



Opening address of Sixth Pan-African Congress was delivered by President Julius Nyerere (above) of Tanzania, who was also elected president of Congress. Delegates (right) met in Kwame Nkrumah Auditorium (below, right) of University of Dar es Salaam. There were more than 50 delegations representing independent states of African and Caribbean and popular organizations in Europe, North and South America, and U. S. Largest delegation was from the U. S.



PAN-AFRICANISM AT

Dreams and realities clash as delegates debate class and color at historic congress in Tanzania

By **LERONE BENNETT Jr.**

Photos by **OZIER MUHAMMAD**

AFTER seven decades of wandering down the white roads of the West in the company of dreamers, intellectuals and stateless exiles, Pan-Africanism went home in the summer of 1974 to reality and radical surgery.

It was, all things considered, an interesting, provocative and possibly fatal homecoming for the venerable concept which was endlessly dissected and redefined by delegates and observers attending the Sixth Pan-African Congress—the first held in Africa—in Tanzania. When the dissecting and defining ended, it was not entirely clear whether the concept had been given new life or whether it had been defined out of existence by delegates who denounced “the utopian idea of returning to promised lands” and rejected a “purely racial” struggle of Africans and people of African descent in favor of a worldwide struggle by the oppressed black, brown, yellow and white peoples of the world.

If the ultimate meaning of all this was not immediately clear, it was unmistakably clear that the Pan-African homecoming was an event of historic proportions and one that marked a fateful fork in the road for Africans and peoples of African descent. For the first time since Europe laid siege to Africa and scattered



THE CROSSROADS

Africans to the four corners of the earth, men and women representing all branches of the African family assembled on African soil to debate the state and the future of the race. More than 500 delegates and observers, almost half of them from the United States, attended the Congress which brought together presidents, prime ministers and high officials of the states of Africa and the Caribbean, leaders of African liberation movements, and representatives of the African communities of Europe, North and South America, and the islands of the sea. For nine days and nine nights, this sharply divergent group of socialists, communists, capitalists, Moslems, Christians, atheists, agnostics, artists, bureaucrats and petit-bourgeois intellectuals debated, caucused and groped for common ground.

They came, these men, women and children, some of them black, some of them brown, some of them white, from different quadrants of geography and power with different perceptions and needs—Arab professors from Egypt, Muslim and Christian bureaucrats from West Africa, artists from Brazil, workers from Jamaica and England, black and white teachers and bureaucrats from Cuba, protest leaders from New Hebrides Islands in the





Congress leaders were (above, left) John Malecela, Tanzania's foreign minister and chairman of Steering Committee; Aboud Jumbe, first vice-president of Tanzania and chairman of Congress. American activist, Courtland Cox (above, right), was acting secretary-general. Powerful political committee (right) was led by vice-chairman Marcelino dos Santos of FRELIMO liberation movement and chairman Mamadi Keita of Guinea.



