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# THE SIXTH PAN A

## Black Unity: Coming of Age in Dar-es-Salaam

By Abdulkadir N. Said

10 Almost 30 years after the Fifth Pan African Congress was convened in England, Africans and people of African descent from North America, South America, the Caribbean and other parts of the globe, wrote a new chapter to the history of Pan Africanism by convening the Sixth Pan African Congress in Dar-es-Salaam from June 19 to 27, 1974. They came from all corners of the world in response to a call of unity, solidarity, progress, and constructive African militancy.

For nearly two weeks, more than 500 men and women carrying the designations of delegates, guests, observers and media representatives, dominated the scene at the modern campus of the University of Dar-es-Salaam as guests of the Republic of Tanzania and its people.

What they were able to accomplish at this historic gathering is highly significant to the future of all Black people wherever they reside, and is likely to endure for generations. It was not a racial gathering. But the work of the Sixth Congress—like the five Congresses preceding it—carries with it political implications of international magnitude for all foes of Africa, whether they be Black or white.

Howard University was well-represented at this historic gathering. There were about 20 people from the University—professors, students, administrators and writers—attending the Congress. All were involved in its activities, with some contributing immensely to the deliberations in the three key bodies of the Sixth Pan African Congress: the Science, Technology, Education, and Culture Committee; the Political Committee, and the Economic Committee. Indeed Howard professors represented the nucleus of the science and technology arm of the Congress. And one of the international sponsors of the Sixth Congress was Dr. Chancellor Williams of Howard.

In a seven-page document titled "The Call," prepared by the International Secretariat during the planning stages of the Sixth Congress, one page is devoted to

the formation of a Pan African Center of Science and Technology. It read:

*It (the Center) will be an educational exhibition so designed as to attract and instruct the observer to an understanding of both the geopolitics of Africa and of the geopolitical and economic position of Africans in the Americas and the Caribbean. This will be done graphically and simply with large maps, books, articles, charts, and a tour-guide adept at exploring the exhibition.*

*Secondly, the Center will be a locus for organizing scientific and technological expertise to assist, advise and develop various projects touching on the human and technical development of African societies.*

*The Center will be financed and operated by Africans from all over the world. Its staffing and its teams of experts will be Africans contracted from wherever we are for specific periods of time, to carry out specific tasks, solve particular problems or conduct research in areas of science and technology.*

*One of the Center's priorities will be the making available of human, technical and scientific resources to develop a viable and self-supporting agricultural system in Africa. That is to say, Africa must feed itself. And to be relevant, agriculture has to consider every other human endeavor; economics, nutrition, medicine, transportation, communication, education, etc. Embodied in this goal is Pan Africanism.*

*The Center must not be viewed as a fixed structure but rather as a living concept among all African people. It is to be so designed as to be relevant to utilizing Black resources for the development of Africa for Africans at home and abroad. It is a move towards self-reliance in the Pan African perspective.*

The charge to draw an agenda for science and technology, as well as to prepare a plan and develop a proposal to create the Center, was given to three men:

Dr. Neville Parker, assistant professor in the School of Engineering; Dr. Don Coleman, director of the Urban Systems Engineering Program at the School of Engineering, and Dr. Fletcher Robinson, a dermatologist with a private practice in Washington, D.C., who has long been associated with the University.

The three, using resources available at Howard and at national and international sources, labored for months and compiled several voluminous documents—including maps and charts—which focused on the impact of science and technology on nation-building. Essentially, their effort produced the agenda for the science and technology body of the Sixth Congress. And, it represented the most complete and well-documented presentation brought before the delegates attending the historic Congress.

Workshops and symposiums on science and technology—natural resources, human resources, problems of food and clothing, health and nutrition, transportation and energy—were conducted by the Howard group, with the cooperation and assistance of experts from the African diaspora. The need to create a Pan African Center of Science and Technology, as well as the viability of such an undertaking, was examined with caution.

Dr. Parker read a long but skillfully prepared paper on science and technology before a packed house and brought into perspective some of the major problems facing the Black world.

"Science and technology are means to an end, not an end to themselves," he told the delegates, which included many representatives of governments of Africa and the Caribbean, educators and political activists from the United States, lay-men and students. As such, "science must serve, not dominate the people," he warned.

