

Revolutionary Culture and African Liberation Day

When you hear a reference to "culture," what thoughts come to mind? Dancing? Drumming? Singing? Acting? Art? These are all aspects of culture, but in his book, *Revolution, Culture and Pan-Africanism*, Sekou Toure, the first President of Guinea, explained that culture includes all aspects of life and humanity. He said:

Culture is the sum of the gains, knowledge, modes of action, enabling man to regulate his conduct, his relationships with other men (women), and his relationship with nature; it is through culture that society creates and develops expresses itself; it defines the level of general consciousness, technical and technological capability, the modes of organization, the principles of action, and the objectives which guide society in its struggle for an always new and brighter future. (Ture, 1978)

Culture, as a manifestation of humanity, changes as time and space evolve and it can possess both positive and negative attributes. *Revolutionary* culture can be loosely defined as an adaptive mechanism that is primarily used as a weapon to combat the exploitative and oppressive acts imposed on African people in particular and humanity in general. In a capitalist society, revolutionary culture serves as a springboard for organizing and strategizing to combat the exploitation and oppression of the masses.

Because culture encompasses all that we do as humans and as a society, revolutionary culture can be found at the center of all African liberation struggles. It was present in Ghana in the 1950's when the people of Ghana used a "Positive Action" campaign to fight British colonialism. Revolutionary culture was at the heart of slave rebellions particularly the one led by Nat Turner in the United States. It was present in the Haitian revolution led by Toussaint L'Ouverture and also in the revolution in Burkina Faso led by Thomas Sankara. These historical demonstrations of revolutionary culture live on today in many sectors of the African world.

Ideology, another aspect of culture, has been used to direct both past and present uses of revolutionary culture. Ideology is defined as the "set of ideas and principles that guide our decisions and behavior." Today we do not have to look hard to find revolutionary culture at the center of revolutionary movements. The Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC) [or in English: "The African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde"] which was founded by Amilcar Cabral, took back power of the parliament in the last several years and is now putting Guinea Bissau back on the road to socialism after years of organizing and struggling.

The victories don't stop in Guinea Bissau. In Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe and his party, ZANU PF, initiated a land reform programme in 2002 to return the land filled with valuable resources back to the people. As we cross the waters to Haiti, we witnessed one of the most devastating "natural disasters" in the history of

the African world. While we know that much of the devastation was exacerbated by both the colonial relationship Haiti had with the West and the obvious lack of development, the people have prevailed nevertheless. The presence of revolutionary culture has been obvious in Haiti every minute, day, month and year after the earthquake. The humanistic principles and strength of Haitian people are the primary reasons why Haiti has survived this tragic event. The songs that were heard in the aftermath of the quake tell the story of strength, love of the people, and the commitment to re build their great nation.

As we walk the streets of any "ghetto" in the U.S. we find Africans struggling to eat, feed their children, and generally staggering from the blows of what capitalists call the "great recession" but which we revolutionaries call the fall of capitalism. In this struggle you will find individuals and organizations pulling together to support one another and to fight for the liberation and unification of our people.

When we hear the cry "HANDS OFF LIBYA," we should recognize it as another reflection of African people and progressives alike banding together to fight imperialism. The world can clearly see that within the African world if one African is still oppressed we are all oppressed. Africans must stop at nothing to achieve our freedom.

As we celebrate African Liberation Day this year around the world let's remind ourselves that we are participating in an act of revolutionary culture. Most important is the fact that our contribution will take us one step closer to achieving Pan Africanism: the total liberation and unification of Africa under Scientific Socialism.