PAN-AFRICANISM *Continued*

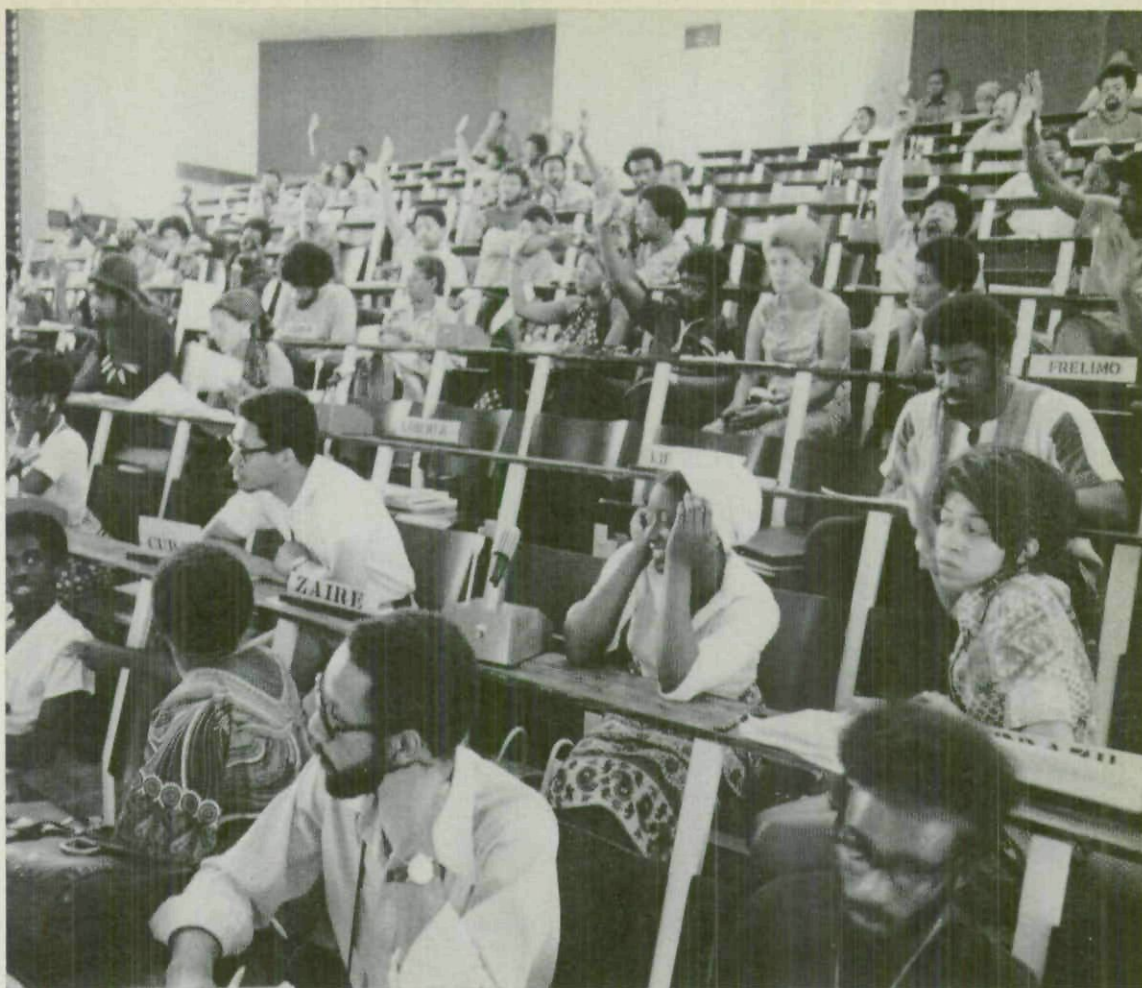
Pacific, and students, housewives, college presidents and artists from the Harlems of America. What brought them all together and held them together, at least for nine days, was the Pan-African idea of the liberation and unification of Africa and the regeneration of Africans and peoples of African descent. And to understand them and what they did and did not do in Dar es Salaam one must first understand the origin of that idea.

As in so many "Pan" movements, the Pan-African idea came not from the center but from the circumference, not from Africa but from Africans in the diaspora. The road to Dar began in London in 1900 at a Pan-African Conference organized by H. Sylvester Williams, a Trinidad lawyer, with the assistance of W. E. B. DuBois, an African-American professor, and Bishop Alexander Walters of the AME Zion Church. After the first conference, the Pan-African idea became, in a sense, the property of W. E. B. DuBois, who organized and sponsored the first five Pan-African congresses. The first Congress was held in Paris in 1919 and was followed by congresses in London and Brussels in 1921, London and Lisbon in 1923, New York in 1927, and Manchester, England, in 1945. The 1945 Congress, the first Congress with substantial participation by Africans from Africa (Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, Joe Appiah and others) laid the foundation for the political liberation of Africa and was something of a turning point in the history of Africans.

When, after the Manchester Congress, the dream began to turn into reality, reality, as in so many other cases, subordinated the dream until it was revived in 1971 by a group of African-American and West Indian intellectuals, including Professor C. L. R. James, a veteran of the Manchester Congress, and Courtland Cox, a young veteran of SNCC and the American Freedom movement. Undaunted by scoffers and doubters, this little band of dreamers enlisted the support of African and African-American intellectuals and received the endorsement of Kwame Nkrumah. Attracted perhaps by their audacity, and their faith, President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania threw his immense resources behind the effort and the impossible dream of a handful of intellectuals became a live option. A call was issued, urging, among other things, the development of a Pan-African Science and Technology Center, and asserting, somewhat prematurely, as it turned out, that "the 20th Century is the Century of Black Power."

