

# African Politics and the World Situation

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*This conference comes at a very important time in regard to the political and economic situation here in the city of Detroit, the state of Michigan, throughout the United States and indeed the world.*

There has been much ruling class propaganda about the purported financial and employment resurgence in the U.S. Wall Street has apparently welcomed the ascendancy of the Trump administration with the Dow Jones Industrial Average exceeding 21,000 points.

Trump has surrounded himself with Wall Street bankers, oil magnates, Pentagon generals and ideological racists. They represent not the strength of the modern capitalist system but its stark contradictions and weaknesses.

Although the stock market is rising this does not necessarily translate into a qualitative rise in the standard of living for working people, the nationally oppressed and marginalized communities in the recent period. The Bureau of Labor Statistics claimed that during the month of February over 250,000 jobs were created. However, what is not said are the types of employment the new hires working in. When the corporate media outlets say that some of these jobs are within the manufacturing sector it still avoids the reality of declining monetary and social wages for the working class overall.

Moreover, the assault on the working class and poor is unrelenting in areas that extend beyond their places of employment. In Detroit and other municipalities, tens of millions have been displaced over the last decade through home foreclosures, evictions, utility shut-offs, and through the processes characterized as “gentrification.” How would we quantify the losses of people’s homes, neighborhoods and essential services?

In Detroit, municipal employees and retirees have undergone massive cuts in their pensions, annuities and healthcare benefits. Just three years ago over 50 percent of African Americans residing in the state of Michigan were living under emergency management designed to enhance the authority and profitability of the banks and industrial corporations. Under the so-called “Financial Stability Agreement” imposed nearly five years ago at the aegis of Gov. Rick Snyder and adopted in a 5-4 vote by the majority compliant Detroit City Council, the stage was set for full-scale emergency management. This acceptance of the FSA took place during a period of political opposition aimed at overturning EM legislation in its totality.

The U.S. promotes the notion of being a democratic society. Many wars in the 21st century have been launched by the White House and the Pentagon saying that their intentions are to bring democracy to other nations which are post-colonial states. Nevertheless, this propaganda rings a hollow tone if we examine the workings of the capitalist system of governance in states such as Michigan.

In essence it was the industrial abandonment of the city of Flint and the appointments of successive Emergency Managers that lie at the root of the poisoning of the water in the city where the population has been reduced by half over the last four decades. The city of Detroit has gone from a population of 1.8 million in 1950 to one of less than 700,000 today.

Corporate media outlets hail on a daily basis the ostensible “rebirth” of Detroit while tens of thousands of its majority African American community are being forced to leave for the suburbs and other areas of the state and country. Despite the campaign of “ethnic cleansing”, African Americans constitute more than 75 percent of the city making them the largest concentration of this oppressed nation among all major municipalities in the U.S.

This same pattern has been replicated throughout the Midwest. In Chicago, public housing complexes have been razed over the last two decades. Historic African American neighborhoods were targeted, as in Detroit, for predatory lending and disinvestment.

Extortionist methods of high mortgages, rents, property taxes, utility and water costs, insurance rates, compounded by food deserts, the lack of educational resources and city services, are all utilized as effective methods to drive people out of their communities.

The segregation of African Americans and their super-exploitation means in essence that they remain a colonized and neo-colonized people within the U.S. With the advent of Black mayors, congresspersons, city council representatives and other elected officials provided a veneer of self-determination and political equality during the era of the 1960s through the conclusion of the 20th century. However, in many cities where African Americans had occupied these positions they have been removed and replaced by whites.

Detroit is an excellent example where for forty years from Coleman A. Young to Kwame Kilpatrick, African Americans had maintained political control of City Hall. Obviously in the present situation, the ruling class cannot even afford to allow this limited degree of political influence and power. Mike Duggan, the white comprador corporate-designated mayor from Livonia, is symptomatic of this shift in capitalist governance. Not only is the Duggan administration promoted as the only viable solution to the current crises of underdevelopment and job losses, he is falsely portrayed as being superior in administrative skills and efficiency.

Of course the actual record is at variance with this narrative. The revelations surrounding the operations of the Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA) and its blight removal program utilizing federal funds has become a focus of a federal criminal investigation. Dan Gilbert, of Quicken Loans, the “Don” of the city who is also promoted as a white savior, occupies the chairmanship of the Detroit Blight Removal Task Force. This entity identifies properties for seizure and demolition. The DLBA has become the largest landlord in the city while Gilbert, a financial and real estate magnate, is also under investigation for criminal fraud involving his misrepresentations to secure Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loans for his unsuspecting clients. While former Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick is serving a 28-year sentence for violations of federal law, Gilbert, Duggan and their cohorts are still open for business. Washington and its district attorney have not shut down their nefarious operations, prosecuted them for the misuse of federal funds and placed them in prison for decades.

Consequently, there is much work to be done to expose these contradictions which the masses understand almost instinctively. This is why our work here in the city has linked the plight of African Americans with their counterparts on the continent of Africa.

## Our Work in the Struggle to Reverse Imperialism in Africa

Over the last decade the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice (MECAWI) has led several campaigns in solidarity with the anti-imperialist struggle in Africa.

The organization was founded in September 2002 during the build-up in the Persian Gulf for the blockade, massive bombing, invasion and occupation of Iraq. The U.S. under President George W. Bush had intervened in Afghanistan directly only a year before.

MECAWI's efforts went beyond Iraq to solidarity actions with Haiti when it was invaded and occupied beginning in the aftermath of its bicentennial in February 2004. Military forces from the U.S., France and Canada overthrew the elected government of President Jean Bertrand Aristide. The president was kidnapped and flown by imperialist military aircraft to the Central African Republic (CAR). Aristide was later granted political asylum in the Republic of South Africa whose then President Thabo Mbeki had visited for the 200th year anniversary of the conclusion of the anti-colonial struggle when African slaves successfully rose and led a revolution against France.

In 2005, a delegation from South Korea visited the U.S. and we were able to host the delegates in Detroit where they appeared before the Detroit City Council and spoke at a MECAWI-sponsored forum at Wayne State University. The Koreans were here to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the national student uprising of 1980. The demonstrations and unrest shook the foundations of the Pentagon and Wall Street outpost which serves as a bulwark against the reunification of the Peninsula and the attempts aimed at the destabilization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) based in Pyongyang.

By the concluding months of 2006, the political situation in the Horn of Africa State of Somalia was reaching a boiling point. A coalition of groups under the banner of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), were bringing a modicum of stability to the decades-long war-torn country. The White House under President Bush sought unsuccessfully to utilize pro-western warlords to reverse the advances of the ICU.

