

# BLACK LIBERATION MONTH NEWS

Peoples College

P.O. Box 7696

Chicago, IL 60680

FEBRUARY

82

## Why Black Liberation Month

Black Liberation Month is our attempt to unite with the founders and supporters of Negro History Week, and join their emphasis on study with our emphasis on struggle. Moreover, the concept of Black Liberation Month more accurately reflects the needs of our movement, particularly the need to build on the massive participation of people in the upsurge of struggle during the 1960s.

Carter G. Woodson, noted Afro-American nationalist historian, founded Negro History Week in 1926. In addition to the newspaper column of J.A. Rodgers, this was the major source of information that Black people had about their history. Every year in schools, churches, civic and political organizations, Negro History Week has been a time for historical reading and discussion.

We believe that Negro History Week has made a great contribution to mass awareness of Black History. Moreover, the recognition of Negro History Week has caught on, and has become an intellectual tradition in the 20th Century Afro-American experience. However, times have changed considerably since 1926. In political and cultural terms, the time has come to transform our orientation: from Negro to Black, from history to liberation, from week to month.

The revolutionary upsurge of the 1960s is our most recent historical experience of massive militant protest. It continues to be a rich source of lessons for current and future struggles. Black liberation month unites with Woodson's effort, but does so by raising it to a higher level based on the lessons of the 1960s.

In sum, our study of history must be linked with the revolutionary history of the Black liberation movement. Our goal is not simply to symbolically institutionalize a change in our yearly calendar of events, but to use this month as one more way to raise the consciousness of the masses of people about the historical nature of exploitation and oppression, to unite people around a correct political line, and to mobilize people to actively take up the struggle for Black liberation.

## REVOLUTIONARY BLACK POWER IN THE 1980s: TEN POINT PROGRAM FOR BLACK LIBERATION

Peoples College puts forward the following ten demands as a concrete political program based on our analysis and summation of the history and current struggles of Black people. These demands reflect what the masses of Black people are thinking, saying, and doing. These demands speak to the revolutionary aspirations of Black people for freedom which requires a basic and fundamental change in the existing system of exploitation and racist oppression. We call for open and full discussion of this 10 Point Program during Black Liberation Month and set the best course for building our struggle for Revolutionary Black Power and Black Liberation.

### 1. WE DEMAND REVOLUTIONARY BLACK POWER!

Where Black people are a majority, Black people should rule. This includes cities, counties and even states (Mississippi is 40% Black!) and public institutions like school districts. Where Black people are not in a majority, then we demand proportional representation. The fight for this Black political power will expose that the capitalist system is not really "democracy" so we must consciously link this fight for Black power of a new type to the fight for socialism, a new system which will abolish all forms of oppression and exploitation, and establish justice and equality for all.

### 2. WE DEMAND FULL EMPLOYMENT AND JOBS, OR AN ADEQUATE INCOME NOW!

### 3. WE DEMAND THAT THE KLAN, THE NAZIS, AND ALL RACIST AND FASCIST TRASH BE LIQUIDATED!

### 4. WE DEMAND AN IMMEDIATE STOP TO THE FORCED DESTRUCTION OF BLACK COMMUNITIES!

### 5. WE DEMAND NO MORE DRAFT AND NO MORE IMPERIALIST WARS! HELL NO! WE WON'T GO!

### 6. WE DEMAND AN END TO RACIST DISCRIMINATION AND EXPANSION OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMS!

### 7. WE DEMAND THAT ALL POLICE BRUTALITY AND ALL POLITICAL HARRASSMENT BE STOPPED!

### 8. WE DEMAND AN END TO THE TRIPLE OPPRESSION OF BLACK WOMEN!

### 9. WE DEMAND AN EDUCATION FOR ALL BLACK PEOPLE THAT EXPOSES THE TRUE NATURE OF OUR OPPRESSION IN THIS RACIST CAPITALIST SOCIETY!

### 10. WE DEMAND A FIGHTING BLACK LEADERSHIP COMMITTED TO BUILDING PRINCIPLED UNITY AND MASS STRUGGLE AROUND A PROGRAM OF CONCRETE ACTION FOR REVOLUTIONARY BLACK POWER AND BLACK LIBERATION IN THE 1980s!