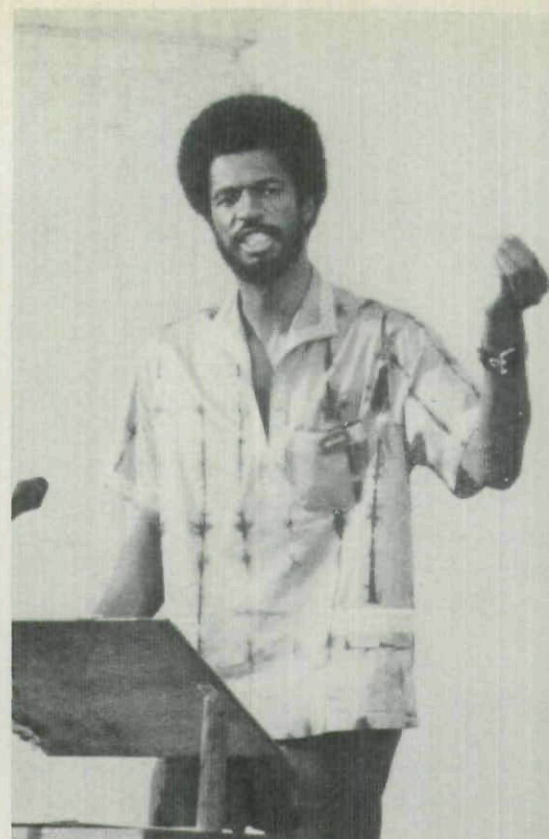
Looking back on that brave beginning three years later, President Nyerere said that "when the idea was first proposed, our friends in North America were very keen on the Congress, and we thought it would be absurd for Africans, who are the greatest beneficiaries of Pan-Africanism, to say that now that we have our political independence we don't need Pan-Africanism. The work started by Pan-Africanism had not been completed, and I said to myself if we started it together we ought to complete it together."

Nyerere's view was not shared by all heads of state. Some governments, believing appar-



U. S. delegation holds caucus (above) in lecture hall. Professor James Turner, chairman of U. S. delegation, confers (left) with Sylvia Hill, secretary-general of U. S. delegation. In gallery (below), delegates and observers monitor the proceedings on earphones carrying simultaneous translations in French, Spanish, Arabic, and English.





U. S. speakers included historian Lerone Bennett Jr., (top, left) who was one of speakers responding to opening message of President Nyerere; Dr. Neville Parker (top, center), professor of civil engineering at Howard University; Owusu Sadauki (top, right) of African Liberation Day Support Committee; Bishop H. H. Brookins (above, left) of the AME Church; and Imamu Amiri Baraka (above, right), who is pictured with his son Obalaji, Queen Mother Moore and artist Jeff Donaldson of Howard University.

PAN-AFRICANISM *Continued*

ently that the Congress was going to be a Black Power gathering and a launching pad for unrestrained attacks on African and Caribbean governments, expressed deep concern. There was also opposition, veiled but persistent, from powerful African leaders who believed that Pan-Africanism was passé and that a worldwide racial movement would threaten the solidarity of the African-Arab bloc and the world socialist movement.

Finally, after the exchange of a number of diplomatic cables, a Steering Committee of ambassadors and liberation leaders was established and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) extended its blessings. To allay the fears of critics, the Steering Committee decided that the Congress was going to be a governmental affair with delegations com-

posed largely of governmental officials and others approved by governments. This meant, as a practical matter, that opposition leaders and critics of African and Caribbean governments would be denied an effective role in the Congress. At that point, C. L. R. James and a number of New World intellectuals withdrew.

Another and related problem was the role and status of the U. S. delegation. To put the matter bluntly, there was a feeling in some circles that the typical African-American was either a CIA agent or a wild-eyed irresponsible radical or both. As a result, there was continuing concern over the U. S. delegation. This concern was particularly pronounced in some North African countries and required several delicate diplomatic missions. It should be



Delegates relaxed at official receptions and cultural events. President Nyerere (top) greets entertainers at State House reception. First Vice-President Jumbe and Second Vice-President Rashid Kawawa lead line of dancers (center) at another reception. Poet Haki R. Madhubuti (Don L. Lee) reads poetry (right) for African students at cultural meeting on university campus. Also reading poetry were South African poet Dennis Brutus (c.) and Kalamu ya Salaam (r.).



PAN-AFRICANISM *Continued*

added, at least for perspective, that some delegations, notably the Tanzanian delegation, insisted on representation from the United States.

