

## **Pan-Africanism, Tanzanian/African American linkages and the Six Pan-African Congress, 1969-1974**

**Lessie B. Tate, PhD**

Adjunct Professor

Prairie View A&M University

Prairie View, Texas 77446

United States of America

### **Abstract**

*Tanzania as a frontline country in the drive for the total liberation of Africa prior to and through the Arusha Declaration mandate of cooperation with liberation political movements for achievement of self-rule created a space where a wide spectrum of Pan-Africanism comingled. The country's designation as the headquarters of the African Unity Liberation Committee solidified this location as a black hub that incorporated all parts of the black world in the struggle. As such in the 1960s and 70s African Americans took this opportunity not only to return to Africa but also seek avenues to contribute to the cause through Ujamaa as well. Delineating the interaction of formal continental Pan Africanism and the informal social practices of the phenomena in Tanzania during the convening of the Sixth Pan-African Congress illumines the manner the black world transcended challenges from within and outside of its' sphere to achieve its mission of total liberation for southern Africa.*

**Keywords:** *Pan-Africanism, total black liberation, diaspora, black internationalism*

### **Introduction**

By 1974, Ujamaa had inspired many African Americans to either visit or reside in Tanzania to experience the African socialism practiced there. The population of the Afro community was at its peak at this time.<sup>1</sup> Bill Sutherland believed the selection of Tanzania for the location of the 1974 Sixth Pan-African Congress, known as the Six PAC, was indicative of the high esteem with which African American organizers held Julius Nyerere and his country.<sup>2</sup> But challenges that occurred in achieving the first Pan-African congress on African soil necessitated the understanding of what the common objectives of the black world were. This article exposes how African Americans involvement at the Six PAC began the painful process of reeducation in their engagement with Tanzania from their dreams in Pan-Africanism to the realities of their identity on the African continent.

### **Ideas for a black congress surface**

In 1969 Roosevelt Browne, a member of the Bermuda Parliament, invited Pan-African activists and militants from North America and the Caribbean to a Black Power Conference in Bermuda. Use of the "Black Power" slogan caused great alarm in the Caribbean, and many black militants

---

<sup>1</sup> There are no official numbers for the African American expatriate community in Tanzania. Approximate numbers ranged on the high side of about 800 to a low estimate of 300. Kalamu ya Salaam, "The Realities of Living and Working in Afrika," *The Black Collegian* (1974): 28; Pete O'Neal, in discussion with author, August 16, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Bill Sutherland and Matt Meyer, *Guns and Gandhi in Africa* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2000), 216.

from the United States were banned from entering Bermuda.<sup>3</sup> Yet Browne, later known as Pauulu Kamarakafego, did attract activists such as Acklyn Lynch, C. L. R. James, Queen Mother Moore, Flo Kennedy, and Yosef Ben-Jochannan.<sup>4</sup> The call for the Sixth Pan African Congress (Six PAC) came forth from this International Black Power Conference. Browne received encouragement for the Pan-African initiative through correspondence from Kwame Nkrumah, then living in Guinea.<sup>5</sup> Reading Nkrumah's letter at the meeting, Browne informed attendees that Nkrumah "agreed with the idea for a Sixth Pan African Congress. Go ahead and begin your work and I will do what I can from this end."<sup>6</sup> From the beginning, this initiative was fraught with challenges from within and outside the black world. In addition to tensions generated by the gathering together of diverse peoples, whose ideologies and intentions varied, the US State Department was wary in the extreme of African American interaction with Pan-Africanists during the planning of the Six PAC. The Black Power conference in Bermuda demonstrated how the concept of "Black Power" was controversial globally. The term *black power* outside the United States gave governmental authorities great cause for alarm, most especially in the Caribbean, where there were recently elected black governments and a history of political uprisings under "the banner of Black Power."<sup>7</sup>

After the emergence of the term in 1966, the *Nationalist* in Tanzania published an editorial titled "Black Power in America," which labeled this phenomenon an "open militant shift" in the civil rights movement.<sup>8</sup> This preceded the arrival in 1967 of SNCC leader Stokely Carmichael (later known as Kwame Ture), who popularized the black power slogan in the United States. While in Tanzania, Carmichael's criticism of African guerrilla leaders in an unsuccessful attempt to unite Africa's freedom fighters with his black power movement did not endear him to African revolutionaries.<sup>9</sup> Carmichael gained enemies when he stated that "Freedom Fighters don't fight. Their leaders are too interested in big cars and white women."<sup>10</sup> An unnamed spokesman from the African National Congress of South Africa responded by characterizing Carmichael's remarks as "meaningless and arrogant demagoguery."<sup>11</sup> African American Pan-Africanists had major lessons to learn in internationalism and the skill of negotiating in Africa.