By December the neighboring state of Ethiopia, now a close ally of Washington, sent troops into Somalia to enforce imperialist foreign policy designs in the region. Ethiopian military forces were working with Pentagon and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) personnel to find another way into Somalia after the enormous defeats suffered by the U.S. and the United Nations between the years of 1993-94. A popular resistance alliance arose in opposition to the Pentagon and UN occupation of Somalia during 1992-1994. The Marines were deployed in December 1992 in what was dubbed Operation Restore Hope. Utilizing the devastation caused by a recent drought in the country, the administration of President George W. Bush, Sr. deployed 12,000 soldiers to ostensibly distribute relief and to establish safe corridors for those impacted by food shortages.

This imperialist intervention of 1992-93 proves disastrous. Within several months a national uprising in response to U.S. military atrocities committed against the Somalian people forced the Marines and the UN so-called peacekeeping operation out of the country.

The previous government of President Mohamed Siad Barre had gone from a 1969 anti-imperialist and socialist-oriented seizure of power by military officers, to making a rightward shift to the U.S. by 1977, leading to a failed invasion of the Ogaden region of Ethiopia.

Cuban internationalist forces were in Ethiopia to assist and defend the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), or the Dergue, which dominated the government in Addis Ababa after the 1974 Revolution against the monarchy. PMAC had committed the country to a socialist path and was providing assistance to the national liberation movements in Southern Africa.

Cuban internationalist forces played an important role during the Somalian invasion of the east of Ethiopia in the Ogaden region during 1977-78. The defeat of this successionist effort undermined the stability of Somalia for decades to come.

However, the Eritrean question was not able to be resolved and the war which began for independence under the His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I in 1961, continued with greater intensity. The internal national question within Ethiopia itself was manifesting through the guerrilla wars waged by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in the north and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in the south. The Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) was waging a war against the central government seeking federation with its nationality in Somalia, a country which during the period of colonialism was divided by five different states carved out by Italy, Britain, France and Ethiopia.

By 1991, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was collapsing following the pattern which had begun in the late 1980s in Eastern Europe. The economic and military resources needed to maintain the war against the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and other armed movements was not forthcoming. The State Department under the George Bush, Sr. administration was pressuring the Worker's Party of Ethiopia (WPE) government under Haile Mengistu Mariam to relinquish control of the state and allow the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), led by the TPLF, to enter Addis Ababa. Also within this deterioration of the WPE government, the EPLF declared independence in Asmara. Two years later the UN-supervised election brought about the inevitable international recognition of Eritrea as an independent state.

In Somalia with the fall of neighboring Ethiopia, Washington no longer was compelled to provide resources for the Siad Barre regime. Internal power struggles worsened to the point of the collapse of the government in Mogadishu. Since 1991, the Somalian state has remained fractured and weak. Today the federal government in Mogadishu is propped-up by the Washington and Brussels funded African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) consisting of 22,000 troops from several states across the region.

MECAWI foresaw this situation as being an opening for imperialism to re-enter Somalia with force in early 2007. Accompanying the Ethiopian intervention and the threats from Kenya as well was the bombing of the country by both the U.S. and the British Royal Air Force (RAF).

A press statement issued on January 11 to announce a demonstration during a program at Wayne State University (WSU) featuring UN ambassadors from Kenya, Ethiopia, Iraq and Malaysia, MECAWI said:

“Despite the overwhelming vote on November 7 to end the war in Iraq, the Bush administration is not only escalating the conflict but has embarked upon a new military adventure in the East African nation of Somalia. Utilizing the US-backed government of Meles Zenawi in Ethiopia, the Bush regime has engineered an occupation of Somalia, a sovereign nation. In addition, the American military launched a bombing campaign that has resulted in the deaths of over 500 Africans in Somalia since Monday.”

This same release went on to emphasize that:

“Using the same old pretext of fighting terrorism, C130 gunships bombed civilian areas in southern Somalia where these rural communities have no defenses against such deadly weapons of mass destruction. The Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice is demanding the immediate halt of all military actions against Somalia and the withdrawal of American and Ethiopian military forces from the Horn of Africa nation.”

Sentiment against the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Haiti were reflective of the mood enunciation in this press release. Hundreds of thousands had demonstrated across the U.S. and the world against the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. With respect to the U.S. role dominating the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces in Afghanistan, the rationale for the war was losing credibility even among those who supported and justified the intervention. Atrocities of the same nature of which were being perpetrated and exposed in Iraq and Haiti were also taking place in Afghanistan.

Neo-colonialism was being enforced at the barrel of the gun and sharpness of the bombs dropping over wide swaths of territory throughout various geo-political regions of the world. Oil, cheap labor and strategic waterways coveted by the imperialists were the real reasons behind the wars of conquest and genocide. As the economic crisis was deepening in Detroit and other Midwestern municipalities, small towns and rural areas, the Pentagon budget was expanding exponentially. The creation of a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in the aftermath of the attacks on September 11, 2001, was aimed at the further consolidation of the intelligence and military apparatuses of the state in both the domestic and foreign policy arenas.

Diplomatic ploys engineered by the U.S. were a key element in the renewed imperialist war drive. The presence of such persons on the campus of WSU in the heart of this majority African American and economically targeted city was an affront to the best in its legacy of Civil Rights, Labor, Black Power, Anti-war and Pan-Africanist traditions. Launching an ideological and political challenge to the neo-colonialist approach to both local and global capitalist and imperialist policy was the appropriate response to such a provocation by the Bush administration.

The MECAWI press release of January 11, 2007 appealed to the people saying:

“The United Nations ambassadors from both the US-backed government in Ethiopia and the American-installed occupationist regime in Iraq will be visiting Wayne State University’s Law School on Thursday beginning at 10:00 a.m. We are calling upon anti-war activists, students and community people to come out and picket the appearance of these puppets in order to tell them and their Bushite sponsors that the people want peace not war. We support the Somali and Iraqi peoples’ right to self-determination and independence. A policy of colonialism and imperialism is doomed to failure in the 21st Century. MECAWI is calling on the US Congress to halt all funding for the Iraq occupation and the military interference in the internal affairs of Somalia. We need money for jobs, health care, quality education, senior services and affordable housing, not permanent war and colonial occupations.”

A report written by this author in regard to our intervention at the WSU Law School forum

featuring the UN ambassadors, notes:

“MECAWI pointed out that the Bush administration has repeatedly lied about a terrorist threat and weapons of mass destruction in order to provide a rationale for the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Only the Ambassador from Bangladesh, Mr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, conveyed an appreciation for questions asked by MECAWI representatives. Two members of MECAWI then continued to shout out critical questions and statements related to recent events in Iraq and Somalia. After the forum was over, MECAWI approached the Ambassador from Kenya, Mr. Z.D.Muburi-Muita, and handed him a copy of a statement issued to the press which condemned American involvement in the Horn of Africa and Iraq. The statement was also handed over to the Iraqi Ambassador, Mr. Talib Hamid Al Bayati, as well as the Ethiopian UN Representative, Mr. Dawit Yohannes.”