Dr. Parker emphasized the need to train more Africans in the area of technology and agricultural sciences. He called for the creation of a strategy for Pan African development and said: science and tech-

# AFRICAN CONGRESS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICARDO P. THOMAS

Howard alumnus Imamu Baraka (left) and Dr. James Turner.



12 nology—given the abundance of natural resources in the continent—should be utilized to combat nature’s disasters, such as the drought in the Sahel region of West Africa which brought starvation, death, misery and displacement to millions of that area’s inhabitants.

A major component of Dr. Parker’s paper, however, was the establishment of a Pan African Center of Science and Technology to serve Africa; to be financed by independent African and Caribbean States; to be located in Africa; and to be staffed by Africans and people of African descent. On behalf of his colleagues, Dr. Parker urged all the delegates, particularly those representing independent nations to endorse the plan. This was not to be.

The plan for the Center—if not the concept—did not get enough support and was not included in the final resolution of the Science, Technology, Education, and Culture Committee. This was a disappointment for Dr. Parker, who served as vice chairman of the Committee, and to his colleagues from Howard, as well as the other delegates who supported the proposal. [See related story on page 17].

Some observers at the Congress theorized: To go ahead with the plan meant commitment—financial, political and ideological commitment that most African governments were reluctant to give—at least for the time being.

Dr. Fletcher Robinson, one of the principal organizers of the science and technology body, said despite the initial disappointment, the group’s work was not lost. He said the development of the Center was just one aspect of the overall plan from which the final resolution of the Committee was realized. The concept is not dead. It shall be revived again at future Congresses, he predicted.

Dr. Don Coleman had this to say: “It has been a learning experience for me. I had higher expectations but my expectations were perhaps unrealistic.”

Speaking for his colleagues, Dr. Coleman said: “The Congress gave us an opportunity to interchange ideas and information with other people.”

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### The Stage was Set in 1900

The Sixth Pan African Congress in Dar-es-Salaam was a continuation of a tradition that dates back to 1900. A series of five gatherings were held outside Africa between the two World Wars.

The Sixth Congress set a precedent by being the first to be convened on an African soil, and in a country under total control of Black people.

Historically, Pan Africanism came into being because of the dedication of a select group who, through collective effort, sought to bring freedom and justice to Africa, and promote solidarity between Black Americans and Africans.

Unlike the Dar-es-Salaam gathering, which focused on “self-determination and self-reliance for all African people,” the previous five gatherings dealt with the burning issue of the day: Independence for Africa. The first one was convened in 1900 under the leadership of Henry Sylvester-Williams and appealed to leaders of the world not to forsake the suffering Black people.

One sentence from “The Appeal,” written by Dr. W. E. B. DuBois read:

*In any case the modern world must remember that in this age, when the ends of the world are being brought so near together, the millions of black men in Africa, America and the islands of the sea, not to speak of the myriads elsewhere, are bound to have great influence upon the world in the future by reason of sheer numbers and physical contact.*

Four gatherings and 45 years later, Dr. DuBois presided over the historic Fifth Pan African Congress which was held in Manchester, England. Other Pan Africanists who were actively involved in organizing that gathering included: Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, George Padmore, C. L. R. James, Wallace Johnson and Ras Makonnen. The call, once again, was independence for Africa. At that time, only Ethiopia and Liberia were the

only two countries not under colonial domination.