Just as the name of the 1969 conference in Bermuda caused a number of participants to be barred from the country,<sup>12</sup> it also resulted in the British dispatching Royal Marines to assist the Bermuda government on this occasion.<sup>13</sup> There would be no further gathering under the name "Black Power" for these Pan-Africanists.<sup>14</sup> At an April 1970 meeting of the Black Power On-Going Committee

---

<sup>3</sup> Komozi Woodard, *A Nation within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 162.

<sup>4</sup> Quito Swan, "Caveat of Obnoxious Slave: Blueprint for Decolonizing Black Power Studies from the Intellectual Governors of White Supremacy," *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 6, no. 2 (2013): 59.

<sup>5</sup> Ronald W. Walters, *Pan Africanism in the African Diaspora: An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Political Movements* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 76.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> "Black Power in America" *Nationalist*, November 26, 1966, 5–6.

<sup>9</sup> "Carmichael Ready to Come Home, But Date Uncertain," *Chicago Daily Defender*, December 2, 1967, 5; "News of the Week," *New York Amsterdam News*, November 25, 1967, 2.

<sup>10</sup> "Carmichael Ready to Come Home, But Date Uncertain."

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> "Barred from Confab," *New York Amsterdam News*, July 19, 1969, 1.

<sup>13</sup> "News of the Week," *New York Amsterdam News*.

<sup>14</sup> James Garrett, "A Historical Sketch: The Sixth Pan African Congress," *Black World*, March 1975, 5.

(BPO) in the United States, the organization renamed itself.<sup>15</sup> In a follow-up meeting in May 1970, attended by Richard Traylor and Haywood Henry of the Unitarian Church, Leonard Harris from the Midwest Coalition, BPO chairman Chuck Stone, and Browne, the focus of the organization was decided. In this new mission the group declared themselves to be “an African People” following a change of “Pan Africanism,” at this time replacing “Black Power” in American student and movement circles. Accordingly, the organization changed its name to the Congress of African People (CAP).<sup>16</sup> Nationalism, Pan Africanism, and Ujamaa were the three main components of this umbrella organization’s ideology.<sup>17</sup> Influence from Tanzanian self-reliance was highlighted in the fact sheet distributed at CAP’s first conference in Atlanta, which was held September 3 through 7, 1970.

C. L. R. James, who was living in Washington, DC, and teaching at Howard University, was the force that pushed the effort to call a conference. At the 1969 Black World Congress of Black Writers in Montreal, Canada, James met staff members from the Center for Black Education (CBE).<sup>18</sup> It was at this congress that James enlisted the support of the CBE and subsequently became its adviser and liaison to initiate a call for a Pan-African congress.<sup>19</sup> Members of the first steering committee were Kamarakafego, James, Jimmy Garrett, Courtland Cox, Liz Gant, and Winston Wiltshire.<sup>20</sup>

A decision to locate the first Pan-African congress on African soil was primarily a result of the continuous interaction between the Atlantic diaspora and Tanzania during the previous two decades. After the 1966 Ghanaian coup that resulted in Nkrumah’s overthrow, Tanzania became the major candidate to host the Atlantic African diaspora.<sup>21</sup> Judy Claude—a Six PAC organizer and member of both SNCC and the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC)—considered Tanzania the best place to be at that time for African Americans who really wanted to be on the continent but in a progressive country.”<sup>22</sup> Correspondence between Kamarakafego and Nkrumah revealed the former Ghanaian leader was pleased with the continued efforts in organizing a conference and thought locating the meetings in Tanzania was a good idea.<sup>23</sup> In 1971 Browne, with the assistance of Walter Rodney, who was then teaching at the University of Dar es Salaam, commenced contact with the Tanzanian government.<sup>24</sup> “Nyerere’s acquaintance with and respect for James . . . secured the [location of Tanzania] as the host site for the Pan-African congress.”<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> “Congress of Afrikan People Social Organization Council: Conference Information Sheet,” John Henrik Clarke papers, Schomburg Center for Research on Black Culture, New York Public Library.