There was finally the question that would not go away—the question of color. On the opening day of the Congress, the Tanzania Daily News addressed itself to that question in a front-page editorial.

"Those who have been trying to undermine the Congress have been going about saying that the Congress is meeting to discuss 'blackness' and therefore is a 'racial' meeting.

"This absurd logic would like to have us believe that when Europeans meet under say the EEC to talk about their problems, it is not racial. When Arabs meet under the Arab League to discuss their problems, it is not racial. . . .

"Only when Black people meet under a Pan-African Congress banner, does it become racial. What arrant nonsense!!"

IT WAS against this background, and in an atmosphere of rising tension, that the Sixth Pan-African Congress opened in the ultra-modern Kwame Nkrumah Auditorium on the campus of the University of Dar es Salaam. The first item on the agenda was an opening address by President Nyerere, who was elected president of the Congress. President Nyerere, who is not called Mwalimu (teacher) for nothing, traced the history of the Pan-African movement, pointing out that this Congress, unlike preceding congresses, was being held in Africa and consisted largely of black and non-black governmental officials. There were also concerned individuals and representatives of popular groups, and Mwalimu for one was glad that they were there. The governments of Africa and the Caribbean were no more composed of angels than any other governments and could therefore benefit from the prodding of individuals standing outside governmental structures. The Congress, he said, was not a forum for attacks on particular governments, but it "would be failing in its duty if it did not recognize the need for a demand that justice be done within the newly independent nations as well as in the older countries."

Turning next to the vexing problem of color, Mwalimu Nyerere outlined a subtle argument based on an acceptance of the *fact* of color and a rejection of colorphobia. Why, he asked, were the delegates there? Was it geography, political power, or political ideology? He answered that it was none of these. What was it then that linked the delegates together and caused them to meet in this Congress? He answered, without blinking, that it was color.

"From the very beginnings of this movement, until now, men and women of Africa, and of African descent, have had one thing in common—an experience of discrimination and humiliation imposed upon them because of their African origin. . . .

"The Pan-African movement was born as a reaction to racialism. And racialism still exists. Nowhere has it been completely defeated. . . . The evil which required the birth of the Pan-African movement has not yet made meetings like this irrelevant.

"Let us make it quite clear. We oppose racial thinking. But as long as black people anywhere continue to be oppressed on the grounds of their color, black people everywhere will stand together in opposition to that oppression, in the future as in the past."

This was one end of the chain, and it was real. But the other end of the chain was equally real, the need for "the victims of color prejudice to avoid color prejudice." For "if we react to the continued need to defend our position as black men by regarding ourselves as different from the rest of mankind we shall weaken ourselves, and the racialists of the world will have scored their biggest triumph. . . ."

For all these reasons, and for others as well, the purpose of the Congress, President Nyerere said, was "to discuss the means, and further the progress, of opposition to racialism, colonialism, oppression and exploitation everywhere. Our discussions will have special reference to our own experience—past and present. But they must take place in the context of a world wide movement for



Pan-African pioneers, Joe Appiah (l.) of Ghana and Ras Makonnen, a native of Guyana now living in Kenya, are two of three veterans of 1945 Congress who attended the meeting. The third veteran was I. K. Musazi of Uganda.

PAN-AFRICANISM *Continued*

human equality and national self-determination."

With the formalities out of the way, the delegates got down to the nuts and bolts of Pan-Africanism, and it quickly became apparent that the Congress power center was a bloc of so-called progressive delegations (Guinea, Algeria, FRELIMO, Somalia, Cuba, Egypt, People's Republic of Congo) which had precise positions on several issues. Before the rest of the delegations could get their bearings, the leaders of this bloc fired two thunderous artillery rounds that virtually ended the contest. The first round was a 40-minute recorded message from President Sekou Touré of Guinea. President Touré was disturbed; Pan-Africanism and Pan-Africanists were being led astray, he said, by neo-colonialists and obscurantists who believed that Pan-Africanism was a "multi-continental Pan-negroism founded on a common ancestry, a kind of racism based on a so-called BLACK NATION." This was clearly erroneous, for "the color of the skin, whether black, white, yellow or brown, is no indication of the social class, ideology, code of conduct, qualities and abilities of a man or a People." It was his opinion that men and women should be able to identify themselves not by the color of the skin, which was a static element, but solely in terms of their goals.

