THE BLACK DIASPORA IN PAN-AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

The diaspora paradigm involves the concept of a "Homeland" and various situations outside of it into which individuals have migrated and where persisting "diaspora communities" survive despite profound changes in the culture and physique of the people. In the classical prototype, the Jewish people were forced away from the Homeland. Though dispersed, a "remnant" never lost its nostalgia for the Homeland and kept alive the concept of "The ingathering of the exiles," of an eventual "Return." Some similarities to the black experience are obvious, including, at times, trends that can be called "Black Zionist." But the diaspora analogy, like the internal colony analogy, needs constant critical analysis if it is to be a useful guide to research as well as a striking metaphor.

For purposes of this essay, sub-Saharan Africa is viewed as a "Homeland" from which, during the past 10,000 years, a number of separate diasporas may be defined. Our primary concern, at this point, is with the most recent, and, to us, the most immediately relevant diaspora, the movement of over 10,000,000 Africans to the Western Hemisphere between 1500 A.D. and 1890 A.D. Europeans brought them and used most of them as chattel slaves in a variety of work-settings—in cities, in mines, on yeoman farms, in maritime activities, and on plantations growing commodities for the world market. Everywhere, they were forced into subordinate roles in the process of production and in non-economic relationships by institutionalized racism, first for over 300 years as slaves and as discriminated-against "Free Negroes," then, later, as "free" labor controlled by caste systems (as in the South prior to legal desegregation) or by color-class systems which condemned them to the lowest stratum of the society by denial of equality of opportunity and through the deliberate cultivation of a "false consciousness" that prevents effective struggle (as, e.g., in Brazil).²

By the mid-1970s, 115 years out of slavery, the black community in the United States represented the largest, most compact, and best organized group in the Hemisphere that considered itself "black"—composed of some 24,000,000 individuals. Yet, its leadership potential in Pan-African affairs is complicated by the fact that it is enclaved within the territory of a large white super-power. Barbados, with its 166 sq. miles is a sovereign state and U.N. member.

In some of the Spanish-speaking areas, such as Mexico, the African component in the population has been virtually absorbed by amalgamation with Indians, mestizos and Spaniards, and cultural assimilation. However, for most of the people of African descent in the Hemisphere, the concept of Black Liberation envisions group persistence within poly-ethnic, multi-racial societies in which no one color group or ethnic group will have more power or prestige than another, and in which equality of rights will be
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guaranteed. Implicit, too, is the idea that miscegenation should be a personal choice and must not be made the price demanded for individual upward mobility, and that some ethnic customs must be accorded legitimacy. Yet, there are mixed-blood groups everywhere who deplore their African ancestry, and obviously, such intermediate strata have been useful in the politics of divide and rule. The race relations situation in the United States of America is the only one in which light skin-color was not the basis for the formation of intermediate privileged strata or a basis for acceptance as "white."

Analysis of the black experience in all of its dimensions can be justified without apology simply in terms of satisfying intellectual curiosity, but the committed black scholar (and one would hope that most of them would be committed) is interested in a research strategy that maximizes the usefulness of the process and the results for Liberation activity. The most useful model for such purposes is one that modifies traditional Marxist-Leninist analysis to include not only the political economy of capitalist-imperialist expansion (studies of the "base"), but also the effect of dependency upon Third World peoples, political, cultural, and psychological, as well as economic. An analysis of "superstructure" as well as "base" must be included, and here a sociology of knowledge approach is indispensable. Concern with alienation in all of its aspects and the implications for effective action will be relevant. In dealing with ideologies, it is assumed that once they have emerged out of concrete historical relations, they function as independent variables and have a "feed-back" effect upon subsequent situations. The study of "false consciousness" and how it can be dissipated is of crucial importance.