For a detailed discussion of demands 2-10 refer to BLM News 1980 and 1981 and/or write Peoples College.

Peoples College welcomes and encourages your comments and criticism.

Peoples College, • P.O. Box 7696  
Chicago, IL 60680

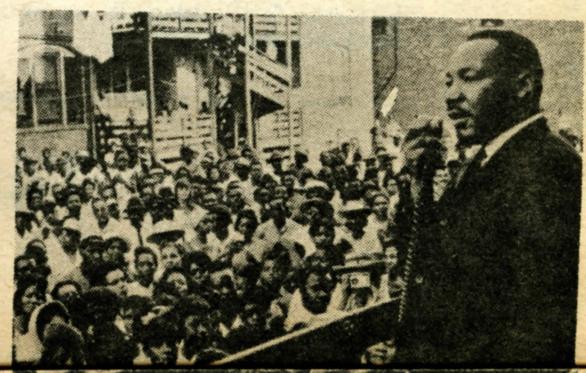
# BLACK HISTORY AND BLACK LIBERATION

## BLACK HISTORY IS FOR BLACK LIBERATION

Peoples College dedicates this Black Liberation Month to the main theme of Black history: *the fight for liberation* from the problems of oppression and exploitation.

One of the greatest gains of the 1960s was the rescue of Black history from racist distortions and omissions. This was a struggle taken up by the masses of people in revolt against centuries of white racist brainwashing. This spontaneous movement resulted in many new things including a more conscious Black leadership, Black Studies programs to institutionalize the study of Black history, and greater support for progressive, anti-imperialist, and revolutionary struggles in the U.S. and throughout the world.

In past years *The Black Liberation Month News* has mainly presented a statement by Peoples College summing up its political line on the struggle. We stated that we must "build unity for the revolution." While we must fight for immediate improvements in our day-to-day lives (reforms), nothing short of destroying capitalism and building a completely new system without exploitation will create the context for Black liberation (revolution).



This year, our focus is on Black history and it is from the careful study of Black history that we have reached the above conclusion. From a scientific view of history, we can gain greater clarity regarding the struggle for Black liberation. Further, we can learn lessons from people's struggles all over the world.

We emphasize Black history now because the revolutionary implications of Black history are being attacked from the left and from the right. Some on the left—in the revolutionary movement—are failing to see that the Black experience and the struggle of Black people have an internal logic and integrity and must be respected on their own terms. The Black experience is not simply a defensive reaction to racism.

And Reagan and the new right are too obvious in their insults to Black people. Reagan stated that he was not aware of a "race problem" and in a recent press conference said that he could not remember what the Weber decision on affirmative action was all about!

On the other hand, many Black people have begun to forget the lessons of Black history. They have begun to see the militant fight for Black liberation as an approach that will not continue to work. This type of view of our struggle removes the main weapon in our fight at the very time we are under attack.

Thus, Peoples College again stresses the importance of Black history, the line that we put forward in the 1981 *Black Liberation Month News*:

"From our study of history we can easily see that Afro-American people always have been exploited and oppressed. Within this universal condition, however, Blacks have been subordinated in three different political and economic roles: as slaves, as sharecroppers, and as factory workers. So 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 since things have changed." (See *Introduction to Afro-American Studies* by Peoples College, an important reference for many points raised in this article.)

Thus, the study of Black history is our most immediate task, one that must never be ignored or allowed to be shoved into the background. But we must also pay attention to the overall study of the history of the peoples and countries of the world, especially those people who have waged successful struggles at particular points in time to win freedom and liberation from oppression and exploitation (see Mao's essay on "Reform our Study"). Black history is a prism through which we can have a vantage point to view the world!

### Three Key Problems Must Be Solved

Our study of Black history helps us to understand the development of the three main ways that Black people are kept at the bottom of society. Blacks are victims of white racism and racial oppression, national oppression, and class exploitation.

(1) *Racial Oppression or white racism* is the total negation of all Black people. White racism as a theory denies the humanity of Black people, and in this way is used to rationalize the most brutal treatment imaginable. Racist attacks have been launched on several fronts like the research on intelligence (Jensen and Shockley), on the family (Moynihan), and on the role that Black people have played in U.S. and world history (recent work on slavery like *Time on the Cross* and on the slave trade).