It was necessary, he said, to fight "all that tends to confine us to a parochial identity, the identity characteristic of zoos." It was necessary to fight "this tendency, the most harmful, the most alienating form of which is indisputably what is called NEGRITUDE." He added:

"The racists of Southern Africa and the poets of NEGRITUDE all drink from the same fountain of racial prejudice and serve the same cause, the cause of imperialism. . . ."

Having laid down this premise, he immediately deduced its consequences.

"Pan-Africanism was founded as a serious movement of revolt of a People against the forces of exploitation, oppression and alienation. And because these forces . . . have embodied in their ideology of domination the myth of racial superiority, Pan-Africanism right from the beginning ran the risk of engulfing itself in racism while professing to be anti-racist. Now, although Pan-Africanism was founded as a movement of revolt, it cannot carry out its project of liberation unless it becomes a revolutionary movement of liberation. . . ."

Thunderous applause greeted these words, and the Algerian delegate—Councillor Mostefa Lacheraf—proposed that the addresses of President Touré and President Nyerere be unanimously adopted as the basic documents of the Congress. The delegation from Senegal objected to the address of President Touré, but the motion was carried, according to the official record, unanimously.

There then followed the second round of artillery, an incisive and forceful analysis by Marcelino dos Santos, vice president of FRELIMO (Mozambique Liberation Front) and head of the FRELIMO delegation. Dos Santos, like Touré, came down hard on the issue of racialism, quoting FRELIMO President Samora

Machel's denunciation of Black Power and warning against "the fascist" tendency of defining the enemy on the basis of skin color. The enemy, he said, was a system of exploitation.

As for the dream of returning to Africa, he said it was necessary "to be realistic and abandon the utopian idea of returning to promised lands because the only promised land is where men are making a revolution and building a new society."

What then was to be done?

The Pan-African movement was called on, he said, to transform itself into a revolutionary force based on the struggles of all oppressed peoples.

This same general line was pressed by other delegations, most notably Congo Republic and Somali. The delegation from Somali—Permanent Secretary Ahmed Abdi Hashi—expressed solidarity with "our brothers and sisters from the North American continent," adding: "However, we should not fight against racist discrimination/apartheid by being racists ourselves." He objected to the establishing of "a black fraternity," saying: "The objective of any call for the establishment of a black fraternity is to confuse the issue, divert us from our real targets—elimination of colonialism, imperialism and racism."

Coming to close grips with key proposals of the North American delegation, he opposed the creation of Pan-African institutions.

It was the opinion of his delegation that there were attempts by some "internal and external forces to paralyse the OAU and establish a rival organization which can serve their interests more promptly and expeditiously," and he urged the Congress to reject "these dark forces."

Thus, the progressives.

The OAU plot apart, there was some truth in all this. There was a need for someone to warn black people against the dangers of racism, although the progressives seemed to forget that there were still two or three *white* racists in the world. There was also a need for someone to blow the whistle on black exploiters and neo-colonialists, although the progressives seemed to forget Mao's excellent dictum that there is a fundamental distinction between contradictions among the people and contradictions between the people and the enemies of the people.

For all that, the progressive position was forcefully and sometimes eloquently stated and provided much food for thought. The problem, however, was that the progressives, in their zeal to see-no-race, hear-no-race and speak-no-race, carried their argument to regrettable extremes. For example: Whatever the political limitations of the Negritude movement, it simply is not true that the ideas of Aimé Césaire and Leopold Senghor have the same meaning as the ideas of the white leaders of the South African apartheid movement. Nor it is true that the Black Power movement was the creation of white American imperialists.

Here, as elsewhere, the basic problem of the progressives seemed to be over-reaction against the lamentable excesses of some blacks and a fear, as the leader of one delegation told me, of being committed to questionable political positions by the per-

Algerian delegate Mostefa Lacheraf, and Mrs. Cybil Patterson, a lecturer at the University of Guyana, address Congress. Mrs. Patterson was one of several women speakers. Congress called for the emancipation of women.





Demanding floor at closing session, chairman James Turner holds up sign of U. S. delegation. He argued for additional language in the Congress' General Declaration on the peculiar realities of racial situation in the United States.

