



Coalition of Black Trade Unionists' members are (standing) Bill Lucy, secretary-treasurer of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO, Washington, D.C., (to his right) Nelson Jack Edwards, of Detroit, vice president of the United Auto Workers and Cleveland Hayes, of New York, president of the Distributive Workers of America.

Trade unionists form coalition

The largest gathering of black labor officials and rank-and-file members in history has set the stage for formation of a permanent national organization to focus attention on the needs of black workers.

More than 1,200 union members and leaders met for two days in Chicago and hammered out a beginning agenda designed to give black workers a greater voice in their unions and in their communities.

Adopting the name Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, men and women from 37 national unions agreed that blacks have a role to play in bringing the labor movement more closely in step with the needs and aspirations of black working families.

The group named a five-member steering committee

from among those attending and directed them to come up with a structure and a program for national membership organization for black union members.

The Coalition will hold a second national meeting to adopt a structure and by-laws early next year.

Lucy spoke for the delegates when he condemned the neutrality stance adopted by the national AFL-CIO in the presidential campaign. "We are here to chart a course which we feel will help elect a president of this nation who is committed to fostering the principles of trade unionism and whose economic policies would assure a fair break for the 80 million working people of this nation," he said.

The conference denounced the Nixon administration's policies toward Blacks and workers and vowed to do everything possible to assure the defeat of Richard Nixon in November.

Rep William Clay (D-Mo.) said that if blacks stayed neutral they would never achieve "total freedom, economic equality and social justice."

"Whether you know it or not, this group has sounded the clarion trumpet of rebellion...," Clay added.

The Coalition can be expected to move into such critical areas as voter registration, economic and community development and a campaign for organizing unorganized black workers as a result of its initial meeting.

Eighth year of War of Liberation: Frelimo calls for unified effort

September 25 marked the eighth anniversary of the armed liberation struggle in the East African nation of Mozambique. In commemorating that observance, the U.S. representative of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) called for continued assistance from Black people in the U.S. to help bring about a hastening of victory for the African people.

On that date in 1964, three groups of freedom fighters from FRELIMO crossed over the Ruvuma river and began the war of liberation to overthrow centuries of Portuguese colonial rule and build a new Mozambique.

What started as a mere 250 men is now an army of over 8,000 regular soldiers and a host of people's militias. They are active militarily in four of the country's provinces and, in the liberated zones, have begun the building of a new African society which "eliminates the exploitation of man by man."

"Perhaps the most important aspect of the last eight years," said Shafuridine Khan, FRELIMO's official representative in this country, "has

been not so much the growth of the armed struggle itself as the development of the popular revolution aimed not just at expelling the Portuguese invaders, but at destroying forever their political and economic system and all that this entails."

Khan cited several specific events which could be considered particular milestones in the past year of struggle. Among them were the opening of a new military front in Manica-Sofala province, the spread of guerrilla operations south of the Zambezi river, a vaccination campaign and the opening of a new school.

But, he added, "the gradual process of the building of a new Mozambique passes for the most part unnoticed -- day by day, week by week." Further evidencing the unromantic view the freedom fighters have of their struggle, Khan pointed out that it was clearly realized by FRELIMO that it would be long, protracted and committed work that would win the war rather than spectacular acts and isolated achievements.

The FRELIMO representative made a special appeal

for continuance of the assistance being given to his organization and people by persons outside Mozambique.

Specific praise was given to the world-wide demonstrations held on May 27 of this year, African Liberation Day. In Canada, Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Calif., and throughout the Caribbean, people of African descent gathered in numbers exceeding 50,000 to show their support for the struggle to free Southern African and Guinea-Bissau.

Khan said that African Liberation Day was one of the most significant acts yet in support of the freedom fighters. Even though materials and financial support had been received on past occasions, an event "of such magnitude has never happened before in this country," he explained.

"This was the first time," he added, "and it was highly appreciated by our people. It had a very positive impact throughout the world -- not only among the Mozambican people, but throughout Africa as a whole."

Uganda-Tanzania conflict: Problems of African unity

by Milton Coleman

The recent armed conflict in the Uganda-Tanzania border in East Africa has ended for the moment with the reported acceptance of a truce pact by the two heads of state, General Idi Amin of Uganda and Tanzania's president, Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere.

The eight days of hostilities centered around fighting in southern Uganda between members of its armed forces and an invading force of soldiers generally agreed to be seeking the return to power in Uganda of President A. Milton Obote.

President Obote was overthrown in January, 1971 by a coup led by General Amin. Since that time, he has been living in adjacent Tanzania where he was given asylum. A reported force of 1000 soldiers loyal to President Obote and others crossed the border into Tanzania after the coup. It was these men who reportedly began the incursions into Uganda on September 17.

The events were compounded by several Ugandan bombings of Tanzanian towns (killing eight persons) and allegations by General Amin that the invading force was being assisted by Israeli mercenaries and Tanzania regulars along with planning from Israel and Britain.