As the war in Somalia escalated the plans for the formal adoption of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) was announced in 2007. Scheduled to go into effect in February 2008, MECAWI issued a call for a conference on U.S. Imperialism and Africa in Detroit that would denounce AFRICOM and expose it for the danger it represented to the independence and sovereignty of Africa.

On February 23, 2008, the 140th birthday of Pan-Africanist and Communist Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, MECAWI held a day-long meeting on the contemporary struggle against neo-colonialism and imperialist militarism on the continent. This was the only gathering of its kind internationally. The U.S. Imperialism and Africa conference was self-organized and carried out by local activists from MECAWI and Workers World Party Detroit Branch. Friends of these organizations were attendance and participated. The National Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL) attended and presented a paper on its legal objection to the creation of AFRICOM.

Papers on issues involving imperialist wars of regime change and domination in Somalia, Sudan, Zimbabwe and other states were delivered. A newly-released film on Cuban internationalist solidarity with Africa was screened for the first time in the city in its entirety. The revolutionary legacy of Patrice Lumumba, Kwame Nkrumah, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Shirley Graham Du Bois, Amilcar Cabral, Agostino Neto, Nelson Mandela and other were evoked. The conference provided a wealth of information and a program of ideological and political opposition to the changing role of the Pentagon, the CIA and NATO in Africa.

The anti-colonial and anti-racist history of struggle waged by African Americans was recounted in the effort to illustrate the principled positions which MECAWI was seeking to continue. In the weeks and months to come the Pentagon accelerated its bombing campaigns in Somalia along with the intensification of the occupations of Afghanistan, Iraq and Haiti. These foreign policy assaults were replicated in the U.S. through the worsening economic crisis that had struck Detroit and the state of Michigan with a vengeance in its first wave.

On February 14, 2008, the call for the U.S. Imperialism and Africa Conference was issued to the media saying:

“The Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice (MECAWI) is an anti-war and anti-imperialist coalition that opposes United States military intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, MECAWI has responded to

further interventionist maneuvers by the Bush administration in Somalia, Haiti, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Colombia, Cuba, Venezuela and other geo-political regions of the world. Based upon recent political events on the African continent such as: the US-backed invasion of Somalia in 2006; the escalation of destabilization efforts against Sudan, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Chad; as well as the much publicized American plans to establish military bases on the continent through the Africa Command (AFRICOM) that is directly administered from the Pentagon, many of us in the anti-imperialist and anti-war movements see the mounting danger of greater United States military intervention in Africa.”

In an address delivered at the U.S. Imperialism and Africa Conference this writer stressed:

“As a result of the rejection by leading African states, such as Nigeria and South Africa, headquarters for this military program remains in Germany. Consequently, in recent weeks the overall political framing of the AFRICOM project has shifted to a less threatening approach with the American administration later claiming that the program is designed to enhance the capacity of African states to provide adequate security amid the changing concerns of the 21st century. This evolution of political spin continued when Bush was in Ghana, the first country south of the Sahara to gain national independence in 1957 from Britain. Kwame Nkrumah proclaimed on March 6, 1957 that the independence of Ghana was meaningless unless it was linked up with the total independence of the African continent. With the overthrow of Nkrumah in 1966 by a US-backed military and police coup, the country has fallen into the grip of neo-colonialism, what the first Prime Minister and President described as the last stage of imperialism.”

This same lecture continued recognizing:

“To further obscure its imperialist aims, the United States Ambassador to the United Kingdom denied over the BBC on February 20 that the Bush administration had any intentions of building military bases in Africa. So what should the people of Africa and the world believe? And what does this apparent new interest in African affairs mean to the anti-war and peace movements in the United States in light of the ongoing occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan?”

Just five years later during the Jubilee commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the predecessor to the now African Union (AU) initiated in 2002, another conference was held by MECAWI to assess the five years since the launching of AFRICOM. Even though the U.S. defied the proclamations in 2008 that its ambitions were to build military bases in Africa, the escalation of Pentagon, State Department and CIA involvement on the continent had accelerated.

The propaganda had shifted to advancing notions of assisting African nation-states to enhance their national security capacity. Nevertheless, airstrips, CIA stations, drone operations, aerial bombings, special forces and commando raids were becoming more frequent with examples of Somalia and Libya being the most pronounced. The phenomenon of joint military exercises, training programs and the embedding of Pentagon and U.S. intelligence personnel within African military structures had expanded.

The call for the MECAWI Conference on May 18, 2013 said:

“Today in 2013, African states are being invaded once again by troops from the Pentagon, various NATO forces, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operatives and other intelligence organizations from throughout North America and Europe as well as transnational corporations and banks determined to maintain western hegemony over the continent, its people and resources. Five years ago in 2008, the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice (MECAWI) held a similar conference in the wake of the formation of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM). In 2008 we predicted that the formation of this Pentagon command specifically geared toward Africa would prove disastrous for the continent. Unfortunately what we anticipated has been proven correct.”

Emphasizing the role of imperialism over the previous five years, the call said:

“AFRICOM coordinated the overthrow of the government in Libya under the martyred Col. Muammar Gaddafi, a longtime leader of his country who served as a co-founder of the AU and its chairman in 2009-2010. Although the headquarters of AFRICOM remains in Stuttgart, Germany, the U.S. has established a military base in Djibouti along with drone and CIA stations in Somalia, Niger and other countries across the continent. The current war in Mali, although said to be waged by France for humanitarian reasons, is merely designed to penetrate the continent and exploit its oil, uranium and gold. Africa is playing a greater role in supplying oil, platinum, natural gas and other strategic resources to the western industrialized capitalist states. Therefore, we believe that a renewed anti-imperialist campaign aimed at enhancing solidarity with Africa and its people is necessary during this period.”

AFRICOM had been formed under the administration of George W. Bush, Jr. nonetheless with the election of President Barack Obama the military command had been strengthened and enhanced. Just two years earlier, the Obama administration would wage a full-scale war against Libya which toppled the Jamahiriya resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of Africans. Aerial bombardments initiated by the White House soon brought in other NATO air forces and their allies in the Middle East such as Turkey and the Qatar. After the adoption of two pseudo -legal resolutions by the UN Security Council 1980 and 1983, the stage was set to dismantle Africa’s most prosperous state driving its leader Col. Muammar Gaddafi from the capital of Tripoli in August 2011 bringing about his eventual brutal assassination on October 20.

