MARXISM-LENINISM AND NKRUMAHISM

by STOKELY CARMICHAEL

"Nkrumahism is scientific socialism applied to countries emerging from colonialism, and specifically African countries where the Marxist capital-labor conflict is only one of a number of fundamental conflicts."

- Osagyefo

There are many African organizations which accept as their ideology Marxism - Leninism. Many of these young organizations received their stimulus from the concept of Black Power, which emphasized the powerlessness of Africans. The All African People's Revolutionary Party knows that the correct ideology for Africans the world-over is Nkrumahism. Nkrumahism does not and cannot negate the universal truths of Marxism - Leninism; it merely incorporates these truths.

Our Party finds that in its attempts to spread our ideology, Nkrumahism, we are meeting ideological conflicts from black Marxist - Leninists. We find the situation ironic simply because it is crystal clear to us that any African who understands Marxist - Leninist theory should readily recognize the necessity and correctness of our ideology. The irony in this case, we feel, is due to misunderstanding. Two particular concepts are recurring themes in this area. One is that the struggle of the African is one in which race is totally irrelevant. This is due to the fact that many Marxist - Leninists believe that economics is the only determining element in the making of history. The other is that the African experience finds reality in Marxism - Leninism. The Party feels these organizations do not understand the importance of race in the class struggle today. Consequently, they are unable to comprehend the world socialist revolution in general and the Black Revolution in particular.

One does not become a Marxist - Leninist by constantly using the term. I find myself constantly amazed at the number of people who become Marxist - Leninist overnight. It seems to me that Marxism - Leninism is a science which has to be carefully studied. Only after study, understanding and practice can one honestly and legitimately claim Marxism - Leninism. Engels understood this phenomenon and as early as 1830 cautioned against it. In a letter to J. Bloch he stated, "Unfortunately, however, it happens only too often that people think they have fully understood a new theory and can apply it without more ado from the moment they have mastered its main principles, and even those not always correctly. And I cannot exempt many of the more recent 'Marxists' from this reproach, for the most amazing rubbish has been produced in this quarter, too."

STOKELY CARMICHAEL, who sparked the black power movement in 1966, was born in Trinidad in 1941. He has been involved in the African struggle since his teens, having served on several fronts in our international struggle. For some time he has been working and studying in Guinea, and he has dual-citizenship (U.S.A. - Guinea), which he feels is symbolic for all of us. His latest book is Stokely Speaks: From Black Power to Pan-Africanism. Brother Carmichael's current work is as an organizer for the All African People's Revolutionary Party. This article is a revised version of a discussion paper prepared for Party cadre.
Neither Marx, Engels nor Lenin ever claimed that economics was the sole determining factor in history. In the same letter quoted above Engels makes this crystal clear. He states, "According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase . . ." Black Marxist - Leninists, proceeding logically from a faulty premise, arrive at an invalid conclusion asserting that in the African struggle race is totally irrelevant to the class struggle.

Any student of revolution knows this is incorrect. They say they are fighting the class structure of the United States. But they do not comprehend that the African is fighting a “racist class structure” and in this structure “capitalist exploitation and race oppression are complementary.” Therefore we must analyze the effects of this racial oppression and understand its relationship to the class struggle. This will allow us to arrive at the correct solution which will be reflected in our ideology. Since they do not analyze this relationship they fly into the arms of Marxism - Leninism, a science which did not analyze race contradictions concretely, due perhaps to its own historical period. Any intelligent person knows that “in the modern world, the race struggle has become part of the class struggle”.

President Sekou Toure reminds us that Marx did not invent scientific socialism. Marx was an observer. He observed certain phenomena in relation to man and economic forces in general and to labor and capital in particular. Having observed the validity of certain theories based on historical materialism, he stated principles which act as a clear guide to the inevitable destruction of capitalism and its attendant evils, and for the reconstruction of a society free from exploitation of man by man. Many people who call themselves revolutionary accept these principles as universal truths. So do I. As we stated earlied Marx, like Newton, observed and recorded but did not invent. Any student of science can independently observe the same laws of gravitation without prior knowledge of Newton. We thank Marx, Lenin and Newton for correctly classifying knowledge, thus making our own research easier.