White racism becomes a material force when the theory leads to concrete individual or organizational action, or

more broadly establishes a climate of opinion for racist attacks. The most blatant form is the neo-fascist hate groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the implementation of racism in its purest form: open and wanton attacks against Black people just for being Black (like the police murders of Ramey in Chicago and Lacy in Milwaukee, and assassination attempts around the U.S.).

In the long run, however, racist statements by the U.S. President are more damaging than sporadic attacks by the KKK because these statements legitimize broader racist attacks—societal racism.

(2) *National Oppression* is the attempt to limit if not liquidate the development of Black culture and the Black community, while racism attacks the humanity of Black people as a whole. The historical experiences of African peoples in the U.S. has molded into being a new people, a new nationality of Afro-Americans. The main experiences of this nationality span all three main historical periods of Black history—slave, rural agricultural and urban industrial. But the main period was the rural sharecropping experience. It was during this period in the South, roughly between 1880 and 1940, that the Afro-American nationality flowered and was at its zenith.

This flowering reflects, in part, the development of social institutions that continue to make up the Black community. Independent social organization was more important to the development of the Black community than at any time before or since. Black people were also more geographically concentrated during this period than at any other time.

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PEOPLES COLLEGE  
Annual Black Liberation Month  
**FORUM 82**  
Sunday • February 21 • 4:00 pm  
TIMBUKTU 2530 S. Michigan • Chicago 842-8242

# BLACK LIBERATION M

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WED
<p>"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 labor at our disposal, with the known techniques of processing materials 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."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">W.E.B. DuBois</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1960: The sit-in movement was launched by four students in Greensboro, N.C. This sparked a new phase of militant Black protest that exposed the national oppression of Black people in the U.S.A.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>1964: Eduardo Mondlane, first president of Frelimo, was assassinated by a mail bomb. Frelimo led the victorious national liberation struggle of the people of Mozambique against the Portuguese.</p>	<p>1965: The Selma dramatized voting rights of 25,000 state capit</p>
<p>7</p> <p>1926: Negro History Week was founded by Carter G. Woodson in honor of Frederick Douglass.</p>	<p>8</p> <p>1964: Malcolm X founded the Organization for Afro-American Unity.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>1943: 4,000 Black and white youth led by the American Youth Congress march in Washington D.C. to protest government discrimination against Black servicemen and the U.S. war policy.</p>	<p>1929: Leontyne Pian Opera</p>
<p>14</p> <p>1790: Richard Allen, founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church was born in Philadelphia. The development of the independent Black church made a major contribution to the formation and development of the Afro-American nation.</p>	<p>15</p> <p>1851: Black Abolitionists crashed a courtroom in Boston to rescue a fugitive slave.</p>	<p>16</p> <p>1937: The National Negro Congress was founded in Chicago. It organized workers in the C.I.O.</p>	<p>1865: The Ku Klux Klan was formed in Tennessee.</p>
<p>21</p> <p>1965: Malcolm X was assassinated at age 39 in the Audubon Ballroom in New York City.</p>	<p>22</p> <p>1872: The National United Front of farmers, workers and city folk, in which the Colored National Farmers Alliance played a prominent role, formed a Peoples Party in St. Louis and tried to establish itself as a national third political party.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>1868: W.E.B. DuBois was born. He was a writer, an educator, and Fisk graduate, as well as architect of Pan Africanism, Secretary of the first Pan African Conference in 1900, organizer of the second in 1919 and key leader in attempting to bring the case against colonialism before the Versailles Peace Conference.</p>	<p>"Modern imperialism and branch of the problem is the white man's b</p>
<p>28</p> <p>...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 our strategy and tactics.</p> <p>Peoples College Editorial for Marxism and Black Liberation</p>	<p>"Of all our studies, history is best qualified to reward our research. And when you see that you've got problems all you have to do is examine the historic method used all over the world by others who have problems similar to yours. Once you see how they got theirs straight, then you know how you can get yours straight."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Malcolm X</p>	<p><b>BLACK HISTORY</b></p> 	

## FEBRUARY

W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963) is thought of as the "Dean of Black Scholar Activists." Throughout his life, he maintained the highest standards of academic excellence and social responsibility. He published many books and scholarly articles and he was always deeply involved in some aspect of the practical struggle for Black liberation. In his later years, he became a Communist and saw socialism as the only path to freedom, justice and equality.