In the case of Libya, many so-called leftists and antiwar activists objectively took the side of imperialism. Not understanding the changing character of western hegemony, these misguided elements fostered the notions that the Pentagon-CIA-NATO forces had some legitimate role inside the North African state to protect civilians. Since when has the imperialists been concerned about protecting the lives of civilians both inside and outside the U.S.? The war against Libya opened Africa further to the military hegemony of Washington, London, Paris and Brussels.

MECAWI organized demonstrations, public forums and wrote extensively on the unjust and imperialist character of the war against Libya. This bombing and ground operation utilizing CIA, Special Forces and State Department personnel under the direction of the-then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton essentially bombed the country back into the stone ages. Clinton laughed at the brutal assassination of Gaddafi and lauded the installment of the counter-revolutionary militias as a triumph for democracy in Africa. The regional AU’s effort to bring about a peaceful resolution to the intervention was disregarded.



Today Libya has gone from the most advanced state in Africa under Gaddafi, where the nation served as chair of the AU in 2009, to being one of the most impoverished—a source of instability and terrorism across North Africa and West Africa. Human trafficking operations involving millions are centered inside the country. The social and political impact of the imperialist dismemberment of Libya has spread throughout North Africa and the Middle East across the Mediterranean into Southern, Central and Eastern Europe.

The fallout surrounding the imperialist war drive led by successive U.S. administrations against Africa and the Middle East extending into Central and Southern Asia has impacted the stability of the European Union (EU). The Brexit vote in Britain to leave the EU can be traced directly by to the machinations of the Pentagon and NATO. What is described in the modern period as “populism” sweeping the imperialist states represents the failure of militarism and unbridled capitalist economic policies. The collapse of the USSR and the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) eliminated the only real alternative to western hegemony emanating from Europe.

Russia after 1917: International Communism, Colonial Questions and the Upsurge of Anti-Imperialism

This year represents the centenary of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Born in the midst of the first imperialist world war, the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP-Bolshevik) later becoming the Communist Party, was able to seize power in October (November 6) just eight months after the popular overthrow of the monarchy. Many including Marx and Engels had been involved in the workers upheavals of 1847-1851 as well as studying the lessons of the Paris Commune (1870-71), themselves seemed to have believed that the first revolution against capitalism would be victorious in one of the more advanced capitalist states in Western Europe such as Germany, France or Britain.

However, the largely unpopular war against Germany would create the political situation for a coalition of workers councils called Soviets, which grew out of the uprisings of 1905, the peasantry starving for bread and land reform along with the battered Russian military suffering from a disorganized war effort and lack of food and supplies on the battlefield, served to provide V.I. Lenin and his comrades the ability to seize power. This revolution took an immediate stand against the imperialist war by signing a treaty with Germany to end Russia’s involvement, also exposing the plot to dominate the West Asia by Britain and France through the Sykes-Picot Agreement signed in 1916, and fostering the liberation of the oppressed nations and nationalities within the Russian sphere of influence.

The Bolsheviks formed the Third International which held its First Congress in 1919. By 1920, Lenin in response to the mass uprisings across the colonial territories in the aftermath of World War I, declared the world socialist movement as being the staunchest allies of the oppressed peoples under the yoke of colonialism and semi-colonialism.

With specific reference to the U.S., the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920 heard a report from John Reed on the state of the African American people. Based on these analyses and other information provided to the Russian Communist Party and Socialist state, Lenin declared:

“The second main idea of our Theses is that, in the current world situation, after the imperialist war, the mutual relations between states, the world system of states, is determined by the struggle of the smaller number of

imperialist nations against the Soviet movement and the Soviet powers with Soviet Russia at their head. If we overlook this question, we cannot pose correctly a single national or colonial question even in the most distant part of the world. It is only from this standpoint that the political questions of the Communist Parties, not only in the civilized but also in the backward countries, can be posed and answered correctly. Thirdly, I would like to emphasize the question of the bourgeois-democratic movement in the backward countries. This was the point that gave rise to some differences of opinion. We debated whether it is correct in principle and theoretically to declare that the Communist International and the Communist Parties have a duty to support the bourgeois-democratic movements in the backward countries, and the outcome of this discussion was that we came to the unanimous decision to talk not about the 'bourgeois-democratic' movement but only about the national-revolutionary movement. There can be no doubt of the fact that any nationalist movement can only be a bourgeois-democratic movement, because the great mass of the population of the backward countries consists of the peasantry, which is the representative of bourgeois capitalist relations. It would be utopian to think that proletarian parties, insofar as it is at all possible for them to arise in these countries, will be able to carry out Communist tactics and Communist policies in the backward countries without having a definite relationship with the peasant movement, without supporting it in deeds. But objections were raised that, if we say 'bourgeois-democratic', we lose the distinction between the reformist and revolutionary movement which has become quite clear in the backward countries and the colonies recently, simply because the imperialist bourgeoisie has done everything in its power to create a reformist movement among the oppressed peoples too. A certain understanding has emerged between the bourgeoisie of the exploiting countries and that of the colonies, so that very often, even perhaps in most cases, the bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries, although they also support national movements, nevertheless fight against all revolutionary movements and revolutionary classes with a certain degree of agreement with the imperialist bourgeoisie, that is to say together with it. This was completely proven in the Commission, and we believed that the only correct thing would be to take this difference into consideration and to replace the words 'bourgeois-democratic' almost everywhere with the expression 'national-revolutionary'. The point about this is that as communists we will only support the bourgeois freedom movements in the colonial countries if these movements are really revolutionary and if their representatives are not opposed to us training and organizing the peasantry in a revolutionary way. If that is no good, then the communists there also have a duty to fight against the reformist bourgeoisie, to which the heroes of the Second International also belong. There are already reformist parties in the colonial countries, and on occasion their representatives call themselves Social Democrats or Socialists. This distinction is now made in all the Theses, and I think that our point of view is thus formulated much more precisely."

Of course there were no African Americans in attendance at the first three congresses of the CI where these questions were debated and discussed. Later in 1922, a delegation of two African Americans, renowned Jamaican-born poet and novelist Claude McKay and Surinam-born Otto Huiswoud, attended the Fourth Congress of the CI. This gathering was held amid a cultural and political renaissance among the African American people.

The Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL) was in its heyday with Jamaican-born Marcus Garvey attracting millions across the U.S., the Caribbean, Central and South America as well as colonies on the African continent. The Negro World newspaper published in three different languages and attracted Black leftists into its ranks such as Nevis-born Cyril Briggs and Hubert Harrison from St. Croix.