<sup>18</sup> Brenda Gayle Plummer, *In Search of Power: African Americans in the Era of Decolonization, 1956–1974* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 321.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid; Geri Augusto, interview by Charles Cobb Jr., January 26, 2005, [www.noeasyvictories.org/interviews/int10\\_augusto.php](http://www.noeasyvictories.org/interviews/int10_augusto.php).

<sup>20</sup> Walters, *Pan Africanism*, 76; Sylvia Hill, interview by William Minter, September 23, 2003, [www.noeasyvictories.org/interviews/int11\\_hill.php](http://www.noeasyvictories.org/interviews/int11_hill.php).

<sup>21</sup> Kevin K. Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 247.

<sup>22</sup> La TaSha Levy, “Remembering Sixth-PAC: Interviews with Sylvia Hill and Judy Claude, Organizers of the Sixth Pan-African Congress,” *The Black Scholar* 37, no. 4 (2007): 42.

<sup>23</sup> James Garrett, *A Historical Sketch: The Sixth Pan African Congress*, 6.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>25</sup> Courtland Cox, interview by Brenda Plummer, June 21, 2012, in Plummer, *In Search of Power*, 321.

It was at this point that the well-traveled United States/Tanzania transatlantic bridge saw a dramatic increase in traffic.

Cox and Augusto arrived in Tanzania in 1973 to work out the logistics. Edie Wilson, also one of the Six PAC organizers who would go to Tanzania in 1974, afterwards made this country her permanent home.<sup>26</sup> Wilson's duties included traveling throughout Africa to engage support from African leaders for the congress and the Pan Skills Project.<sup>27</sup> Wilson maintained that the only way they were allowed to approach African heads of state was on behalf of James and Chancellor Williams, both of whom were quite revered by leaders throughout Africa.<sup>28</sup>

Whereas the focus of the 1945 Fifth Pan African Congress in Manchester, England, was geared towards the eagerly anticipated independence of African nations, James thought the initiatives of the Sixth Pan African Congress should emphasize the people's movements.<sup>29</sup> As such, participation was not only sought from Africa, Europe, the Americas, and the Caribbean, but also from Australia and the Pacific Islands.<sup>30</sup> Building an independent infrastructure for cooperation and understanding within the black world was the ambitious goal of early congress planners from the Atlantic diaspora.<sup>31</sup> On February 5, 1972, a document titled *The Call* was issued.<sup>32</sup> Referencing the initial rationale for the first Pan-African congress, the document set forth a political forum, suggesting the Six PAC return to its origins by "drawing a line of steel against those, Africans included, who hide behind the slogan and paraphernalia of national independence while allowing finance capital to dominate and direct their economic and social life."<sup>33</sup>

Yet what did the African American diaspora have to offer, even though by the numbers of those involved in the planning of this congress they were the driving force behind this project? When asked this question decades later, Claude reflected that the answer given at the time "sounds condescending, particularly for those who lived in the industrialized North as opposed to those who might live in Brazil or the Caribbean."<sup>34</sup> As a whole, African Americans did not quite understand the meaning of "international." This was demonstrated in their attitude of dominance taken at CAP congresses held from 1970 to 1974. American black nationalists commandeered the focus of the events, giving no consideration to matters of those outside the United States.<sup>35</sup> African American technological knowledge and accompanying skills vital to the development of African countries was what this segment of the diaspora offered Africa.<sup>36</sup> Six PAC organizers from the United States believed their scientific and technological skills represented their entry into Africa. To achieve this feat, CAP proposed the creation of a permanent secretariat and information center based in Africa.<sup>37</sup> Establishment of an institution of this nature would facilitate the goal of funneling skilled African Americans throughout Africa. But there was a lot to be learned by African Americans on the technique of negotiation in international arenas that differed from their

---

<sup>26</sup> Edie Wilson, in conversation with author; Sylvia Hill, interview by William Minter.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Sutherland and Meyer, *Guns and Gandhi*, 217, 219.