Carter G. Woodson (1878-1950) was the "Father of Negro History." He founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in 1915 and edited the Journal of Negro History from 1916 to 1940.

# MONTH CALENDAR 1982

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
3  to-Montgomery March and the fight for Black rights. It ended with a rally of people in front of the jail.	4  1913: Rosa Parks, the Black worker who sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott, was born.	5  1968: There was a demonstration in Orangesburg, South Carolina, to end segregation in bowling alleys in that city, resulting in a police assault on February 8, brutally murdering 4 students and wounding 50.	6  1973: Native Americans unleashed armed resistance at Wounded Knee, South Dakota to protest government repression. Wounded Knee is a historic site of the 1890 massacre where federal troops killed over 300 Indians.			
10  Price, Black Metropolitan soprano was born.	11  1933: The first Black library was founded in Philadelphia. This is one of the many examples of Black peoples' struggle to build institutions and to develop culturally.	12  1909: The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was founded at Niagara Falls, N.Y.  1793: The Fugitive Slave Law was passed which made it illegal to protect an escaped slave.	13  1817: Frederick Douglass, ex-slave, abolitionist, and organizer for Black freedom, was born.			
17  Klux Klan, a facist organization promotes white supremacy in Pulaski, Tennessee.	18  1688: Quakers of Germantown, Pennsylvania made the first formal protest against slavery in the western hemisphere.	19  1909: W.E.B. DuBois organized the first Pan African Congress which was held in Paris, France.	20  1895: Frederick Douglass died.			
24  ism and modern industry are the same system; root and branch. The race is the same side of the labor Black man's burden is upon him."	25  1877: The Hayes-Tilden Betrayal was announced.	26  1884: At the Berlin Conference the Europeans ended the "Scramble for Africa".	27  "Without struggle there is no progress." Frederick Douglass			

## STUDY and BLACK LIBERATION



1875-1950) is called by many "History." He initiated several which have been important for the masses: The Association Life and History (1915), the (1916), and the observance (1926).



J.A. Rogers (1880-1966) was a self-educated historian born in Jamaica. He worked as a journalist traveling in Europe, Asia, and Africa searching for materials on Black people. His newspaper column started in 1920 was one of the important sources for popularizing knowledge of Black history. He wrote nine books and many pamphlets; he published them himself because major publishers refused. His writings were most often in response to racist attacks of Black people's history.



Zora Neale Hurston (1903-1960) was one of the most productive Afro-American women writers. She was trained as an anthropologist, wrote seven book length manuscripts as a novelist and playwright. She served as a historian of Black people's culture, especially as a popularizer of folklore. She collected rich material from the every day lives of Black people and was very talented at recording Black English of that period.

**What is Peoples College?** Peoples College is an organization of revolutionary Black people dedicated to fight against racism, imperialism, and all forms of exploitation and oppression. Its goal is total freedom for Black people, all oppressed people, and all people who are victims of class exploitation which will require fundamental changes in the U.S. capitalist system.

Peoples College was founded in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1970 and is now based Chicago, Illinois. The key theme that has guided the work has been "education for liberation." Peoples College has been actively involved in many activities in the Black liberation struggle. We have been active participants in the Black Studies movement, having published **INTRODUCTION TO AFRO AMERICAN STUDIES**, a two volume text useful for Black Studies courses and study groups. Another area of activity has been African liberation support work: building African Liberation Day demonstrations in the early 1970's the FREE ZIMBABWE campaign, the Anti-Kruegerand struggles in Chicago, and African Liberation Sunday in 1978. More recently, Peoples College has given leadership to Study and Struggle, the Chicago Student Mobilization for Black Liberation, and to its campaign against draft registration and imperialist war.

Peoples College also operates TIMBUKTU BOOKSTORE, a non profit educational center at 2530 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago.