The hostile and uninformed who dismiss Marx as a racist ignore the substantial contributions he made as journalist and official of the International Workingmen's Association to the mobilization of public opinion to support the anti-slavery cause. But he wrote before either psychology or anthropology had reached its present level of sophistication, and without a body of research to draw upon for assessing the degree of race prejudice that existed within the American working class. His optimism about the possibility of effective unity between black and white workers during the post-Civil War period sounds naive, but he also underestimated the strength of nationalism in Europe when he sounded the call: "Workers of the world unite: you have nothing to lose but your chains." But Marx and Engels developed an incisive method of analysis in the field of political economy and posed the "big" questions in the area of historical sociology. These were legacies as useful to black scholars as to white. Lenin's subsequent analysis of imperialism "made sense" to two generations of Asian and African nationalist leaders—even the anti-Communist ones; although as an evolutionary positivist, Lenin—and Stalin
who followed him—as well as Marx and Engels who preceded him—could not be expected to have any empathy for many of the “primitive” cultural observances and values that Third World leftists are willing to tolerate or even treasure. Fanon, Nkrumah, and Cabral were all engaged in the process of adapting Marxist principles to African realities whether they called themselves Marxist or not when they died. Sekou Touré and Nkrumah were consciously and deliberately doing so.7

Harold Cruse has deplored the Marxist factionalism which he claims West Indian intellectuals introduced into Harlem during the 1920s, but T. Thomas Fortune had been making a class analysis in the 1880s before the Populist Movement, and, by 1918, A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen were praising the I.W.W. in the Messenger.8 It is true, however, that the objective situation of West Indian colonies, as contrasted with the ghettoization of Afro-Americans, was the milieu out of which Eric Williams contributed skilfully to the use of Marxism for historical analysis (Capitalism and Slavery -1944) and Oliver Cromwell Cox developed a theory of race relations (Caste, Class and Race -1948). Two other Trinidadians carried theory into practice: George Padmore working with the International African Service Bureau in London and with Nkrumah in Ghana, and C. L. R. James as advisor and journalist to Eric Williams in Trinidad political operations.

During the 1930s, Ralph Bunche’s A World View of Race and Horace Mann Bond’s History of Education in Alabama: A Study in Cotton and Steel, as well as Dr. Dubois’ Black Reconstruction were experiments in Marxist analysis by outstanding Afro-American scholars of a previous generation. Today, Ameer Baraka, Abdul Alkalimat, James Boggs, and Earl Ofari are a few of the contemporary young committed scholars engaged in developing action-related theory and analysis combining black solidarity and class struggle.

Within the broad matrix of a model that defines the total black experience in the New World as an aspect of European imperialism and neo-colonialism, which exploited black labor, a number of significant problems might be defined for comparative study. Such analysis permits the critical examination of such important questions as the extent to which racism and anti-black sentiments and behavior have always been present in human societies, or the validity of claims that negritude is something found universally among black people.9 Also, hypotheses may be posed and tested about the operation of geographical, economic, social and cultural factors in defining the life-chances and lifestyles of black populations. A plethora of works are available—articles, books, and monographs—on specific black communities in the Western Hemisphere and on race relations, but less attention has been given to the Pan-African problem of relationships between the scattered communities of the Black Diaspora and their relations with the Homeland. One fruitful approach to handling this problem is through what might be called an analysis of “flows” of people, ideas, and artifacts between the diaspora communities at varied time-levels and using interdisciplinary research techniques.

A POSSIBLE FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

If we adopt a time-span of approximately 10,000 years for the study of successive dispersals of population out of sub-Saharan Africa,10 eight situations might be defined—numbered I-VIII in Fig. 1—where for varying lengths of time black people have been present in sufficient numbers to have made an impact and where data about their presence can be retrieved. It should be emphasized that in some of these situations the fact that they were “black” may have had no social salience for the people and is important to us only because the Caucasian West developed a kind of virulent racism incident to its expansion overseas after the middle of the 15th Century that has forced all blacks to be race conscious. Whether they were “civilized” or “Barbarian,” Muslim or pagan, Christian, Jew, or Infidel may have been far more important to them than whether or not
they were black or non-black. This is a matter to be ascertained empirically, situation by situation. As sociologist Raymond Mack phrases it, race is “invariably relevant” to us.

The earliest dispersals would have been into the situation I, North Africa and Egypt. The prehistoric picture is a matter for debate and speculation among archaeologists. Up to the 19th Century the only available sources for early historic periods were Graeco-Roman mythology and folklore, Herodotus and other early Greek historians, and Biblical references to Egypt and Ethiopia. Between the middle of the 18th Century and the end of the 19th, Ethiopia assumed special importance among North American black people, for their religious leaders elaborated a pre-political defensive ideology that might be called “Ethiopianism” which stressed favorable Biblical references and affirmed belief in a prophecy, “Princes shall come out of Egypt and Ethiopia shall soon stretch forth her hand unto god.” W. E. B. DuBois and Edward Blyden,11 not only brought forward the testimony of the classical scholars to support the idea of a once great and powerful Ethiopia, but also launched a vigorous attack on those racist scholars who insisted that Egypt’s greatness was destroyed by incapable, degenerate, black pharaohs who came as conquerors from the South, and by miscegenation with the blacks. It could not be denied that blacks functioned in high places in Egypt as well as on lowly levels as servants and slaves. Egyptology was racist to the core.