PAN-AFRICANISM *Continued*

ceptions of black Americans who were, he said, obsessed by race. Whatever the reasons, the progressive bloc was forced into positions which were theoretically, politically, and historically unsound. It is not true, for example, that Pan-Africanism is the class struggle and nothing else but the class struggle. And it is dangerous nonsense, refuted by 400 years of struggle and 74 years of Pan-Africanism, to suggest that Africans, or people of African descent, can safely entrust their fate to the white working class. Moreover, there are few, if any, situations of African oppression in the world which can be explained solely by a class analysis. To be sure, there are few, if any, situations of African oppression in the world which can be explained without a class analysis. But that is only another way of saying that the question of color or class is not a question of either/or—it is a question of both/and. In other words, neither a class nor a color analysis explains the oppression of Africans which requires both a class *and* a color analysis and additional formulations based on the realities of specific African situations.

With rare exceptions, these issues were not raised and debated at Dar es Salaam. This is not to say that there were not powerful presentations from different viewpoints. The delegate from Senegal—Minister Alioune Sene—denied that Negritude was racism but rejected a “sterile polemic based on demagogic slogans.” The delegate from Britain—Jasper Forbes—argued for a revolutionary struggle but refused to “apologise for being black” and “for recognizing that the primary contradiction in our lives . . . is the colour of our skins.”

There were other notable contributions. The delegate from Sierra Leone—Minister S. A. J. Pratt—argued for a permanent Pan-African structure which would grant “our oppressed brothers outside Africa formal recognition.” He criticized the OAU for not paying enough attention to the problems of Africans outside Africa, pointing out that the OAU takes decisive stands on several non-African issues, including the Middle East. “African descendants in America and the Caribbean,” he said, “have no less claim on our attention.” Also arguing for permanent Pan-African structures were delegates from Kenya and Ghana.

Two of the four papers presented by U. S. delegates supported key elements in the progressive position. In a passionate denunciation of racism in the United States, which evoked a standing ovation, Owusu Sadauki warned against getting carried away by skin color, which was, he said, an accident of birth. He called for an international movement based on active struggle for socialism. Also arguing for scientific socialism was Imamu Baraka, who deplored the limitations of the OAU and neo-colonialist governments in Africa and the Caribbean and attacked “the pseudo-powerful American Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie.”

Speaking from a different perspective, Dr. Neville Parker, professor of civil engineering at Howard University, proposed the establishment of a Pan-African Center of Science and Tech-

nology. The final American speaker, Bishop H. H. Brookins of the AME Church, received a standing ovation after he called on the delegates to move from rhetoric to reality by establishing mutually beneficial arrangements.

As the debate intensified, causing deepening concern, President Nyerere added a postscript to his address. Meeting with members of the African-American press, he said frankly that the racial situation in the United States was a class *and* a color problem. In the same press conference, he came out in favor of a permanent Pan-African structure within the OAU to represent the interests of African descendants. “At present,” he said, “when we talk about racialism, we mean racialism in Africa. And when we talk to you people we want you to help us end racialism in Africa. We should accept the logic if we are going to fight racialism in Africa, we must fight it in the United States.” He warned his idealistic young listeners not to expect a speedy coming of the kingdom of Pan-Africanism. “All governments,” he said over and over again, “are conservative.”

IT WAS soon apparent that Nyerere's warning was all too well founded. For powerful forces were massing behind the issue of class and color and the related issue of the institutionalization of Pan-Africanism.

The progressive bloc, as the speeches cited indicate, took a hard line on these issues, defining Pan-Africanism as the class struggle and the movement of all oppressed peoples and opposing any form of institutionalization. Some delegates were so adamant on the last point that they even opposed the adoption of rules and the election of Congress officers. When the Congress adopted a draft set of rules over the objection of the progressives, the Algerian delegation threatened to withdraw from the Congress Steering Committee. The Algerian delegate said it was the view of his delegation that the delegates should not make substantive commitments but should confine themselves to exchanging views and getting to know one another. The matter was referred to a committee which decided that the rules would only be used for the guidance of the chair.

What was the American delegation—the largest and potentially most powerful delegation—doing all this time?

It was caucusing, debating, going through the painful process of adapting the Pan-African dream to Pan-African reality. What made this process even more painful was the size of the American delegation. Most delegations consisted of five or six bureaucrats voicing a precise governmental position. The U. S. delegation consisted of 183 persons—60 delegates, 30 alternate delegates, 31 special guests, 11 staff members, 28 observers, and 23 members of the press. These persons—only the delegates had voting power—were charged with the responsibility of deciding how to cast one vote. In making this decision, the U. S. delegation was hampered not only by its size but also by its diversity. Unlike most delegations, the U. S. delegation was composed of a heterogeneous mixture of Marxists, nationalists, Marxists-nationalists, and moderates.