Write for more information to Peoples College, P.O. Box 7696, Chicago, IL 60680.

Please post or pass on

# Black People Must Study History, To Develop a Theory of Liberation

Continued from front page

National oppression works several ways, showing one pattern in the rural south and another pattern in the cities. In the rural area, the fight has generally been over the ownership of productive agricultural land. In the cities, sharp struggles have raged over control of neighborhood real estate and housing in the Black community. In both rural areas and in the cities, there is a struggle against national oppression, for political power, and the development of self-sustaining community institutions and cultural self-expression.

(3) *Class Exploitation* is based in the economy but its effects are not limited to economic relations. By class we do not mean social status—how much prestige one has—or social stratification—how much income or years of education. Class means power—control over jobs, control over investment of funds and control over the instruments of producing wealth like factories and banks.

*Black people are overwhelmingly in the working class.* This means that all they have is the opportunity to get up everyday and go to work for eight hours or so, in exchange for a wage that is hardly large enough to pay the bills. Thus, working class Black people have no real stake in capitalism whatsoever.

The essence of class exploitation is that the masses of people provide the profits and the privileges that the rich enjoy. *Economic exploitation is the foundation on which great fortunes are built in a capitalist society.* This view is just the opposite of the myth that there is a mechanical separation between rich and poor—that the rich are simply smart and frugal people and that the poor are ignorant, lazy masses. Just the opposite is true: it is the hardworking masses of people who get ripped off in the process of capitalist production and provide the bloodsoaked profits (surplus value) that the rich vampires live on.

In summary, the class structure of the capitalist system includes people of all nationalities. All (abstract) labor is the same and it is impossible to look at any product (commodity) and tell the age, sex, nationality, or race of the workers who produced it. All workers are thus commonly exploited by capitalism, even though some are ripped off more than others and some workers don't understand it as much as others. Racism serves the ruling class well by masking this common exploitation of all workers and dividing workers against their common enemy.

## Three Key Movements Must Be United!

The main history of the Black Liberation Movement involves the rise and the fall of different phases of three major movements: *Pan-Africanism, Nationalism and Marxism.* These movements are based on the concrete realities of Black people and the Black experience and are therefore likely to be here for years to come.

A decisive factor at every point in Black history has been the extent to which these three movements are moving together or not moving together. This is important because these three movements generally include the most militant and radicalized forces within the Black Liberation Movement. Thus, each of these movements must be understood and openly included in all discussions that seek to link together the revolutionary movement.

**PAN-AFRICANISM.** The continued struggles on the African continent pull Black people all over the world into a discussion and struggle over their relationship to Africa. This includes the fight to liberate South Africa (Azania!) as the most important aspect of the relationship between Africa and Black people throughout the world.

Pan-Africanism must also embrace the fight against imperialist penetration and continued outside manipulation. Of increasing importance is the fight for socialism under the leadership of the working class and communists in some African countries. This is a fight which is just beginning to flower and must also be supported.

The task of revolutionaries is to understand the legitimate existence of the progressive and revolutionary impulse in Pan-Africanism—based on race, nationality and class analysis—and to vigorously support it and guide it to merge in unity of action with the overall revolutionary struggle.

**NATIONALISM.** Culture and community have been the concrete basis for the nationality impulse among Blacks. Nationalism, as the Black masses feel it, is a call for the realization of Black unity. One clear case of this is when nationalism emerges as a response to external attacks. But this is not the *basis* of nationalism, only its *condition*. The basis of nationalism is the common identity that Black people have developed across many generations as individuals who function within shared styles of family life, social institutions and a shared culture.

White racism is the external factor and to Black nationalists white racism appears to be an insurmountable barrier to any positive reconciliation with white people. But racism is not the only important factor, nor is it always primary.

The task of the general revolutionary movement and its vanguard is *both* to train Black revolutionaries who must *earn respect* through consistent work within the Black liberation movement and to build a revolutionary sector of the working class—especially among white workers—prepared to take up the righteous demands for Black liberation. This two fold task cannot be reduced to a fight *against* white racism but must be a conscious movement for Black liberation.

*Revolutionary nationalism* is the main aspect of Malcolm X and is demonstrated by such historical organizations as the African Blood Brotherhood and the Black Panther Party.