The West African savant, Cheikh Anta Diop, has effectively completed the critical work begun by Blyden. His work is summarized in The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality (1974). In deciding for “reality,” Diop warns against attributing any special racial or genetic virtue to blacks, citing the very favorable concatenation of physical circumstances in the Nile Valley and virtues of black culture. (He combines an old fashioned Marxian stage theory with his black nationalism.) A new breed of Egyptologists is now admitting that black influences on an-

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Figure 1
cient Egypt were far from disastrous; in fact, that in many cases they were just the opposite. There is still exciting work to be done on Kush and Meroitic culture, but it demands a willingness to master a number of esoteric languages. The late Professor William Leo Hansberry of Howard University was one of the few Afro-American scholars who was prepared to do Egyptological studies, including hieroglyphics.

For centuries; the terminal points of caravans crossing the Sahara have been in Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, some on the coast and some farther inland. Settlements of blacks have grown up and remained in these areas as well as traditions of occupational specialization—black soldiers, entertainers and domestic servants. The black experience in this part of Africa deserves more attention than it has received in the effort to answer questions about the relationship between race and color, ethnic group or tribe, and social class in North Africa, and about the role of blacks in the trade between the northern Muslim areas and their pagan ancestral homeland. There is even lack of clarity about the extent of black involvement in the Almoravid invasion of the Iberian peninsula which started from Senegal, or in Moorish conquest of the Songhay Empire. The argument that Caucasian invaders cohabited with black women and then taught their children to despise blacks needs backing with more empirical data than Professor Chancellor Williams presents in The Destruction of Black Civilization (1974). The Tuareg may be a crucial instance. Algerian asylum for the Panthers and Libya’s generous loan to the Nation of Islam for the purchase of the mosque in Chicago, as well as Frantz Fanon’s long association with black and the role of North African states in the Organization of African Unity suggest that the reciprocal relationships, defined by A→I, have Pan-African importance.

Diop, citing the French scholars Dieulafoy and Contenau, brings some support to the belief that there was at least one black dynasty in Mesopotamia at Elam and speaks of a “Black Egypto-Phoenician world.” It is undoubtedly true that Ethiopians played active roles throughout the Middle East (Situation II) at least from Homeric times. Memnon came from Ethiopia with his army to fight at Troy and black archers were in constant demand as mercenaries. That they left some genes throughout the Middle East is likely but that blacks also formed diaspora settlements needs archaeological backing that is very difficult to find. On the other hand Herodotus said he knew the Colchians in Asia Minor were Egyptians because they were black with wooly hair, and it is generally agreed now that an African military outpost was planted there. Medea also came from this area. Was she possibly black, too, in some Greek versions? Corliss Lamont reports on an all-black collective farm in the Abkhazian Republic of the U.S.S.R. that is about a century old, made up originally of black slaves of the Turks. This whole area around the Black Sea coast was a source of white slaves for the Mediterranean world until the Turks took Constantinople. There are black Jews from the Chicago now living in the Negev who sent a petition to the Sixth Pan African Congress in 1974 claiming that they, not the Israeli Jews, are descended from the original inhabitants of Palestine. As intriguing as these speculations are, it might be more fruitful to consider questions about situations after the spread of Islam throughout the area.

The Arabs were originally without color prejudice, according to Bernard Lewis, but along with their military expansion they developed contempt for both the white and black pagans and expressed color prejudices against both. Iraqi Arabs did not hesitate to make slaves of the Zanj pagans from the African interior at the same time the Omani Arabs were sustaining equal status relations with Islamized Africans on the Swahili Coast, and later with the Copts in Egypt. Zanj slavery was defended with the same Ham myth that was used several centuries later in Virginia! Between 868 A.D. and 883 A.D. thousands of slaves on the salt flats of Iraq revolted and almost overthrew the Caliphate of Baghdad. Careful study of relations be-
tween blacks and other populations in the area are needed to clarify questions concerning the emergence of racist tendencies under specific conditions, and the dynamics of systems where blacks were simultaneously occupying very high status positions and very low ones, a situation impossible in Christian slavery.