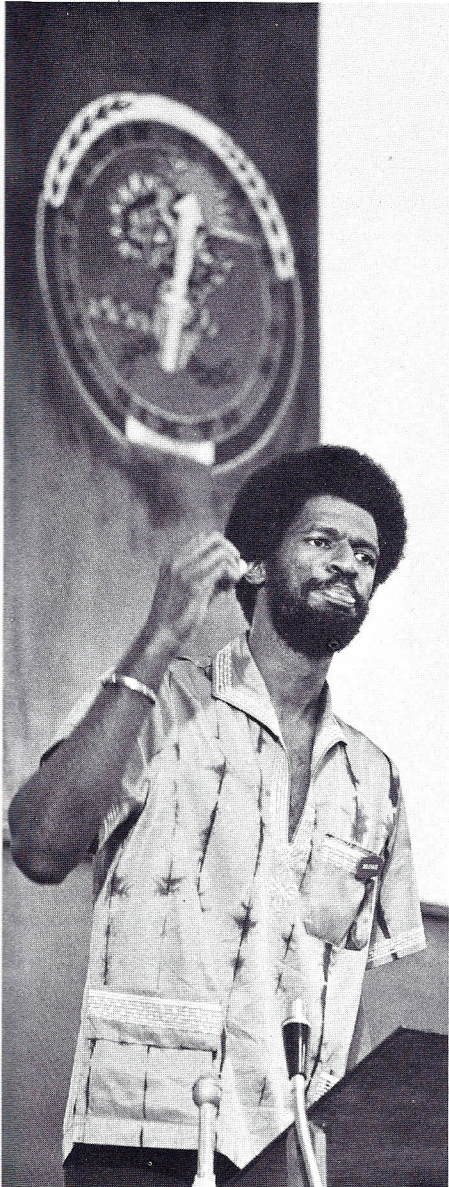
In less than 20 years, the aspirations and objectives of the dedicated individuals who gave the Black people the concept of Pan Africanism became a reality in most parts of Africa. And, the Sixth Pan African Congress paid tribute to them for their courage, dedication and commitment. They were the early pioneers of Pan Africanism.

The spirit of the 1945 Congress, and the significance of what was accomplished there under great duress and limited financial and moral support, was brought to Dar-es-Salaam by two men who were there: Ras Makonnen, now residing in Kenya, and Joe Appiah, a Ghanaian emissary.

Approximately 50 governments—including Cuba—and political organizations, the United Nations, and the Organization of African Unity sent delegations to the Sixth Pan African Congress, with most governmental delegations headed by high cabinet ministers or ambassadors. One head of state, Prime Minister Eric Gairy of newly-independent Grenada, was present.

The Congress, true to its objectives of total independence and self-reliance for the Black world, provided a forum for representatives of liberation movements in Guinea Bissau, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Azania, the so-called French Somaliland, and Palestine. They were able to articulate the objectives of their collective struggle against international imperialism, which is: to gain freedom for the masses they represent. The thrust of their plea was for material, moral and ideological support on the continental level.

President Julius Nyerere of the host country, in his opening address—an address which was voted by the delegates to be used as the Congress’ working paper, along with the recorded message of President Ahmed Sekou Toure of Guinea—called for active support for the cause of African liberation.



Owusu Sadaukai

“... South Africa, Namibia, Rhodesia, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Spanish Sahara, the Territory of the Afars and Issas (so-called French Somaliland); all these countries have yet to be won for the cause of freedom in Africa.

“For one thing is very important. If this Congress issues declarations of support for the liberation movement of Africa, those declarations must be supported by a commitment to action in the future months and years . . .”

In the same tone, President Nyerere said: “And if this Congress recognizes the need for unity in the Third World in order to overcome the economic injustice from which so many people now suffer, this also must be followed by word to that end. The same is true for any demand to end racialism; it must be followed by individual and group actions against racialism of any kind, and anywhere.”

Although the President called no names, the delegates understood the implications of his remarks. Their response was overwhelming and spontaneous. Clenched fists went up from the North American sector in the delegates’ hall and in the balcony.

The Black Americans constituted the most visible group, numerically. More than 200 of them, some accompanied by spouses and children, were in Dar-es-Salaam. Some came as delegates, others as guests and observers. Others were tourists who flew into Dar-es-Salaam to experience history in the making, and to demonstrate support for the Congress.

Inside the conference hall, particularly the delegates’ section on the first floor of Nkrumah Auditorium, the number of Black Americans seating with delegate status was less than 10. However, several hundred Black Americans literally took over the balcony—observers, guests and journalists. Most of the people from Howard sat in this section. They included, Dr. Alyce Gullatee, Dr. Percy Pierre, Dr. James Donaldson, Dr. Ralph Gomes, Dr. Jeff Donaldson, Dwight Bachman, Martha Cobb, and Don L. Lee.

Howard people covering the event included, Larry Still, assistant dean of the School of Communications; reporter Jean Wiley of WHUR-FM, and reporter Hodari Ali of the *Hilltop*. A team of four from the Department of Afro-American Studies—Harold Burke, Eugene Miller, Melvin Coley and Eugene Young—recorded the historic event on videotape, film and still photographs for the University.