<sup>30</sup> "Sixth Pan African Congress," *Black World* (January 1974), 5.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 6-7.

<sup>33</sup> "The Call" in Walters, *Pan Africanism*, 77.

<sup>34</sup> Levy, "Remembering Sixth-PAC," 42.

<sup>35</sup> Garrett, A Historical Sketch: The Sixth Pan African Congress, 5-10.

<sup>36</sup> Levy, "Remembering Sixth-PAC," 42.

<sup>37</sup> Plummer, *In Search of Power*, 322.

local, domestic, or even national arenas.<sup>38</sup> The continuous rescheduling of the Six PAC is an indicator of African Americans' lack of knowledge of international interaction in the black world.

In May 1972, a Six PAC delegation of planners arrived in Tanzania.<sup>39</sup> C. L. R. James, Bill Douglas, Fletcher Robinson, Courtland Cox, and James Garrett were the delegation chosen for either their political or technical influence.<sup>40</sup> Bernard Muganda from the Tanzania Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the delegation's main contact during this visit to Tanzania. The delegation's first meeting was with Tanzanian Foreign Minister John Malecela and his assistant Muganda.<sup>41</sup> In this meeting, it was confirmed that the congress would be held in Tanzania in June 1973. Garrett felt that Tanzania wanted to host the congress for historical reasons, because of its perceived isolation as a progressive state in East Africa and the international visibility that the congress would bring.<sup>42</sup> Still, the Tanzanian leaders' desire for African American participation in their nation building had long preceded the visit of these delegates to Tanzania.

In December 1971 CAP members Imamu Amiri Baraka, Program Chairman; Hayward Henry, National Chairman; Balozzi Zayd, International Affairs Chairman; and Imamu Vernon Sukumu, West Coast Regional Organizer; along with Sultani Tarik, NewArk Congress Youth Director, traveled to the *Miako Uhuru*, the tenth celebration of Tanzania's independence.<sup>43</sup> Writing for *Black World*, Baraka noted that the only official delegations from the United States to attend this historic event were black: the CAP delegation and a delegation from the National Council of Black Churchmen.<sup>44</sup> For Baraka, the courageous social evolution taking place in the Republic of Tanzania was inspirational.<sup>45</sup> He stressed that "African Americans must support in all ways possible the rise of African nations."<sup>46</sup> Baraka was convinced that "the stronger Africans in Africa are, the stronger Africans in America will be." This was essentially the same message delivered in an article published in *Jet* the previous month. Baraka's objective in his piece for *Black World* was to recruit skilled African Americans for the Pan Skills Project to help with the work of nation building.<sup>47</sup> In this manner, groundwork was laid to expose the black public in the United States to Tanzanian and African American participation in the Pan-African mission before the CAP delegation left the United States in May 1972.

Enthusiasm gained from Tanzania's support of the project sparked immediate action upon the return of both delegations to the United States. CAP members began the active broadening of their base to generate global involvement in the upcoming congress.<sup>48</sup> After the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), what had been known as African Freedom Day from 1958 to 1963 was renamed African Liberation Day, and its observance was moved to May 25. Attendance estimates varied from 30,000 to 55,000, when the newly named African Liberation

---

<sup>38</sup> Levy, "Remembering Sixth-PAC," 42.

<sup>39</sup> Garrett, *A Historical Sketch: The Sixth Pan African Congress*, 15.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> "Report From the Black World: Towards Pan Africanism," *Black World* 21 (1972): 65.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 66.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid; "Tanzania Government Invites Black Americans to Join in Nation Building," *Jet*, February 24, 1972, 21.

<sup>48</sup> Sylvia Hill, interview by William Minter; "Meeting to Support the African Liberation Idea," *Atlanta Daily World*, March 19, 1972, 7.

Day held its first gathering in Washington, DC, in 1972.<sup>49</sup> For American black individuals and organizations who wanted to support African liberation without access to government-level decision making, this support served as a vehicle that made their voices heard.<sup>50</sup> The African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC) materialized after the success of the second African Liberation Day to serve as a pro-Africa lobby and a national educational and community-organizing group.<sup>51</sup> This development tremendously increased the networks for black solidarity that were established in the 1950s and 1960s, becoming a national vehicle for African American participation in the fight for global black liberation.