Prof. Joseph Harris, Chairman of Afro-American Studies, Williams College, has made an outstanding contribution to our knowledge of reciprocal relations between Africa and Situation IV, Asia and China, in his book, The African Presence in Asia: Consequences of the East African Slave Trade (1971) and his article "The Black Peoples of Asia" in the World Encyclopedia of Black Peoples (1975). In addition to detailed discussion of the interaction between diaspora communities in India and East Africa he has unearthed such fascinating facts as those surrounding Malik Ambar, the Ethiopian, who became a famous ruler in Ahmadnagar from 1602-26 at the same time that the first settlements of Africans were taking root in Virginia, New Amsterdam, Maryland and South Carolina. Whatever "racism" may have existed in the Mogul Empire was certainly not of the same thing as that which was used to support chattel slavery in the Western Hemisphere. Yet, it may have been a special type of "tokenism."

In 1970, an Afro-American classicist, at Howard University, after retranslating many of the sources and adding to them a careful study of archaeological finds, published the definitive work on what might be called the Black Diaspora into the ancient Mediterranean World (Situation III): Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience. This was a dispersion that did not result in any permanent communities on the northern shores of the Mediterranean, a fact that Professor Snowden would cite in corroboration of his contention that racism did not exist in the Greco-Roman world and that miscegenation was accepted as normal and his evaluation of the situation as a desirable one. Professor Joseph E. Harris in Africans and their History raises quite pertinent critical questions about Professor Snowden's assessment of some of the data. It needs a wider range of attention by black scholars.

It was Mediterranean Europe of a much later period, however, that brought slavery to the Western Hemisphere, through the Spanish Crown with the backing of Italian bankers. And when the Pope allotted Brazil to Portugal, that sovereign, too, became involved in the exploitation of African manpower for opening up "The New World." Had white slaves still been available, the trade in blacks as an exclusive commodity might not have arisen. During the latter part of the 16th Century, Northern Europeans became the dominant maritime powers, with Britain finally achieving the commanding position among these. As Winthrop Jordan points out in White Over Black (1968) contact with Africa generated derogatory stereotypes in the British mind and they functioned as prejudices which the plantocracy in the colonies elaborated as an anti-black racist ideology.

At times there have been communities of black people in Britain (Situation V) and Kenneth Little's Negroes in Britain (1948) opened up the field of race relations to research. Drake later published on the diaspora community in Cardiff Wales. Now, with increased immigration of West Indians and Africans to Britain a "race problem" has been defined and a sizeable body of literature exists. It is significant that British blacks were represented in 1974 at the Sixth Pan African Congress in Tanzania. A small fragment of the Black World resides under British rule in Canada, mainly West Indian migrants, but some being descendants of refugees from the U.S.A. between the Revolutionary War and the Civil War.

The research output on the impact of Africa on the Western Hemisphere is top heavy with studies of the Middle Passage to the British and French West Indies and to North America, but comparable material, if it exists, has not been made available in English from Spanish and Portuguese.
sources. Given the large numbers of people from the Congo and Angola who were transported, this gap should be filled. Much of this literature deals with the horrors of the trade and with demographic facts and epidemiology. As interesting as these matters are, a serious effort should be made to retrieve and collate all of the data on resistance to enslavement on the African coasts and on ship-board en route to America from a black perspective. A preliminary survey of the data available in English reveals a constant running battle across the Atlantic on the slave-ships themselves between the captives and their enslavers. Another much studied aspect of the African impact has been the work of anthropologists, musicologists, and sociolinguistics on cultural retentions, reinterpretations and syncretisms, especially in the fields of religious ritual and belief, in music and in dance.

Pioneering work in socio-linguistics was done by the Afro-American linguist, Lorenzo Turner (Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect) and in a wider field of interests by Melville and Frances Herskovits. Some recent studies suggest that the extent of enduring African influences on North American black cultures has been underestimated. A virtually neglected field of study is being explored in the Caribbean by J. D. Elder and Maureen Warner, the impact of Yorubas who came to Trinidad as free wage labor after slavery was abolished and who gained considerable esteem there. The current strength of the Shango religion in that island is probably due to this group rather than to the descendants of the slaves. While these historical studies are important and should involve a much larger group of Afro-Americans as co-workers than is now interested in such problems, the post-World War II relations between black Americans and Africans living, studying and working in the United States (or representing their governments) should be given research priority with the goal of stimulating more effective Pan-African co-operation. It is significant that a Nigerian, Essien Udom, put his finger on several crucial aspects of Afro-American life in his Black Nationalism before Afro-American intellectuals began to deal with them. Comparison with the Caribbean where state-to-state relations are not only possible but are being constantly reinforced should be made.