**MARXISM.** The development of a Marxist-Leninist movement led by communists fighting against capitalism and for socialism is qualitatively different from the two movements discussed above for at least two reasons: (1) it is not a movement mainly limited to Black people, but it is based in and on the working class, including people of all nationalities; and (2) it is not a spontaneous movement, but must be nurtured by a consciously trained cadre of highly disciplined scientific organizers.

In general, Marxism appears to have been taken up by Black people in three different ways: (1) as the theoretical direction taken by Black intellectuals; (2) as an alternative taken up with the Black liberation movement due to exhausting the potential of spontaneous reform struggles; and (3) as an extension of the communist movement based on a line put forward in the movement of cadre working in the Black liberation movement, or

by communists leading the workers movement in unity with the Black liberation movement.

As stated in 1981: "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 the changing world."

An important task in the 1980's is to dig up the history of Black people, Marxism and revolutionary struggle that has been buried. Because of this, autobiographies and biographical statements by Harry Haywood, Hosea Hudson, Ernest "Big Train" Thompson and Admiral Kilpatrick are important. Biographical work on such important but little known revolutionary fighters as Vicki Garvin is also essential.



POLITICAL UNITY IS THE KEY!

Black people of all ideological views must unite on a political basis in struggle! "As the need to struggle increases, the need to unite also increases. An old African proverb says that 'when spider webs unite they can tie up a lion.' This proverb describes a major strength and lesson of the Black Liberation Movement: the importance of Black unity. *There is no better time to build a principled unity among all those who genuinely want Black liberation than right now,*" as we stated in the 1980 *Black Liberation Month News*.

In the 1981 *Black Liberation Month News*, we sought to deepen this point by identifying three basic levels and processes around which we could fight for Black unity.

(1) **BUILDING UNITY IN STRUGGLES OVER CONCRETE ISSUES** (like fighting discrimination and attacks on affirmative action, fighting the draft and imperialist war preparations, fighting the KKK and police brutality, fighting to save Black community institutions and fighting for the liberation of Africa.)

(2) **BUILDING UNITY THROUGH DISCUSSION** (especially in major national conferences held by Black people throughout each year.)

(3) **BUILDING UNITY WITH THE RITUAL CULTURE OF RESISTANCE** (especially in the observance of special holidays and activities like Black Liberation Month (Feb), International Women's Day (March), African Liberation Day (May), International Worker's Day (May) and Kwanza Black Christmas (December).)

There are three key aspects of the overall process of building unity—*ideological unity* (agreement on the main ideas/theory that guide our practice), *political unity* (agreement around the main practical tasks on any given issue) and *organizational unity* (how we structure ourselves to carry out the work).

*Our main focus in the three unity building processes above must be on the political and not mainly on the ideological and organizational.*

Making the political aspect primary, it is most important to sum up practice, establish political lessons (things to do and things not to do), and to develop concrete political plans. Similarly, we must also 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 concrete struggle. This is an obvious attempt to block the development of positive leadership that must be given *now* to the mass spontaneous struggle.

In sum, the *main thing is that we do something now to fight our common enemy*—that we unite in action as we continue to discuss and debate our differences. As we stated in 1981:

"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."

## USE REAGAN TO UNITE THE MASSES IN STRUGGLE

There is not enough room to detail the drastic cuts in social programs implemented by the Reagan administration. All areas have been slashed—job programs, educational loans and scholarships, housing subsidies, old age benefits, unemployment assistance, childcare services, cultural programs and many more. And these cuts fall especially hard on Black people during a period in which outright racist attacks on Black people are escalating.

Two important things can be said about these cutbacks. First, they have exposed "Ronnie the Ripper" as the capitalist tool that he really is—robbing the poor to give to the rich. The only things *not* being cut in his administration are profits and tax breaks for the rich and the crooks he has around him running the government

(Allen accepting \$\$ and watches, Donovan bribing union mis-leaders, and who knows what else!)

There is no more graphic illustration of Reagan as a popular symbol of people's spontaneous hatred against what and who he represents than this: many newscasters reported cheers and expressions of approval by many U.S. people after the assassination attempt on his life. The general response among many people was "I knew someone would get back at him for what he is doing to people!"