The entire affair soon came to involve other African countries as Libya made an attempt to hasten troops and supplies to General Amin's assistance. Planes carrying this aid were forced down while over the Sudan. Meanwhile, African statesmen under the leadership of Somalia pushed for reconciliation, while General Amin soon implicated others in the plot by leveling a blast of accusations at Zambia.

At this point, the hostilities are ended. Yet, the Uganda-Tanzania clash contained within it aspects of almost every significant problem to be faced in the quest for African unity.

In terms of African unity, it was Libya's role which first was startling. Libya is generally recognized as one of the more progressive African governments -- especially in its foreign relations. Yet it was only a few technical steps away from engaging its troops in battle with another of Africa's most progressive governments, Tanzania, on behalf of one of Africa's most questionable governments, General Amin in Uganda.

Colonel Qaddafi's allegiance with Uganda is reportedly based on Amin's flight from and subsequent vehement denunciation of Israeli Zionism. Zionist aggression is the immediate enemy of the Arab people, who make up the vast majority of Libya's people. Libya is one of the strongest supporters of the struggle of the Palestinian guerrillas, as evidenced by its fitting heroic burial of the fedayeen killed last month in Munich.

Yet its allegiance with Uganda could have brought it to war with one of the most stalwart champions of Africa's other freedom fighters, Tanzania, which openly and consistently supports Southern African guerrillas. Such a confrontation could only have set Africa back.

Even within North Africa, the Uganda invasion threatened to ruin internal relations. President Jaafar Numeiri of the Sudan is said to have ordered the downing of the Libyan fighters carrying assistance to General Amin. Oddly enough, last year when Numeiri had been temporarily deposed by a coup, it was Libya's President Qaddafi who ordered down the plane carrying Numeiri's successor. This subsequently led to a quick counter-coup which restored Numeiri to power.

In the face of continued Israeli aggression in North Africa, such a split between two North African countries supporting the Palestinian struggle could also be only defeating in terms of African unity and progress of the entire Third World.

The internal problems faced by General Amin also had ramifications outside Uganda and echoed in the arena of the entire continent. His expulsion of Asians (who control 85 per cent of the country's economy, yet stubbornly refuse to accept citizenship there) was reflective of a problem common to several other East African countries as well as Black lands in the Caribbean.

In all of these situations, Asians represent a legacy of the colonial rule where it was they -- as a class more so than a people -- who became middlemen for the control of Black economies from the outside by the European powers. As portrayed by white press and British diplomats, General Amin's expulsion of Asian citizens was 'Black racism' or 'racism in reverse.' Yet in an objective sense it represented Amin's

solution to a very real problem, even though it may not have been a correct solution tactically.

The danger was that due to the race-baiting of the white press, it threatened to somehow throw another thumb into the side of unity between peoples of color.

President Nyerere has this same problem in Tanzania, and, as widely reported, he condemned General Amin's expulsion orders to all Asians as "clearly racialism and representative of the same thing that Africans are deploring."

But President Nyerere was not in line with the race-baiters, for he clearly pointed out that he could understand Amin's exportation of those Asians who were not citizens. His disagreement was with ousting those who held Uganda passports.

Threats of Arab-African divisions (Libya-Sudan) and African-Asian divisions (inside Uganda) are all very real. They could be extremely detrimental if allowed to be means by which the former colonial powers play peoples of color against one another.

A final inherent problem was the age-old tribalism aspects of African life. Many of General Amin's internal problems stem from his ruthless dealing with Baganda tribesmen, whose support reportedly helped get him into power, but against whom he has turned; and the massacre last year of Langi and Acholi tribesmen, the tribesmen who traditionally supported President Obote (a Langi) and who are said to have made up a good deal of the invading force.

So reckless has been General Amin's playing of tribal politics that now even the sole remaining tribal ally for him inside Uganda -- those from his native West Nile region -- is said to be fast becoming a burnt bridge and some reports say that almost half his present army is composed of mercenaries.

The problem which emerges from all this is that the move to return President Obote to power must be motivated by more than tribal considerations if it is to be successful. If the invading Acholi and Langiguerrillas were only interested in tribal concerns, they were potentially just as dangerous as General Amin. The current East African truce has submerged these many problems for the moment. But just as it may well be only a cease fire agreement postponing to another date the struggle to remove General Amin (by either internal or external forces), the problems which emerged with it may also be expected to reappear in other forms in the continued quest for African unity and unity throughout the peoples of color of the Third World.



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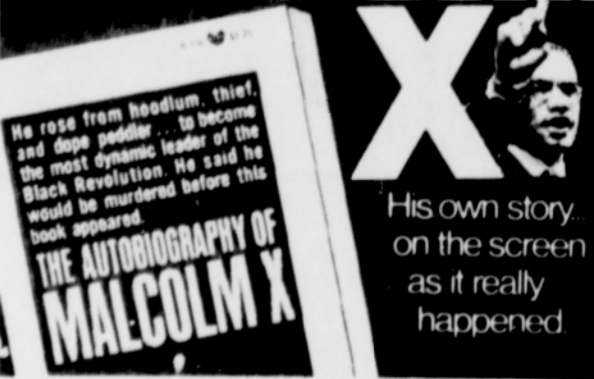
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