### ***African Americans maneuvering through the politics of Pan-Africanism***

The focus of Pan-African congresses before the independence of African and Caribbean nations was geared toward the agendas of people's movements. In 1974, when many of these countries had achieved sovereignty, a rift developed in the Pan-African movement between statesmen and popular participation.<sup>52</sup> Guyanese government officials were disturbed by the Caribbean Steering Committee meeting of the Pan African Congress that was held in Georgetown, Guyana, March 28 and 29, 1974.<sup>53</sup> A cable from Guyana Prime Minister Kit Nascimento to the United States embassy criticized the meeting because the Guyana government believed that these militants were "using Pan Africanism as a cloak" to establish a platform for their dissidence which did not relate to Africa.<sup>54</sup>

These convictions resulted in pressure being exerted by countries such as Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad against the Tanzanian government to clarify its intentions for the congress, since many of the people most interested in the congress were dissidents from their own countries.<sup>55</sup> The newfound independence and black leadership of some countries did not relieve the economic woes of colonialism. Those in the Atlantic African diaspora who were disillusioned looked to Africa for the answers to progressive change.<sup>56</sup> Caribbean officials saw attendance at the Pan African Congress as potential validation of these dissenting groups' causes and demanded to know the intention of the Six PAC.<sup>57</sup> Were they simply trying to pull together parties of the opposition for this conference?<sup>58</sup> Focusing on neocolonialism at the Six PAC would have automatically raised questions of certain black governments.<sup>59</sup>

Negotiation by Tanzanian officials with other black governments was a very delicate balancing act for Nyerere and TANU, who were the official sponsors of the congress. At this time, TANU was, in actuality, the Tanzanian government—for TANU and the government were one and the

---

<sup>49</sup> Plummer, *In Search of Power*, 277; "Meeting to Support the African Liberation Idea," *Atlanta Daily World*.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> "Liberation Movement in Africa and African America," *Archives Unbound*, <http://gdc.gale.com/index.php?id=3247>.

<sup>52</sup> Plummer, *In Search of Power*, 323.

<sup>53</sup> "Caribbean Black Power Militants meet in Georgetown Amidst Evidence of Government Concern," Public Library of US Diplomacy, Cable 1974GEORGE00501\_b, [https://www.wikileaks.org/plusdcables/1974GEORGE00501\\_b.html](https://www.wikileaks.org/plusdcables/1974GEORGE00501_b.html).

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Sutherland and Meyers, *Guns and Gandhi*, 218.

<sup>56</sup> Plummer, *In Search of Power*, 32.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Plummer, *In Search of Power*, 330.

same entity.<sup>60</sup> Officials in Tanzania's government felt they had to subvert the original ideas of the congress and invite all heads of state. It was at this point that Caribbean radicals vowed not to attend; this included C. L. R. James, one of the strongest original supporters in the launching of the event.<sup>61</sup> Although James did not attend, because he felt the change in platform of the conference was a betrayal of the initial ideas projected for this event, the longtime Pan-African activist did not fault Nyerere for changes.<sup>62</sup>

An attempt to sabotage the US delegation's travel arrangements demonstrated the extent to which the FBI would go to foil the connection of African Americans with the international black world. The US delegation entered into a contract for air travel from the United States to Tanzania with the Henderson Travel Agency located in Atlanta, Georgia.<sup>63</sup> Two days before the departure of the delegation, the airline broke the contract to avoid any problems.<sup>64</sup> Because the FBI had requested review of the travel manifest for the delegation, the airline stated the list of travelers was questionable.<sup>65</sup> At the very last minute India Airlines, through the sanction of the Indian government, entered into a contract with the delegation that resulted in their timely arrival in Dar es Salaam.<sup>66</sup> This action demonstrated that the Bandung spirit of the 1950s was still alive, as another sovereign country formerly under the yoke of Western colonialism was willing to come to the aid of African unity.