Secondly, these cutbacks are leading to an increase in mass spontaneous fight back. The majority of Black people and others are making three spontaneous responses to the current crisis: (1) *militant nationalism* is where Black unity is called for to resist racist attacks; (2) *trade unionism* where Blacks are joining other workers in fighting to increase their wages on the job because of double digit inflation; (3) *consumerism struggles* against the escalating prices for rent, transportation, food, utilities, etc.

These spontaneous reform struggles in response to worsening conditions are necessary and useful, but they are not sufficient to solve the problems that Black people are facing. In a sense, just fighting these reform struggles alone is like putting band-aides on a cancer when only cobalt radiation will cure the disease.

## REVOLUTION IS OUR STRATEGY, SOCIALISM IS OUR GOAL

It is based on a careful and scientific assessment of Black history, world history, and the current situation that Peoples College has taken the very bold step over the past ten years and prescribed **SOCIALISM** as the only possible medicine that can cure the ills of this capitalist society which exist for Black people (and for others). We fully understand that achieving socialism in the U.S. will be no easy task. But neither was going to the moon, harnessing atomic energy, or surviving slavery, sharecropping and the depression, and still prospering as a people.

We provided our basic definition of socialism in the 1980 *Black Liberation Month News*:

"By socialism, we mean a system in which all power rests fully and completely in the hands of the masses of people—including Black people—and not in the hands of politicians whose first loyalty is to protecting the profits of capitalists. Socialism means a system in which all wealth and the means of producing wealth (factories, banks, communication and transportation systems, etc.) are collectively owned by the people. All exploitation is ended and the surplus that is produced by the working masses goes to meet the needs of people (e.g., keeping the schools open, lower rents and gas prices, etc.) and not into the bank accounts of a few wealthy capitalists. Finally, socialism means putting all of the resources of the society and the full political power of the government behind ending all forms of oppression—especially racism and male supremacy. Can anyone really honestly argue that these things would not be of great benefit to the masses of Black people?"

The main theme of Black history, as we said in beginning this article, has been one of struggle for Black liberation. For centuries, Black people have fought for freedom, justice and equality. Not only have we not achieved these, we would argue that things are getting worse—that the clock is being turned back and new forms of oppression and exploitation are being daily put into place.

*The main stumbling block to our liberation and the source of most of the other problems that Black people face is the capitalist system.* On the other hand, the only historical system—in theory and in practice—that is an alternative to capitalism is **SOCIALISM**. (This is certainly not to say that countries which call themselves socialist today are not making many mistakes and perhaps should not even be called socialist. But we refuse to throw the baby out with the bath!)

The fact remains that most freedom fighters all over the world in the 20th century are embracing the struggle for socialism as the path for genuine liberation for their nations, countries, peoples and, most importantly, their class. This includes countries like Zimbabwe in Africa, El Salvador in Central America, and Grenada in the Caribbean. There must be an important lesson in this for us!

Another fact is clear: *socialism is the main threat to the capitalists and they know it!* This helps to explain why the capitalists, their media and their schools constantly repeat information similar to what Reagan and Alexander Haig said to U.S. allies in Europe: "the only good Red is a dead Red!" This is why there is so much glee about recent developments in Poland, a country whose claim to socialism we must seriously question because of the unjustifiable suppression of the Polish working people.

In short, we must not let capitalists continue to mislead us into thinking that socialism would be bad for the masses. *If done correctly, socialism will only be bad for the capitalists.*

We must also fight all efforts to mislead the struggle for Black liberation and make it only for reforms. This is why Peoples College has put forward "Revolutionary Black Power in the 1980s" as a slogan. It means that Black power of the old type was important but not sufficient. It was reformist! Only when we transform the struggle for Black power with the task of making a revolution in the U.S. can Black people help create the conditions for our liberation.

We must escalate our efforts to build a revolutionary struggle for socialism and against capitalism, a struggle which will involve peoples of all nationalities and social backgrounds, a struggle that will seek to end exploitation and oppression for all people and for all times.

## BLACK HISTORY IS FOR BLACK LIBERATION!

## BUILD UNITY FOR THE REVOLUTION!

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