Documentation of the flow of people, ideas, and artifacts from among North American blacks to Africa is easy to come by, although the data in institutional archives and newspapers have been barely touched. The British historian, George A. Shepperson demonstrated the potential for such research in his pathbreaking article in Vol. I, No. 2 of the Journal of African History, 1960, "Notes on Negro American Influences on the Emergence of African Nationalism." A Nigerian graduate student at the University of Minnesota, Tony Nnameka, has recently completed a content-analysis study which demonstrates conclusively that the "Negro press" in the United States, not British examples, influenced the first journalists in Sierra Leone and Nigeria as well as those in Liberia. Neither the Liberian experiment nor the impact of the Garvey movement on Africa have yet received the kind of thorough study by Afro-American scholars that they merit. An English scholar, David Jenkins effectively combines historical material and interviews with people now living in Africa in his Black Zion: The Return of Afro-Americans and West Indians to Africa (1975), but a full-scale, comprehensive scholarly attack will have to await a great deal more of pedestrian research resulting in journal articles, master's theses, and doctoral dissertations before the groundwork will have been completed that can make it possible. St. Clair Drake's article on "Negro Americans and 'the African Interest'" published in the American Negro Handbook (1966) suggested some of the directions such research might take.

The impact of West Indians from British and French areas on Africa has created some interest because of well-known personalities like Felix Eboue, George Padmore, or Edward Wilmot Blyden who made their careers in Africa, but since the emancipation of the slaves between 1838 and 1848 hundreds of West Indians have served as soldiers and
The reciprocal relations between Afro-Americans in the United States and black people in the West Indies is a matter of crucial significance to diaspora studies. Marcus Garvey, Stokely Carmichael, Roy Innis, and Shirley Chisholm, and Mervyn Dymally are well-known examples of West Indians who have found an opportunity for leadership careers in the United States. But this is nothing new. Prince Hall from Barbados fought at Lexington and Concord and later founded the first Black Masonic Lodge, African Lodge No. 459 of the Scottish Rite of Masons. One of the first two black college graduates in the United States was a Jamaican, as was the founder of Freedom's Journal, the first Afro-American newspaper. Ira De A. Reid's study of the Negro immigrant discussed the West Indian impact during the 1920s and Harold Cruse has stated his strong views about the harmful effect of West Indian intellectuals during that period. Equivalent studies of the American impact on the Caribbean are just beginning, and the future publication of Robert Hill's work on Rev. Ringold Ward and Rev. Henry Highland Garnet in Jamaica will open up a new dimension in Afro-American studies. There are similar opportunities in Trinidad where villages of black migrants who came in the 1840s still call themselves "Americans." The absence of a major Caribbean Studies center at either Howard University or Atlanta University has hampered the serious study of historical and contemporary interactions between North American blacks and West Indians.

It can be argued that the most important political event in Western Hemisphere diaspora history occurred in the Caribbean. This was the insurrection of the blacks in Haiti in 1791. They freed themselves and fought a 13-year war that ended in 1804 with the establishment of a sovereign state. Both the events and the personalities of Toussaint L'Ouverture, Dessalines, and Christophe shook the nerves of planters everywhere in the Hemisphere but sent tremors of hope and rejoicing throughout the Black World. To the remote and almost mythical Ethiopia was now added another symbol of black sovereignty. Increasingly the impact upon the U.S.A. of San Domingo is being rediscovered, and certain facets need further exploration. For instance, anthropologist Leyburn reports in The Haitian People that Christophe brought Dahomeans to serve as middle level administrators. Other scholars report an allocation of a ship to call at American ports to pick up freed slaves who might wish to emigrate to a sovereign Haiti. Both gestures merit serious research. In periodizing black history, the Age of Christophe merits a book every whit as much as did the Age of Jackson from a U.S. perspective.