It was clear from ideological disagreement during meetings in the planning phase of the congress that the US delegation was not a united entity. A split between cultural nationalists and Marxists caused great problems within the American delegation and at the congress as well.<sup>67</sup> Amiri Baraka, a strong cultural nationalist, and Owusu Sandaki (born Howard Fuller), a Marxist, were the two main leaders in the delegation.<sup>68</sup> Disharmony within the delegation resulted in their failure to submit a position paper from a point of solidarity. This division was confusing for Tanzanian government officials, as it was difficult to understand the primary objective of the delegation.

Bill Sutherland was asked to represent the interests of the Tanzanian government in the Six PAC development of the congress. Sutherland characterized the majority of the US delegation as cultural nationalists, because they were "the people with the money and the time to take international trips."<sup>69</sup> Representing the Tanzanian government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs placed Sutherland in a very difficult position. At that time, he had lived in Tanzania for a decade and in Africa since the late 1950s. Therefore, he did not know the younger generation of SNCC members well.<sup>70</sup> And as a Tanzanian government employee, some Tanzanian officials in Tanzania were suspicious of Sutherland's allegiances to the United States delegation.<sup>71</sup> Here was a Pan-Africanist sandwiched between conflicting interests.

---

<sup>60</sup> Nyang'oro, "The Challenge of Development in Tanzania," 32.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Sutherland and Meyer, *Guns and Gandhi*, 216.

<sup>63</sup> Sylvia Hill, interview by William Minter.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> *Two Line Struggle: Revolutionary Pan Afrikanism*, (Patrice Lumumba Publishers, n.d.) pamphlet.

<sup>68</sup> Sutherland and Meyer, *Guns and Gandhi*, 218.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 217.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

Tanzanian ambassador to the United States Bomani confided to his counterpart, the African American and US ambassador to Tanzania Beverly Carter, his frustration with African American attempts to dominate the congress.<sup>72</sup> Some delegates were deemed unrepresentative of the American black population, as their criminal backgrounds—unassociated with political activity—not only discredited their standings, but embarrassed both Tanzanian officials and esteemed SNCC veteran Bob Moses. While a proponent of the congress who then lived in Tanzania, Moses ultimately chose not to attend, rather than associate himself with the American delegates whom he considered objectionable. Carlton Goodlett reported in *The Sun Reporter* that it was “a mistake to exclude United States Ambassador W. Beverly Carter, an African American, from the proceedings.”<sup>73</sup> In this case, the diversity among the American delegates at Six PAC, coupled with the challenges from the Cold War, did not contribute to credibility or acceptance of the US delegation or their mission in Africa. Six PAC organizer Sylvia Hill stated that the source of resistance to American black radical focus was African liberation movements not wanting the conference dominated by ideological debate around race and class without the directive of bringing forces of the black world together around the primary goal of ridding the continent of Portuguese colonialism and apartheid in South Africa and Rhodesia.<sup>74</sup>

Despite the challenges from within Tanzania and internationally, a proposal that emerged from the 1969 International Black Power conference in Bermuda did come to pass. Kwame Nkrumah, the elder African statesman who held the first Pan-African gathering on independent African soil, died in Guinea on April 27, 1972, before the 1974 congress. Yet for the delegates, the memories of Nkrumah were acknowledged in Nyerere’s opening address.<sup>75</sup> Nkrumah’s contributions to the 1945 congress, his calling of the All People’s Organization meeting in Ghana in 1958, and his tireless work for African liberation throughout his life were remembered as groundbreaking events that made the Six PAC possible. After four postponements from 1972 to 1974, the Six PAC took place over nine days in 1974, from June 19 to 27.<sup>76</sup>

### ***Realities made clear at the Sixth Pan African Congress***

Nyerere and Sékou Touré delivered the opening address at the Sixth Pan African Congress.<sup>77</sup> Both leaders stressed an understanding of the broader revolutionary issues, which included class. From these leaders’ perspectives, Pan Africanism could not be defined from the narrow parameters of cultural nationalism.<sup>78</sup> Nyerere “made it quite clear” that racial thinking was opposed, “but as long as black people anywhere continue to be oppressed on the grounds of color, black people everywhere will stand together in opposition to that oppression, in the future as in the past.”<sup>79</sup> In a taped message, Touré stated Cuba’s President, Fidel Castro, “demonstrated more ‘blackness’ than many African and Afro-American leaders in his humane approach to solving problems in his country.”<sup>80</sup> Vice President of *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Mozambique Liberation Front, or FRELIMO) Marcelino dos Santos, in his address to the delegates, illustrated the

<sup>72</sup> Plummer, *In Search of Power*, 325.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 325, 337; Carlton Goodlett, “Weak Performance at Pan-African Meet,” *The Sun Reporter*, July 20, 1974, clipping in FBI-NARA.