Because of the limit on the number of persons accredited as voting delegates—and perhaps unfamiliarity with the international scene—the North American delegation displayed a low-key stance in the general sessions of the Congress. The Congress, due to its internationalism, was conducted as though it were the Organization of African Unity or the United Nations. However, the North American delegation was able to make a positive impression as the days went by, despite a set-back on the opening day. This is what happened:

It was past four o’clock in the afternoon, after President Nyerere officially opened the Congress with a call to Black people everywhere to fight the evils of oppression, exploitation and injustices wherever they exist.

As a gesture of goodwill to Black Americans who have come a long way to participate in the Congress, the leader of the North American delegation was invited to come to the dais and address the other delegates. The name invoked was that of Lerone Bennett, Jr., senior editor of *Ebony* magazine, who was not a voting delegate but a guest, and one of the Congress’ international sponsors. This created a stir among media representatives and confusion among delegates in the hall. All the same, Bennett answered the call and delivered a brief message.

Reading from notes, he said: “We are one people, our struggle is one.” He pledged solidarity with President Nyerere “Your problem will never be solved until our’s is,” he said. “You will never be fully respected, and until Africa is united, there



**A moment of truth:** An American delegation listens.

will be work for Pan Africans to do. There will be dreams to dream."

All was well the second day. Dr. James Turner, director of Cornell University's Afro-American Studies Department, was recognized as the leader of the North American delegation. Others on this delegation included political activist Owusu Sadaukai and Imamu Baraka, poet and playwright.

Both Sadaukai and Baraka addressed the delegates with such eloquence that they were able to rouse the audience on the issue of political and cultural emancipation.

In his speech, Sadaukai called for:

- Support for the struggle of American Blacks.
- Political and material support for the African liberation movements.

■ Intensified common struggle against racism, imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism.

■ All-out boycott of corporations who oppose freedom, particularly those with financial interests in South Africa.

He said the solution to these problems is the destruction of the monopolistic society.

"We are comrades in the struggle, which calls for a fundamental change in replacing the capitalist society with a just socialist system and not the replacement of foreign exploitation by an internal one."

Baraka's speech called for a cultural revolution, and the transformation of African culture to its true identity.

"In order to transform Afrikan culture from reactionary, i.e., capitalist dominated whether colonial, semi- or neo-colonial, it

will be necessary to mobilize the positive, democratic, socialist, values of our people and to help eradicate the feudalistic, backward, defeatist, or opportunistic values. This requires self-criticism and criticism of ourselves, our organizations of struggle and our communities at large. It requires self discipline and relentless reviews of the prospects of the struggle; i.e., evaluations of ourselves and our enemies, merciless objectivity and the un-daunted construction of systems, institutions, that objectify the values and ideology of revolution and socialism.

"A revolutionary culture is simply the people, their way of life, their values and institutions consciously developed as a force for positive social transformation. The revolutionary culture is the objective of what is called cultural revolution's intense struggle to transform the values and life of the masses of people. Cultural

revolution in China, progressive Afrika, and Southeast Asia, have not only brought focus to conflict between the two world systems (capitalism and socialism) over the years, but even in the fortress of world imperialism, the U.S.A., the Black Cultural Revolution of the 60s, the Black Power movement, led directly to a political re-awakening to Afrika, and the understanding that Afrikans all over the world must be dedicated to the liberation and unification of the Afrikan continent under socialism, as well as to the self-determination, self-respect, and self-defence of Afrikans everywhere."

### The Summation

Now that the historic Sixth Pan African Congress has closed with a tone of new militancy, a pledge to strive for unity among Blacks, and an appeal to "all progressive forces" to support the struggle for liberation "in Africa and outside Africa," the question must be asked: Where do we go from here?