Latin America has had a symbolic significance for North American blacks that needs critical analysis. During the 1930s, Brazil achieved a reputation for being free of race prejudice that dies hard. Even when Katherine Dunham was refused service in Rio de Janeiro Afro-Americans accepted the Brazilian argument that blame fell on American tourists. The persistence of highly visible black poverty was talked away as "class oppression" only without a racial component. The matter began to achieve greater clarity after a UNESCO publication pointed out that what being black meant varied by region and situation. The work of the Brazilian sociologist, Fernandes and of the dramatist Nascimento, calls attention to the overt discrimination against blacks as contrasted with mulattoes in Sao Paulo, and anthropologist Marvin Harris is led to predict that a Black Power movement is likely to emerge there despite all of the claims that given time and
more miscegenation alleged racial disabilities will disappear. Cuba has become, for many black Americans, a similar symbol of freedom from racism, but here, too, questions have been raised as to whether or not a subtle form of racial prejudice continues despite the socialist revolution. About one area, however, there has never been any question, the Panama Canal Zone where the Anglo variety of blatant overt segregation and discrimination held full sway until recently in sharp contrast to attitudes in the adjacent Republic of Panama. But there if one were Spanish black he held a higher status than if he was of West Indian ancestry.

Except for Mexico City where a few black Americans occasionally take a vacation, face-to-face contact between Afro-America and Latin America is rare. Afro-Americans probably have some kind of symbolic significance to Latin American blacks but this has not been pursued by depth-interviews or whatever other techniques could elicit the information such as study of audience and listener response to black films and music. Mexico which once had a large black population has absorbed most of it by amalgamation and most of the rest of Latin America claims that a similar "solution" will eventually take place in their areas. But persisting black communities in Cuba, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic, some of which think of themselves as a part of the Black World and some of which don't, present a research problem that challenged black North American scholars and a situation requiring a decision as to whether or not the raising of black consciousness in these areas should be assigned high priority.

**TOWARD A UNIFIED VIEW OF THE BLACK WORLD**

There is no necessary contradiction between a Marxist approach to the black experience and some forms of black solidarity—though not all. Racial mysticism and chauvinism, of course, as well as a dogmatic Marxism that ignores the role of race-thinking in history, cannot be reconciled. In 1900, the first formal conference using the name Pan-African was held in London, at a time when a number of Pan-Movements cutting across national political boundaries were very active. The Sixth Pan-African Congress met in Tanzania in the summer of 1974, at which basic differences surfaced between what might be called racial Pan-Africanism and Continent Pan-Africanism, those who give priority to unity of the Black World as opposed to those who give priority to the unity of the continent. Obviously, black solidarity is not the prescription for continent-wide unity, but as Kwame Nkrumah and George Padmore demonstrated in practice, continental unity no more excludes racial Pan-Africanism than it does Pan-Islamism. A dialectical unity of opposites generates continuous contradictions that must be resolved.

During the 75 years between the first Pan-African Congress and the sixth, the number of sovereign states in Africa increased from two (Liberia and Ethiopia) to over forty, and the number in the Caribbean from three (Haiti, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic) to a half dozen. The black population in the United States, although unable to exercise sovereignty, increased its demographic Black Power potential from 5,000,000 to over 20,000,000. The North American delegation at the Sixth Pan-African Congress and some of the peoples' organizations seeking representation from the Caribbean inevitably held views that could not coincide with those of the present rulers of black states. Fanon alerted us to the possibility of such an impasse in Ch. 2 of *The Wretched of the Earth*. Yet, as President Nyerere pointed out, so long as worldwide denigration of black people remains, black people have tasks of mobilizing against racism that demand unified or co-ordinated action that cuts across all other divisions. How to achieve such solidarity without sacrificing the interests of the great majority of the people is a major problem.

Groups as diverse in goal and membership as the Organization of African Unity and the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity operate with a conceptual entity, "The Black World," which includes all people everywhere who "look
like" they are of African descent or who claim to be. Scholars can accept this concept and refine it. These geographically scattered peoples might be referred to as a potentially organizable “Pan-African Aggregate” within which political leaders in various sectors of it, attempt from time to time, to increase the “black consciousness” of their followers, sometimes for quite limited and occasionally nefarious ends, but sometimes with the goal of gradually developing Pan-African solidarity that will eventuate in common or co-ordinated action to complete the worldwide task of Black Liberation. But black consciousness is also generated by other processes. For instance, it has always been stronger in the Western Hemisphere than in most of Africa, a function not only of less abrasive face-to-face race relations (except in settler states), but also of the high illiteracy levels. Now, as more and more children are drawn into the schools and are exposed to the history of the slave-trade and its aftermath, Africans will become more highly conscious of their links to the diaspora. Whether the response will be positive or negative will depend to a large extent upon the kind of textbooks that are used in the schools. One of the tasks of cultural workers, including scholars, is to document, clarify, interpret this process, isolating the factors that make Pan-African solidarity difficult to achieve so that such data may be taken into account by planners and statesmen, and those who design curricula and media content. Equally important is the non-utilitarian objective of developing appreciation for the art, literature, drama, and music of black people everywhere as an end in itself.