Briggs and Harrison had been associated with the revolutionary nationalist and socialist movements in the U.S. prior to joining the UNIA. Briggs co-founded The Crusader magazine which eventually took an anti-capitalist position. In 1919, Briggs, and others formed the African Blood Brotherhood for African Liberation and Redemption (ABB). Eventually many within the leadership of the ABB joined the early formations which later consolidated as the Communist Party of the U.S. 1919 witnessed over two dozen racial incidents when African Americans came under attack by white mobs and law-enforcement authorities in the aftermath of the first imperialist war in cities such as Chicago and Washington D.C. What distinguished these so-called race riots from others which had occurred during the late 19th and early 20th century was that African Americans fought back against the racists in a disciplined and organized fashion. It was during this period that the ABB was formed as a self-defense organization advocating self-determination and anti-capitalism.

In addition, strikes in the Steel and Coal Mining industries and the Seattle general strike heightened fears of the capitalist class and federal government. A series of bomb attacks attributed to Anarchists also set the stage for a massive wave of repression involving thousands of law-enforcement personnel as they raided homes and offices of suspected radicals ostensibly designed to prevent an uprising aimed at overthrowing the U.S. government on May Day 1920.

Ideological and political differences with Marcus Garvey over the character of the movement led to a split within the UNIA between Briggs, Harrison and the leadership. These contradictions were heightened by the federal government infiltration of the UNIA, Socialist organizations and the eventual Communist Party.

During the post-World War I period the Department of Justice targeted radicals and revolutionaries for disruption, deportation and imprisonment. Hundreds of Socialists, Anarchists and Black Nationalists were victimized in this effort initially launched by the-then Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer in 1919.

Garvey was indicted and convicted on bogus charges of mail fraud during the 1922-23. He was eventually imprisoned in 1925 serving two years in federal prison before being deported back to Jamaica in 1927. Moreover, Africans living in the South still tied to the land in the agriculture system of production were being harassed, super-exploited, imprisoned through contract labor schemes and lynched by the racist mobs, started to rapidly migrate into the industrial and shipping centers of the Northern, Midwestern and Western urban areas. This process of migration brought vitality into the workers' movement and the African American nation which continued to grow in class and racial consciousness. A plethora of newspapers, magazines, theaters, social organizations and businesses flourished as a result of the legalized and de facto segregation prevalent in the municipalities.

Although Africans relocated in the hope of a better life through good paying employment, quality housing and more social freedom, conditions in their new found homes were just as bad if not worse than what existed in the South.

A statement issued after the 1922 Fourth Congress of the CI in Moscow said of the African American national question that:

“The Communist International must show the black people that they are not the only ones to suffer capitalist and imperialist oppression; that the workers and peasants of Europe, Asia and America are also victims of imperialism; that

the black struggle against imperialism is not the struggle of any one single people, but of all the peoples of the world; that in India and China, in Persia and Turkey, in Egypt and Morocco, the oppressed non-white peoples of the colonies are heroically fighting their imperialist exploiters; that these peoples are rising against the same evils, i.e., against racial oppression, inequality and exploitation, and are fighting for the same ends – political, economic and social emancipation and equality.”

These movements outside the U.S. in the colonial and semi-colonial territories were the foreign counterparts of the African American national question. There had been an ongoing debate within the Left over whether the African American people were fighting for inclusion within U.S. society or sought to establish their own autonomous and perhaps independent existence. Judging from the report of John Reed at the Second Congress of 1920, there seems to be a lack of appreciation of the necessity of organizing within the rural areas of the South where African American farmers and agricultural workers were very much a part of the production process which was integral to the capitalist manufacturing centers of the North and Midwest.

Racial conflict in the South was often prompted by the division of labor along national lines. Many white farmers remained landless and poor however they were indoctrinated by the ruling class that their interests lay with the plantation owners whom had survived the destruction of the Civil War and Reconstruction periods. In major cities such as Memphis, Atlanta, Winston-Salem, etc., African Americans had carved out an existence through the utilization of religious, cultural and social institutions. These also came under attack by white racism. By the final decade of the 19th century and first years of the 20th, migration began to increase. This migration was not limited to the North, Midwest and West it also occurred in areas such as Kansas and Oklahoma. These migration patterns were not exclusively spontaneous. There were organizations that eased the strain on moving to other regions of the country. African American newspapers such as the Chicago Daily Defender carried ads which promoted migration and groups such as the National Urban League were founded and funded by some capitalist corporations to facilitate the transferal of African labor from the rural South to the industrialized centers of the U.S.

In an effort to embrace the anti-colonial and revolutionary nationalist struggles as their own as well, the resolution adopted at the Fourth Congress of the CI continued stressing:

“The Communist International represents the revolutionary workers and peasants of the entire world in their struggle against the power of imperialism – it is not just an organization of the enslaved white workers of Europe and America, but is as much an organization of the oppressed non-white peoples of the world, and so feels duty-bound to encourage and support the international organizations of the black people in their struggle against the common enemy. The black question has become an integral part of the world revolution. The Third International has already recognized what valuable help the colored Asiatic peoples can give to the proletarian revolution, and it realizes that in the semi-capitalist countries the co-operation of our oppressed black brothers is extremely important for the proletarian revolution and for the destruction of capitalist power. Therefore the Fourth Congress gives Communists the special responsibility of closely applying the “Theses on the Colonial Question” to the situation of the blacks. The Fourth Congress considers it essential to support all forms of the black movement which aim either to undermine or weaken capitalism and imperialism or to prevent their further expansion. The Communist International will fight for the racial equality of blacks and whites, for equal wages and equal social and political rights. The Communist

International will do all it can to force the trade unions to admit black workers wherever admittance is legal, and will insist on a special campaign to achieve this end. If this proves unsuccessful, it will organize blacks into their own unions and then make special use of the united front tactic to force the general unions to admit them. The Communist International will immediately take steps to convene an international black conference or congress in Moscow.”

Leading elements within the ABB which grew out of the resistance to racist state and mob violence after World War I joined the Communist Party during the mid to late 1920s. Eventually the ABB was dissolved and the American Negro Labor Congress (ANLC) was formed in 1925. The organization was the first attempt on the part of the CP to organize mass organizations among the African American people. ANLC cadre held a conference to draft a program of action although this effort gained limited results. A newspaper called the Negro Champion was published in an attempt to intervene in the political and ideological struggles taking place among the African American people.