In the general declaration issued by the Congress, the objectives, as well as the urgent needs of Blacks were spelled out in a concise nine-point outline:

1. To put an end to foreign domination in Africa by destroying the bases of the last colonial and racist regimes; because for as long as part of the African continent continues to suffer under the yoke of foreign domination, irresponsibility and indignity, the personality and moral integrity of every man, whether or not of African descent, will be jeopardised.
2. To get rid of neo-colonialism since it hinders the overthrow of the last colonial regimes as well as the achievement of African unity, and in as much as it represents a concrete instrument of imperialist oppression of our peoples.
3. To liquidate foreign military bases in African States as a contribution to the achievement of the political independence and the total liberation of Africa.
4. To consolidate the unity between the peoples of Africa and of African descent and all peoples.
5. To appeal to all the progressive forces in Africa and in the world to give political and material aid to the liberation movements in Africa and outside Africa.
6. The strategy of Revolutionary Pan Africanism is basically defined in terms of the anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist, anti-neo-colonialists, anti-capitalist and anti-racist struggle that it considers to be a means of promoting equality, democracy and developing a new society:

<https://dh.howard.edu/newdirections/vol1/iss4/3>

New Directions, vol 1 (1973), p. 54. Are 3  
this generalised struggle and the aspirations of the masses and the working classes must constitute the moving force behind it.

b) It must be defined in terms of the class struggle at the national and international level, as the rational basis for explaining and finding solutions to social injustices, exploitation, oppression and racism.

7. Based on the common objectives of the anti-imperialist struggle, Revolutionary Pan Africanism takes into account the organisational and tactical peculiarities of its various component forces throughout the world, provided the tactics and organisation are subordinate to the ultimate aim, namely the destruction of capitalism and its by-products.

8. In 1974 Pan Africanism aims at the complete restoration by the African peoples of their dignity and responsibility, the radical transformation of the whole society, the whole of mankind and the complete development of man as well as the building of socialist societies.

9. Pan Africanism therefore excludes all racial, tribal, ethnic, religious or national chauvinism; it embraces the cause of all oppressed peoples of the world and is opposed to all reactionary forces throughout the world.

The task of making these objectives a reality, it was stated, belongs to all those who are committed to the cause of Black progress. The tone was militancy—positive militancy.

Pan Africanism, although taking a new approach for bringing constructive solutions to universal Black problems, has become a viable force, because it has transcended ethnic, religious and differences in ideology. Its longevity is enhanced by the ability to embrace all people of color whether they live in Africa or outside Africa.

Beyond the impressive oration—sprinkled with a heavy dosage of anti-capitalism, anti-Western imperialism and anti-exploitation in the delegates' hall—and the provocative dialogue in Committee meetings, the real test lies ahead. The issue is: To what extent are the governments of Africa and the Caribbean willing to implement the objectives spelled out in the general declaration of the Congress? To what extent will they be willing to commit the financial, political and manpower support that will be required to liberate Africa from foreign economic exploitation and political domination?

How committed are the individual delegates who came to Dar-es-Salaam with high hopes, and departed with renewed spirits and higher hopes? Will they be perpetuating the Pan African spirit that brought them to Dar-es-Salaam, regardless of differences in ideology or political orientation.

Short of unreserved moral, material, political and financial support of its goals, the success of the Sixth Pan African Congress would be only partial.

Indeed, if success can be measured by the occurrence of an event, the fact that Africans and people of African descent from the West were able to deliberate about common problems and map a plan for the future, should in itself represent one kind of a victory toward universal liberation and unity.

For Black Americans, the Sixth Congress marked the first opportunity for them to bring the color and social conflicts facing them at home before an African forum. Their voice was heard. Their message was clear. They made new friends and won added moral support for their cause.

Blacks from the Caribbean, like their counterparts from the U.S.A., were able to experience Africa firsthand, thereby clearing unfounded misunderstanding and myths about the Continent and its people. Because of this historic interaction, a lasting link of friendship has been established in the true spirit of African brotherhood, unity, solidarity and freedom.

The hospitality of the host country and its people, and the warm welcome extended to the visitors in Dar-es-Salaam, Zanzibar, Arusha and other places will prove hard to repay.

Beyond Tanzania, a large delegation of Black Americans was flown to Somalia at the invitation of the Somali government, to observe some of the work accomplished in that country after the October 21, 1969 Revolution.

Still a smaller delegation, also of Black Americans, visited Uganda at the invitation of that country's government. Ugandan citizenship was given to members of this delegation.

When will the Seventh Congress be held? This may be a burning question that you may want an answer for. There is none. The Sixth Congress ended its work agreeing to convene the Seventh Congress at a later date, without setting a specific date. When the time comes, the Seventh Pan African Congress is likely to be convened in the Caribbean. □