One of the most recent efforts at synthesizing a wide range of data and presenting it as a collective statement about the Black World as a whole is the World Encyclopedia of Black Peoples, Volume I, Conspectus (1975). Its 20 articles, prepared by a group of African and Afro-American scholars includes exciting new facets of history and discussions of art and religion of black people as well as of economics and social policy in Africa, North America, the Caribbean, and India. The standard A-Z encyclopedia will follow gradually in 16 volumes. This is good, but it’s not enough. The future should provide us with a more sophisticated version of what Booker T. Washington and G. W. Williams tried to do in those first histories of the black man in the late 19th century—a narrative treatment of Africa and the peoples of the diaspora within a single unified frame of reference.21 Anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits tried to do this utilizing anthropological concepts he had developed, in his book, The Myth of the Negro Past (1944). A combination of a dependency theory analysis and a black perspective should give us a more adequate account of the dynamics of the societies out of which the Africans came, the New World work-settings, and the reaction of the whole black world to those structures of world capitalism and of the world religious and political movements that condition the black experience.

While no satisfactory single volume on The Black World has yet appeared, two very substantial ones dealing with black history in the African Homeland have, both being syntheses on a grand scale: Cheik Anta Diop’s combination of Marxism and black nationalism in The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality, and Chancellor Williams’ black nationalist book, The Destruction of Black Civilization: Great Issues of a Race From 4500 B.C. to 2000 A.D.

An ambitious attempt at synthesizing material for the entire New World Diaspora was made by Roger Bastide in his little volume Les Ameriques Noires: Les Civilisations Africaines Dans Le Nouveau Monde, but like the collection of papers in Melville J. Herskovits, The New World Negro, the focus is so narrowly anthropological that it loses its relevance for understanding crucial issues of social change. Norman E. Whitten Jr. and John F. Szewd in the introduction to their book of readings: Afro-American Anthropology: Contemporary Perspective (1970), criticize earlier work (including that of Herskovits) and suggest a frame of reference for research that starts with the assumption that “economic marginality is a critical constant affecting
adaptive processes” and taking account of C. A. Valentine’s criticism of “... the failure of anthropologists to adequately understand the role of white domination of Negroes throughout the New World. ...” Within that broad framework, a series of questions might be asked that are of primary concern to those who are trying to prepare textbooks and material for visual and auditory media that contribute toward implementing black solidarity throughout the Hemisphere:

1. How have the cultures of each African tribal group been affected by contact with other African cultures in varied work-settings: plantation, mines, cities, ranches, yeoman farms, etc?

2. How have the cultures of each African ethnic group been modified by contact with varied groups of Europeans (English, Spanish, French, Dutch, Portuguese, Danish, etc.) borne by a variety of occupational types—planters, overseers, soldiers, missionaries, “poor whites,” etc?

3. How have the detached fragments of people from The Homeland survived physically and been modified through miscegenation in various ecological niches scattered from the Arctic to the tip of South America and what is their present demographic position?

4. What types of social differentiation have taken place under what kind of specified conditions, and what new institutions have emerged?

5. How have diaspora populations in varied settings mobilized against cruelty and degradation and for freedom during slavery?

6. How have diaspora populations struggled for total liberation since the abolition of slavery?

7. How and why did a supra-ethnic, Pan-African consciousness emerge first in the New World and lend support to: (a) resistance to cruelty during slavery, and (b) black nationalist goals?

8. What has been the nature of the interaction between the communities of the diaspora and The Homeland and between the various communities? What kind of conscious and deliberate co-operation has taken place and how can it be enhanced?

It is this last point that we have discussed briefly in this essay.

FOOTNOTES


17. Ibid., pp. 65-66.