On an internationalist level, the League Against Imperialism (LAI) was founded during this same time period. The first gathering was held in Brussels, Belgium and organized by German Communist Willi Munzenberg in February 1927. Delegates were invited to the first meeting from China, India, South Africa, Indonesia, Senegal and Algeria. Leading figures in the anti-colonial movements from these geo-political regions such as Lamin Senghor (Senegal), Virendranath Chattopadhyaya (India), J.T. Gumede of the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa, Messali Hadj of the Algerian North-African Star, and Mohammad Hatta of the Perhimpoean Indonesia were reported to have been in attendance.

Including the Chinese nationalist Kuomintang led by Chiang Kai-shek, the involvement of these forces along with the Communist Party would not last long. On April 12, 1927, the Kuomintang military forces marched on Shanghai where they massacred the Communists and allied workers. Later that year in December, the Kuomintang crushed the Canton Commune. As a result, the coalition of Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China was dissolved, leading to the Chinese Civil War. Later in 1931, the Japanese imperialists invaded Manchuria.

LAI was headquartered in Berlin during the period of 1927-33, when the Nazi Party came to power. Anti-imperialist and anti-colonial work was severely set back as fascism spread throughout the European continent after 1933.

The League Against Imperialism did enormous work in Britain expressing solidarity with the anti-colonial struggle in India. Nonetheless, there were disagreements with Nehru of India in 1930-31 over criticism related to the policies of the Congress Party. He was expelled from the LAI in 1931. By 1937, the LAI had gone out of existence as an international organization.

Paralleling the LAI was the work of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers (ITUCNW) which was an affiliate of the Red International of Labor Unions (RILU) and the Third International. This organization formed in 1928 was led by African American Communist James Ford who was quickly replaced by Trinidad-born George Padmore. The ITUCNW came amid the positions on the African American and African national questions emanating from the Sixth, (1928) Congresses of the CI. Prior to this the efforts of the Workers (Communist) Party had been extremely limited.

Cyril Briggs admitted in a lengthy article published in *The Communist* magazine in September 1929 that:

“In attempting to evaluate the work of our Party among the Negro workers and farmers during the past ten years, it is necessary to begin with the frank admission that the task of winning the Negro masses to our program was seriously and sincerely taken up only since the Sixth World Congress. Most of our Negro work prior to the Congress was of a sporadic nature intended in the main as gesture for the benefit of the Comintern.”

Later Briggs quotes the Sixth Congress resolution on the Negro Question in the U.S. which said:

“the Negro masses will not be won for the revolutionary struggles until such time as the most conscious section of the white workers show, by action, that they are fighting with the Negroes against all racial discrimination and persecution... to mobilize and rally the broad masses of the white workers for active participation in this struggle.” (p. 494)

This same article continues in relationship to the demand by the Sixth Congress that white chauvinism, prevalent in both the left and right factions of the Party, be rejected categorically:

“An aggressive fight against all forms of white chauvinism must be accompanied by a widespread and thorough educational campaign in the spirit of internationalism within the Party, utilizing for this purpose to the fullest possible extent the Party schools, the Party press and the public platform, to stamp out all forms of antagonism, or even indifference among our white comrades toward the Negro work. This educational work should be conducted simultaneously with a campaign to draw the white workers and the poor farmers into the struggle for the support of the demands for the Negro workers.” (pp. 494-5)

The ITUCNW published *The International Negro Workers' Review* in March 1931. It was later renamed *The Negro Worker*. In July 1930, the International Conference of Negro Workers was convened in Hamburg, Germany utilizing the base of the Western Secretariat of the COMINTERN located there. This meeting was originally scheduled to be held in London however the repression leveled against the working class and anti-colonial struggle by Britain prevented the gathering.

Specifically related to the attendance at the 1930 Conference, Susan Campbell said:

“Present in Hamburg were 17 delegates representing six African-American organizations, British Guiana, Trinidad, Jamaica, several west African countries, and South Africa. Information on who these delegates were is both lacking and in some cases (partly because of pseudo-names) contradictory. Jamaica was represented by S.M. DeLeon, Trinidad by Vivian Henry of the Trinidad Workingmen's Association, and British Guiana/Guyana by pioneer trade unionist Hubert Critchlow. There for Sierra Leone, under the alias 'E. Richards', was Isaac Theophilis Akkuna (I.T.A.) Wallace-Johnson; for South Africa, Albert Nzula. Also present were Johnstone (Jomo) Kenyatta, two men identified only as 'S. Norton' and 'Akrong' from the Gold Coast/Ghana, and Frank Macaulay,

who had cooperated with Wallace-Johnson in the Nigerian Workers' Union. Padmore, although from Trinidad, had counted as an African-American delegate, together with James W. Ford, I. Hawkins, and J. Reid. The Gambian delegate, listed as George Small, was almost certainly E.F. Small, editor of *The Gambia Outlook* and organizer of one of west Africa's first unions, the Bathurst Trade Union. In late 1929 Small's union had led a general strike that tied up the Gambian economy for 18 days. British Colonial Under-Secretary Drummond Shiels, a prominent member of the Fabian Society, had commented "the union has unfortunate affiliations and has been run rather on Communist lines." Otto Huiswoud seems not to have been present; likely he was already off as part of a COMINTERN 'mission' to the South African Communist Party he is known to have undertaken around this time." (*The Negro Workers: A Comintern Publication of 1928-37*)

The resolutions passed at the ITUCNW Conference in Hamburg took a hard line against what was described as "Negro reformism." This tendency was characterized as "the most dangerous obstacle to the development of the struggle of Negro workers." There was much criticism of the role of the Socialist International as represented by the British Labor Party. ITUCNW said of the Labor Party that it was "the best proof of the real policy of these imperialist agents."

ITUCNW resolutions demanded the full independence of all colonial territories along with the right to self-determination for all oppressed nations. In the aftermath of the Conference many of the delegates traveled to Moscow to attend the Congress of the RILU. However, in 1933 the Nazis came to power in Germany. Padmore was arrested and jailed for several months. He was then deported to Paris where it appeared the authorities were working with the German fascist regime to gain access to Padmore's collection of documents shedding light on the strength and work of the ITUCNW and the RILU.

Soon after this, Padmore broke with the COMINTERN over its shift in foreign policy in relationship to Britain and France. Moscow viewed Germany as the principle threat to the Soviet Union and its influence.

Padmore initially claimed it was the financial problems associated with the ITUCNW as his reason for departure.

Nonetheless, Campbell recalled:

"in September 1933 Padmore bid 'Au Revoir' to his editorship of the *Negro Worker*, then begun castigating the COMINTERN for its cynical abandonment of the colonial workers' cause in the interests of Popular Front rapprochement with Britain and France. Here it should be noted that while the Popular Front era is usually thought of as having begun with the July-August 1935 Seventh (and last) COMINTERN Congress, its start can be more accurately dated to the 13th Plenum of the Executive Committee of the COMINTERN, held shortly after Hitler's January 30th 1933 assumption of power."