<sup>74</sup> Levy, “Remembering Sixth-PAC,” 44.

<sup>75</sup> Julius Nyerere, “Julius K. Nyerere’s Speech to the Congress,” *The Black Scholar* 5 (1974): 11.

<sup>76</sup> Garrett, *A Historical Sketch: The Sixth Pan African Congress*, 18.

<sup>77</sup> Sekou Toure sent a taped message that was played at the congress.

<sup>78</sup> Nyerere, “Julius K. Nyerere’s Speech to the Congress.”

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>80</sup> Booker Griffin, “Pan African Congress Report,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, July 18, 1975, 1.



progressive ideology of Pan-Africanism through an example made simple in Mozambique's resistance. Santos explained, "the struggle in South Africa is not Black Power versus White Power, but the power of the exploiter versus the people. We cannot Africanize exploitation."<sup>81</sup> Santos then pointed to the logic of "replacing white leaders with black leaders who maintain the same system of exploitation that existed before" independence.<sup>82</sup> This position was a painful one for a number of African Americans in the US delegation. Yet it forced those who attended and were involved with organizing the Six PAC to grapple with their own identity in the black world.

The US delegates represented no constituency, nor did they belong to a registered state associated with the congress, unlike other delegations at the Six PAC. Thus, few of their resolutions were incorporated into the final congress report.<sup>83</sup> No discussion ever materialized for a permanent secretariat envisioned by the US delegation for the establishment of an information and technology center to facilitate placement of Pan African scientists and technologists from abroad in Africa. African American delegates cited three main problems in getting this task accomplished: "a lack of sophistication and expertise in dealing with international forums, language barriers which reduced the effectiveness of lobbying and the emotional rhetoric [of] speakers [such] as Sadaukai and Baraka rather than documented position papers on African conditions."<sup>84</sup> Delegate Don Lee, also known as Haki R. Madhubuti, was quoted as saying, "One thing we learned here is that *we* [African Americans] have a national interest."<sup>85</sup> Lerone Bennett suggested that African Americans should feel "it was the ending of the beginning of a painful process of reeducation which may yet make the reality match the splendor of the dream."<sup>86</sup> What a number of Americans in the delegation brought back from the conference was a commitment to support the liberation movements in Africa.

Nyerere did meet privately with a small group of American Pan-Africanists during the congress. Equally as important to the liberation struggle and to the development of Africa as the African Americans' skills was the guidance Nyerere provided to sympathetic African Americans who chose not to immigrate to Africa, for Americans in the United States had power. Those who met with Nyerere during their Six PAC attendance left the meeting with "an important matter of a sensitive nature"<sup>87</sup> and a new sense of urgency. From their conversation with Mwalimu Nyerere, "Afrikans in America realized they were an important key in the struggle against imperialism, [as] they were right inside the belly of the beast." African Americans returned from their journey to Africa prepared to cause their country a tremendous stomachache.

### ***Conclusion: The battle from the belly of the beast***

A meeting was held the week following the congress by the ALSC Central Council for analysis of the findings from the Six PAC in order to establish their position within the global black struggle.

---

<sup>81</sup> Griffin, "Pan African Congress Report," 1.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Plummer, *In Search of Power*, 336.

<sup>84</sup> Lawrence A. Still and Hodari Ali, "Pan-African Congress: Fall Short in Action Policy," *Chicago Daily Defender*, July 18, 1974, 12.

<sup>85</sup> Lerone Bennett Jr., "Pan-Africanism at the Crossroads: Dreams and Realities Clash," *Ebony*, September 1974, 159.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Chairman's Report: Central Council Meeting—8 Julai 1974.