In Osagyefo’s classical philosophical work, Consciencism, we can see that the theories of Marx and Lenin have their roots in communalism.” Thus, as an African, I should study ancestors of socialism, one must go to communalism”. Thus, as an African, I should study Nkrumahism which knows communalism contains the very foundation of Marxism - Leninism. It contains my history, African history, as it must be presented in order to “become a pointer at the ideology which should guide and direct African reconstruction.” Nkrumahism has already studied the theories of Marxism - Leninism, accepting their universal guidelines and scientific method. And Nkrumahism returns to Africa, returns to communalism, because Nkrumahism knows that if Mother Africa had been left untrampled by alien forces she would have been the first to achieve communism naturally, without bloodshed.

Nkrumahism now studies African history as it must be studied as “the history of our society.” Studying in this framework allows Nkrumahism to correctly analyze the forces of history utilizing the method of dialectics. Nkrumahism having studied its history correctly now dissects it with the principles of Marxism - Leninism, which it accepts as universal truths. Thus Nkrumahism uses these principles to validate its own theories of historical materialism, producing new principles for African reconstruction. Consequently, Nkrumahism merely sees Marxism - Leninism as an instrument, thus avoiding dogmatism. Failure to understand this leads to disaster. It is like a man holding in his hands instruments preparing to perform an operation but having no knowledge of medicine.

*All unspecified quotes are taken from Osagyefo’s books Consciencism and Class Struggle in Africa.
This charlatan preparing to remove a malignancy will cut our patient improperly and at random. His operation will not be based on scientific knowledge, but on egotistical guesswork. This unashamed imposter, who has stolen the instruments, screams at the top of his lungs, 'I am the doctor.'

Any African who accepts Marxism-Leninism must find his reality in Nkrumahism. Marxism-Leninism is the universal instrument; Nkrumahism is the scientific ideology. Nkrumahism is reality grounded in our African experience. If the African does not accept Nkrumahism we find him like our charlatan dogmatically slashing our patient, at first cautiously, then angered at not finding the malignancy; becoming more desperate, we find him killing the very patient he professes he wants to cure.

Thus we find these groups missing the boat completely. Were they grounded in the reality of Nkrumahism, they would know the “total liberation and the unification of Africa under an All-African socialist government must be the primary objective of all Black Revolutionaries throughout the world. It is an objective which, when achieved, will bring about the fulfillment of the aspirations of Africans and people of African descent everywhere. It will at the same time advance the triumph of the international socialist revolution, and the onward progress towards world communism.” These heretics of Nkrumahism (and consequently, Marxism-Leninism) see the primary objective of Black Revolutionaries in America as the transformation of the American society; an obvious conclusion if one has an a-historical analysis.

We black revolutionaries, who are Nkrumahists, know that the highest political expression of Black Power is Pan-Africanism; and the highest political expression of Pan-Africanism is Nkrumahism. The pre-requisite of an Nkrumahist is knowledge and love of the ideas of Osagyefo. When these ideas “display themselves in moral theory and practice,” we have an Nkrumahist. We know that any ideology concerning African people, who have been maliciously scattered all over the world, during the calculated period of the disruption of our society, must consider all the component parts while maintaining “the core of the Black Revolution in Africa.” We understand the death of imperialism is certain, and as Osagyefo teaches us “it can only come under the pressure of nationalist awakening.”

Brother Malcolm told us we needed Black Nationalism, and Black Nationalism is African Nationalism, because the Blackman is the African and the African is the Blackman. Thus Black Nationalism is African Nationalism which finds its highest aspiration in Pan-Africanism. The ideology must go beyond mere nationalism. It must establish a society where the principle, from each according to his ability to each according to his needs, is a reality. We know that Nkrumahism is the surest and fastest way to reach our goal. Especially since Nkrumahism has analyzed Africa so thoroughly with Marxism-Leninism. Our goal is to work in harmony with Mother Africa. We are on safe ground. In the Mind of Africa we are told, “whereas socialism has been a corrective in Europe, it has been the pristine condition in Africa in the form of communalism.” Any true African revolutionary must embrace Nkrumahism.