To make matters worse, the U. S. delegation arrived in Dar es Salaam without position papers and held its first meeting as a delegation after the opening session. This was not entirely the fault of the delegation. It was hampered in the United States by a lack of money, publicity, and public support (the delegation did not contain a single black elected official, although Congressman Charles Diggs sent a statement of support). It was also plagued at the last minute by repeated and mysterious cancellations of charter flights.

In view of all this it is easy to see why the U. S. delegation was not a serious factor in the early and decisive Congress maneuvering. By the end of the Congress, the delegation had made substantial progress in bridging the ideological gaps. By this time, too, many U. S. delegates had coalesced around several positions, including demands for a Pan-African Skills Center, a society of Pan-African scientists and technicians, a permanent Pan-African secretariat, and some form of dual citizenship.

The American delegation was courted, wined and dined, but their key proposals were not seriously considered by the three



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PAN-AFRICANISM *Continued*

Congress committees (Political, Economic, and Science, Technology and Culture). And the final reports were unequivocal endorsements of the progressive position.

The key document, the General Declaration of the Political Committee, was essentially a series of quotations from the speeches of President Touré and Marcelino dos Santos of FRELIMO. It denounced racial movements and racial slogans and called for a revolutionary movement of the oppressed peoples of the world. It said Pan-Africanism must be defined in terms of the class struggle at the national and international level and excludes all "racial, tribal, ethnic, religious or chauvinist considerations." What of African-Americans? They were listed with "all peoples" in a vague sentence which urged the delegates "to consolidate the unity between the peoples of Africa and of African descent and all peoples."

So there it was, then. There was not going to be a permanent Pan-African secretariat. There was not going to be a Pan-African Center of Technology. There was not even going to be a Pan-African movement. By inadvertence, the draft copy of the General Declaration contained language referring to the Pan-African movement. The delegate from Algeria gained the floor and reminded the vice-chairman of the Political Committee, Marcelino dos Santos, that it had been decided that all references to the Pan-African movement would be deleted in favor of the word *Pan-Africanism*.

Although the final documents rejected institutional arrangements, there was language recommending that Pan-African scientists be encouraged to exchange information and to settle in Pan-African countries which were urged "while recruiting scientists and technologists from abroad for equal qualification and experience where possible to give preference to Pan-African scientists and technologists."

As a matter of course, there were resolutions—resolutions recommending a common currency for African countries and a restructuring of the United Nations "in order to fairly represent the continents of the Third World." Other resolutions urged the United States and others Western powers to immediately grant independence to their colonies in the Caribbean and Pacific, supported the struggles of the Palestinian people, and called for a total boycott of Portugal, South Africa, and Rhodesia.

Under the rules of the Congress, the documents were accepted without debate or a formal vote, despite objections from several delegations, notably the United States, Senegal, and Ghana. The delegate from Senegal charged that the General Declaration was shamefully apologetic on the issue of race. "We are told," he said, "that we must set aside all considerations of race when black men are still despised because of race." He added: "We militants of Negritude say we are black and we want to remain black. We don't want to be white, yellow, or any other color."

Speaking for the U. S. delegation, chairman James Turner argued for additional language recognizing the limitations of the white working class and the peculiar realities of the racial situation in the United States. The objections were ruled out of order, and the documents were accepted. Later, in deference to the sensibilities of the United Kingdom and United States delegations, sentences were added recognizing the problems of the white working class and urging Pan-Africanists to work for an integrated struggle of the black and white working masses.

Appraisals of the Congress varied widely in African-American circles. Some delegates said the Congress was an ideological disaster which endangered the future of Pan-Africanism. Others, more realistic perhaps, certainly more optimistic, said the Congress was an important first step in reorienting the Pan-African movement.

"One thing we learned here," poet Haki R. Madhubuti (Don Lee) told an audience of African college students, "is that *we* [African-Americans] have a national interest."

If that was not the beginning of the ending of the Pan-African Crusade, it was at least the ending of the beginning of a painful process of reeducation which may yet make the reality match the splendor of the dream.

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