Later in early 1934, Padmore officially severed his ties with the COMINTERN. James Ford went so far as to label Padmore a "police agent." Padmore then wrote a public letter criticizing the new COMINTERN position having it published in the NAACP's *Crisis* magazine. Earl Browder, the-then General Secretary of the CPUSA, replied to Padmore's criticism which also appeared in the *Crisis*.

During his Paris sojourn, Padmore continued his work in the Pan-African struggle. He collaborated with Nancy Cunard, the author of the anthology "Negro." By late 1935 and early 1936, Padmore relocated to London where he teamed up with his childhood friend C.L.R. James who was working within the Trotskyist movement in Britain. They formed the International African Service Bureau (IASB) publishing the International African Opinion. Later in 1944, long after James had traveled to the U.S. for a lecture tour that extended for fifteen years, the IASB was dissolved and the Pan-African Federation was formed which went on to organized the Fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester in October 1945.

The Fifth Pan-African Congress was led by George Padmore, Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois and Kwame Nkrumah, who had just arrived in Britain from studying for a decade in the U.S. Nkrumah left for the Gold Coast in 1947, eventually forming the Convention People's Party (CPP) in 1949 which led the British colony to independence by 1957, becoming the base of the anti-colonial and Pan-African struggle until 1966 when Nkrumah was overthrown in a CIA-backed coup against his government.

### Post World War II and the Socialist Camp

During the years of the second imperialist world war from 1939-1945, the anti-colonial movement was reawakened in the colonies of the British and the French. Africans from Morocco, Egypt, Algeria and South Africa intensified their struggle against colonial occupation. On August 12, 1946, African mineworkers in Witwatersrand went on strike for higher pay and better conditions of employment. After one week, the racist state still dominated by British imperialism, ruthlessly suppressed the work stoppage. Nine people were reported killed by the police and over 1,200 people were injured.

The brutality of the state had a profound impact on the consciousness of the national liberation movement of the African National Congress (ANC). The ANC had assisted in the formation of the African Mineworkers Union dating back to 1941. J.B. Marks, an ANC leader, played a critical role in the organization of the union.

African workers earned 1200 percent less than white miners. Although European mineworkers had been involved in labor struggles dating back to the 1880s, they were eventually accommodated by capital and most became staunch defenders of the racist system of colonialism. The 1946 African Mineworkers strike was broken by the racist colonial state. However, its impact on the consciousness of the masses was enduring. In 1949, the ANC Youth League, formed in 1943, drafted its program of action calling for more militant activity on the part of the liberation movement.

By 1950, after the passage of the Suppression of Communism Act, outlawing the Communist Party of South Africa, there were strikes and mass demonstrations surrounding May Day resulting in the deaths of 16 people by the police. In 1952, the Defiance Against Unjust Laws Campaign began lastly four years until 1956. These events prompted the formation of the Federation of South African Women in 1954 bringing together women patriots from the African, Indian, Colored and white progressive movements.

In 1955, thousands met in Kliptown to announce the Freedom Charter, a revolutionary democratic document that called for the abolition of the racist apartheid system, the nationalization of the mines and white-controlled lands inside the country.

The South African apartheid regime indicted over 150 activists for treason. The trials lasted



for four years ending in the acquittal of the members of the Congress Alliance in 1960 which consisted of the ANC, Indian National Congress, Congress of Democrats, among others. On March 21, 1960, the police massacred 69 people outside a police station in Sharpeville and near a bus terminal in Langa Flats. The ANC, along with the newly-formed Pan-Africanist Congress were banned and remained so for another thirty years when they were allowed to operate openly in February 1990.

These mass struggles characterized the national liberation movement in South Africa, Ghana, Guinea and other areas. Nevertheless, in Algeria the National Liberation Front (FLN) was forced to take up arms against French imperialism in 1954. The guerrilla movement waged a military campaign until 1961 when the stage was set for the national independence of the North African state in 1962. The ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP) formed Um Khonto we Sizwe (MK) which embarked upon an armed struggle in December 1961.

The guerilla unit carried out attacks on power stations and government offices in its initial phase. Leaders of MK were arrested between 1962 and 1964. Later the Rivonia Trial was held placing Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrada, Dennis Goldberg and others in prison for life without parole.

Although the apartheid regime expected that the ANC and SACP were eliminated as threats to the state and economic system, by 1976, the mass movement emerged again when students in the thousands demonstrated and struck against Bantu education. Hundreds of youth were killed, wounded and arrested during 1976-77. Thousands of additional youth fled the country into exile where they received training in camps established by the ANC, PAC and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM).

In 1980, the ideological and political orientation of the national liberation movement in South Africa had swung decisively in favor of the ANC. The form of the movement focused on igniting unrest within the military, labor and mass arenas of struggle. These developments in South Africa were not occurring within a vacuum.

The former Portuguese colonies of Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Angola were focal points for the armed phase of the African Revolution. Portugal, a fascist colonial state, had been one of the earliest European nations to initiate the Atlantic Slave Trade. Nonetheless, Portugal was overshadowed by Britain and France in the colonial scramble for Africa.

Making tremendous gains in the armed struggle in Guinea Bissau and Mozambique, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea (PAIGC) and the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) were poised to declare independence by 1974. A coup of younger military officers in Lisbon in April 1974 pledged to decolonize their holdings on the continent. Guinea Bissau became independent in 1974 while Mozambique followed later in June 1975.

The situation in Angola was more complicated since there were three organizations claiming to be the legitimate national liberation movements in the oil-rich country. The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) has done the bulk of the fighting during the revolutionary war starting in 1961 and extending to 1975 when an agreement was reached for a peaceful transition to power.

Nevertheless, two other organizations, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) based largely in Zaire ( now the Democratic Republic of Congo) under the-then leadership of

the imperialist-backed military strongman Mobutu Sese Seko, who had been involved in the overthrow and assassination of Congolese patriot and elected Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, and the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) headed by Jonas Savimbi, a dubious character who had later been discovered to be a collaborator with the Portuguese colonial authorities, were the groups favored by the imperialists.

CIA operatives and mercenaries sought to ensure the victory of the counter-revolutionary forces against the MPLA which was supported by Cuba and the Soviet Union along with having an alliance with the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP). Cuban internationalist forces intervened in Angola on the eve of independence in November 1975 in the midst of an invasion by the South African Defense Forces (SADF).

The Cubans fighting alongside their MPLA comrades pushed back the SADF consolidating the independence of Angola under revolutionary leadership.