These Pan-Africanists had deemed 1974 the “Year of Ideological Clarity.”<sup>88</sup> It was in this meeting that a discussion was opened for qualitative changes in the organization’s ideological position.<sup>89</sup> The two-line struggle that began in the United States between the cultural nationalists and the Marxists continued in Tanzania. The split was between those who prescribed a socialist solution to the African American problem, which dictated that the struggle should be based on class, and those who endorsed a race-based solution.<sup>90</sup> The latter believed that the problem was neither capitalism nor mercantilism, hence the problem was the color of one’s skin. For these members, the answer for blacks in America was only found in black nationalism.<sup>91</sup> On the return of the American delegation to the United States, the polarizations within the CAP organization led to a number of resignations.<sup>92</sup> A need for ideological clarity within the progressive group of “Pan Afrikan Revolutionaries” during this period was paramount.<sup>93</sup>

American delegates returning from the Sixth Pan African Congress were strongly committed to taking on the liberation struggle in America. Sylvia Hill, upon her return, devoted her time through “many transformations [of protest] in the Southern Africa Support Project to the Free South Africa Movement, as well as her work with TransAfrica.”<sup>94</sup> After the mid-1970s, a wide, diverse spectrum of blacks in the United States—including lobbyists, government officials, missionaries, and Pan Africanists—were seeking means to affect American foreign policy in Africa.<sup>95</sup> Growing support within the black communities was not limited to the black elites or radicals, but spanned the distance from grass-roots organizations to the middle class.<sup>96</sup> One of the largest anti-apartheid demonstrations in New York on August 13, 1985, illustrates the cross-section of participation for this cause. ACOA joined with the American Jewish Congress, Asian Americans for Equality, the Urban League, Columbia and Harvard University students, the New York Labor Council, the National Congress of Puerto Rican Rights, and National Council of Churches to rally sixty thousand protestors to march from Nelson and Winnie Mandela corner, which was where the South African mission was located on 42nd Street and Second Avenue, to the United Nations, chanting “Death to apartheid, free Mandela.”<sup>97</sup> Although political division hampered the ALSC operations after 1974, demonstrations such as this reveals that other entities rose to fill the void. Despite the division in the cultural and radical nationalist network that developed in the black power era, many

---

<sup>88</sup> Amiri Baraka, “Revolutionary Party: Revolutionary Ideology,” in *Chairman’s Report: Central Council Meeting—8 Julai 1974*, Series V: Congress of African People, n.d., Komozi Woodard Amiri Baraka Collection, Auburn Avenue Research Library on African-American Culture and History, Atlanta-Fulton Public Library, *Archives Unbound*, <http://go.galegroup.com/gdsc/i.do?>

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Edward O. Erhagebe, “The African-American Contribution to the Liberation Struggle in Southern Africa: The Case of the African Liberation Support Committee, 1972–1979,” *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 4, no. 5 (September 2011): 36.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Levy, Remembering Sixth-PAC,” 46.

<sup>95</sup> Henry Jackson, *From the Congo to Soweto: US Foreign Policy Toward Africa Since 1960* (New York: William Morrow, 1982), 123.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Simon Anekewe, “60,000 March Against Hated, Evil Apartheid,” *New York Amsterdam News*, August 17, 1985, 1; David Goodman, “The 1980s: The Anti-Apartheid Convergence,” in *No Easy Victories: African Liberation and American Activists Over a Half Century, 1950-2000*, ed. William Minter, Gail Hovey and Charles Cobb Jr. (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2008), 154.

who were involved joined with the Pan-Africanists from the 1950s and 1960s in bringing the issue of freedom for southern Africa to the forefront of American politics.

### **References**

Gaines, Kevin K. *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Minter, William, Gail Hovey, and Charles Cobb Jr., eds. *No Easy Victories: African Liberation and American Activists over a Half Century, 1950-2000*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1982.

Plummer, Brenda Gayle. *In Search of Power: African Americans in the Era of Decolonization, 1956–1974*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

----. *Window on Freedom: Race, Civil Rights, and Foreign Affairs 1945-1988*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Sutherland, Bill and Meyer, Matt. (2000). *Guns and Gandhi in Africa*, Trenton: African World Press.

Walters, Ronald W. *Pan Africanism in the African Diaspora: An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Political Movements*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1993.

Woodard, Komozi. *A Nation within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and Black Power Politics*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.