By 1988, after a monumental battle at Cuito Cuanavale, the racist apartheid regime in defeat agreed to withdraw from southern Angola and to grant independence to Namibia, then known as South West Africa, a colony of Pretoria. These advances in the African Revolution coupled with the growing armed and mass struggle led by the ANC and its allies in South Africa, prompted the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners during 1987-90 and the lifting of bans on other political activists living in exile when many then returned to South Africa after 1990.

The African Revolution was not uniform in its response to the neo-colonialism. As early as 1961, the independent states had split into a minority anti-imperialist and socialist-oriented camp led by Ghana, Guinea, Algeria and Mali, in opposition to the more moderate governments which resisted the calls by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and others for political and economic integration. The setbacks in Congo, Cameroon, Nyasaland (Malawi) and similar post-colonial states where the reactionary and moderate political elements supported by imperialism seized control of the governments, served as an impediment to the realization of genuine independence and sovereignty.

Kwame Nkrumah in his ground breaking work entitled "Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism", published in late 1965, clearly identified the U.S. as the leading power which was committed to the halting of the forward progress of the African Revolution. Nkrumah in the chapter entitled "The Mechanism of Neo-Colonialism" says:

"In order to halt foreign interference in the affairs of developing countries it is necessary to study, understand, expose and actively combat neo-colonialism in whatever guise it may appear. For the methods of neo-colonialists are subtle and varied. They operate not only in the economic field, but also in the political, religious, ideological and cultural spheres. Faced with the militant peoples of the ex-colonial territories in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America, imperialism simply switches tactics. Without a qualm it dispenses with its flags, and even with certain of its more hated expatriate officials. This means, so it claims, that it is 'giving' independence to its former subjects, to be followed by 'aid' for their development. Under cover of such phrases, however, it devises innumerable ways to accomplish objectives formerly achieved by naked colonialism."

This same idea is further elaborated by Nkrumah when he illustrates that:

“It is this sum total of these modern attempts to perpetuate colonialism while at the same time talking about ‘freedom’, which has come to be known as neo-colonialism. Foremost among the neo-colonialists is the United States, which has long exercised its power in Latin America. Fumblingly at first she turned towards Europe, and then with more certainty after world war two when most countries of that continent were indebted to her. Since then, with methodical thoroughness and touching attention to detail, the Pentagon set about consolidating its ascendancy, evidence of which can be seen all around the world.”

## Challenges of the 21st Century

As Nkrumah articulated in *Neo-Colonialism* fifty-two years ago, the U.S. remains the dominant imperialist power in the world today. This is even more evident with the fall of the USSR and the allied Socialist states in Eastern and Southern Europe.

However, the struggle against imperialism and for Socialism is by no means over. The People’s Republic of China, the world’s most populace state, remains under the control of the Communist Party. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) has survived for more than sixty years since the imperialist war led by the U.S. attempted to overthrow Kim Il Sung during the early 1950s. Vietnam has been a united country for over four decades after both French and U.S. imperialism sought to eliminate the Communist and national liberation forces through a war of genocide and occupation which lasted from 1945 to 1975.

On the African continent the ANC, SWAPO, ZANU-PF, MPLA and FRELIMO remain in power in Southern Africa after the defeat of settler-colonialism. Strikes launched by trade unions and students are occurring with greater frequency across Africa in states such as Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa.

Our task in the U.S. is to demonstrate unconditional solidarity with the peoples of Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin American in the face of mounting imperialist pressure. The wars in Libya, Sudan, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Somalia and the DRC are a manifestation of neo-colonialism where the imperialist countries of the West are seeking to maintain control of the strategic minerals, land, waterways and productive labor of the African people.

These developments in Africa and other areas of the so-called “Global South” are by no means episodic, they are consistent. The approach of the anti-imperialist movement in the West therefore must be unrelenting. Irrespective of the class and political character of any individual state on the continent, the people must be defended against neo-colonialism and imperialist machinations.

Genuine anti-imperialists should demand the dismantlement of AFRICOM, the halting of the interference of the Pentagon and the CIA in African affairs and the payment of reparations to the nations of Somalia, Libya, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Ghana and others which have been the subject of military bombing campaigns, direct or indirect interventions and the strangling of their national economies through sanctions and other forms of effective warfare.

In Ivory Coast in 2011, the French imperialists supported by the Obama White House destabilized and overthrew the government of President Laurent Gbagbo. The president was arrested by French commandos and transported to The Netherlands to stand trial before the dreaded International Criminal Court (ICC). The ICC has focused primarily on the pursuit,

targeting, arrest and prosecution of African governmental leaders and rebel commanders.

At the same time the ICC has not lifted a finger against Washington, London, Paris and Brussels which has waged unjust wars against the peoples of the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Latin America since the conclusion of World War II. Millions have died and been displaced in wars that have been started by imperialism just over the last quarter century. Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Syria, Yemen, Colombia, Cuba, Brazil, Venezuela and additional states have had their economies and political systems either destroyed or severely crippled by the western capitalist governments.

Institutions such as the ICC serve as surrogates of the imperialist system. They are the enemy of the majority of the world's peoples and should be dealt with as such by anti-imperialist forces based in the West.

States such as Zimbabwe, South Africa and even Greece should be defended by progressive forces in the U.S. since their difficulties stem from their efforts to re-correct the ills imposed upon them by the U.S. and its allies. This international proletarian solidarity is a method of forming closer ties with the workers and the oppressed in the post-colonial and semi-colonial nations.

An alliance of revolutionary workers movements in the West with the peoples' struggles and organizations of the Global South will guarantee the overthrow of imperialism. This is our task in the present period as we build a revolutionary party and movement to take on imperialism in the center of its operations here in the U.S.

*Note: This report was written and delivered in part to the Midwest Regional Conference on Socialism and National Liberation held in Detroit, Michigan at Wayne State University on March 25-26, 2017. The Conference was sponsored jointly by the WSU chapter of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Detroit branch of Workers World Party (WWP). Azikiwe addressed the Conference on a panel entitled "Fighting Capitalism Around the World." Other panelists in this session were Lorena Buni, Chairwoman and National Solidarity Officer of Anakbayan USA; Mond Jones of the Detroit branch of Workers World Party; Claude "Toutou" St. Germain, leader of the Boston Fanmi Lavalas of Haiti; Randi Nord of the Detroit branch of Workers World Party and editor of Geopolitics Alert; Yvonne Jones, co-founder of the Detroit Active and Retired Employees Association (DAREA); and Joe Mchahwar of the Detroit branch of Workers World Party. This panel was chaired by Kayla Pauli of Workers World Party in Michigan. The Conference was attended by delegates from at least 12 different states and some 20 cities.*

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