

Part 1

Owusu Sadaukai's CAP Speech

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE SECOND BIENNIAL ASSEMBLY CONGRESS OF AFRICAN PEOPLE
September 2, 1972 by BRO. OWUSU SADAUKAI
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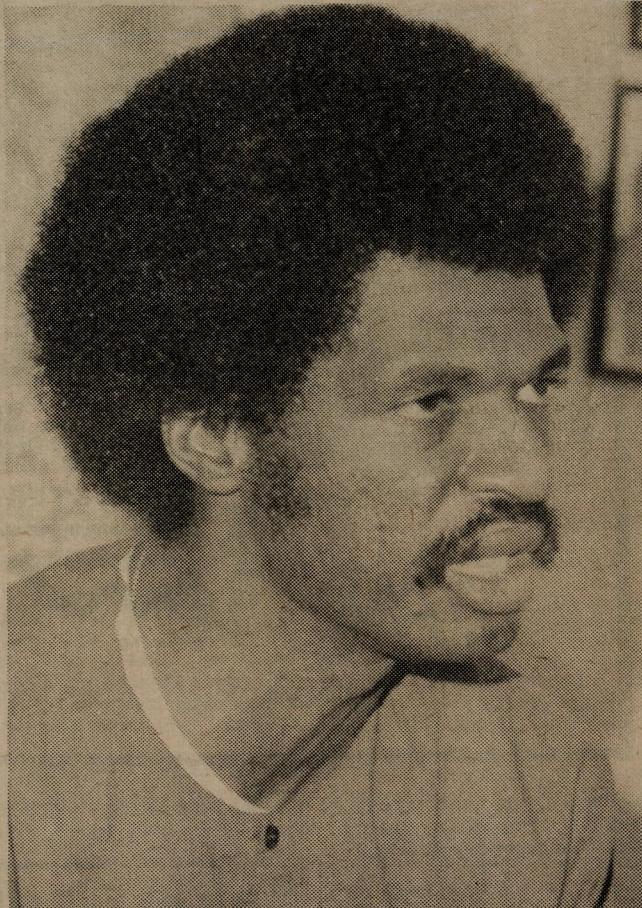
I am very honored and pleased to be able to represent Malcolm X Liberation University at this Second Congress of African People Biennial Assembly. We thank the leadership of the Congress and all of you Brothers and Sisters for giving us the opportunity to spend some time with you this evening.

Several months ago, I heard Bro. Vincent Harding give a speech in Chicago. He was discussing the role of the Black Scholar in the Black Community. He said many important things in that speech, but the thing that stuck with me was his suggestion that their greatest role is to speak the truth, or as he put it, "Speak the truth to the people." It occurred to me that this must not only be done by the black scholar, but by anyone of us who accepts the challenge of trying to give some direction to our people.

Yet, as simple as it sounds, speaking the truth is always a difficult assignment. It is difficult because of the constant question — is that really the truth, or merely your interpretation? It is difficult because many of us do not want to hear the truth because it might be too difficult to deal with. It is difficult because the truth requires analysis and clarity — little catchy sayings and phrases that sound good — but mean nothing — are of no use. No matter how difficult it is, though, the challenge is there and must be met. Speak the truth to the people no matter what questions are raised to avoid it, no matter who it hurts, no matter who does not want to hear it, no matter what happens, speak the truth about us and our condition.

Make no mistake about it Brothers and Sisters, we are still a suffering people, and that suffering cannot become a romanticized concept. Suffering is a harsh reality.

What is the reality about the condition of Black people — African People? After weeks of reading about the new politics, and hearing new slogans, and speeches about bringing America back home, the reality is that the conditions for the masses of our people here and throughout the world are getting worse, not better. Make no mistake about it Brothers and Sisters, we are still a suffering people, and that suffering cannot become a romanticized concept. Suffering is a harsh reality, a reality all too prevalent wherever we are — we are being killed in Angola, Rhodesia, Detroit, and Chicago. We are being imprisoned and brutalized in Mississippi, South Africa, Canada and Trinidad. We are being forced to work for slave labor in the mines of Southwest Africa, and the tobacco fields of North Carolina. We are destroying ourselves with drugs in Los Angeles, New York, Nairobi and the Congress of African People in San Diego, California. We are being



OWUSU SADAUKAI, MWALIMU OF MALCOLM X LIBERATION University was a featured speaker at the San Diego CAP conference. (YOBU photo).

deprived of our land in Mozambique, Antigua and Georgia.

The suffering is such that it is no longer necessary to debate the need for revolution. No sensible, intelligent person really believes anymore that anything other than revolution will significantly alter the lives of our people. But it must become crystal clear that this revolution must be more than just words: If it is to be taken seriously, it must bring about the destruction of those ideologies and structures that cause the suffering of our people. In other words, if our revolution is to in fact alter the lives of the masses of our people, if, in fact, the oppressed will no longer be oppressed, then fundamental changes must take place in the African World. Our revolution must be an all-inclusive one. It cannot merely be the elimination of the white man from a given political, economic or social structure and replacing him with a Black man with no change in the nature of these structures. Malcolm states,

"Revolutions are never based upon that which is begging a corrupt society or corrupt system to accept us into it. Revolutions overturn systems." This revolution must affect every aspect of our lives. It must alter the basic fiber of our being, because after centuries of violent repression, subtle trickery and brainwashing, too many of us are carbon copies of our oppressors, or at least as much of a copy as they have allowed.

So firstly, tonight I speak of revolution. The African Revolution that must be brought to fruition. Yet, we should understand the reason and the context within which the African Revolution must take place. As an African People, we should understand that we struggle against two evils — Racism and Capitalism. Both of them are

fighting in Angola, Namibia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Tanzania, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, the same enemy that we must someday fight in earnest on the North American-Continent. That enemy knows no boundaries, knows no geography when it comes to oppressing people of color through the world. The Vietnamese people are locked in a death struggle with the forces of imperialism in this world. These same forces are also raining bombs of destruction and despair on our people in Southern Africa. These same forces are jailing us and killing us in the U.S. So it is in fact the same struggle. They are fighting for self-determination in Vietnam and all of Indochina. We are fighting for self-determination and Revolutionary change in Africa and wherever our people are on this earth.

While all of this is true, it is equally true that there are characteristics of the African struggle that are peculiar to African people. The African Revolution must understand its relationship to other struggles, such as the Vietnamese, but at the same time our struggle must be based on our own concrete reality. We as an African people must see that our struggle must be initiated by and carried on by African People.

Let me go at it another way. Many of us believe that we should be demonstrating and issuing messages of solidarity with the Vietnamese people. While that is commendable, it is really not what needs to be done. What needs to be done is clear — we should heighten our own struggle, the Vietnamese are taking care of theirs. If we heightened our struggle everywhere we are, will help weaken and ultimately destroy the hold that the white ruling class has on the world. This is the way to make world revolution a reality, and to make our part in it real.

Finally, on this point, Brothers and Sisters, do not be lulled to sleep by theories about so-called progressive forces in the World Revolution. A look at China and Russia's advantages with the U.S. will clarify this point. No matter what people profess they take care of themselves and their people first. China and Russia are continuing to verbally assault the U.S., and at the same time,

they continue to give aid to Vietnam, and African Liberation Struggles. On the other hand, they are working out economic deals with the U.S. The lesson is simple — people move in their national interest first! We must understand that lesson — and see that ultimately certain help notwithstanding, we can look to no one but ourselves to free ourselves.

Brothers and sisters, do not be lulled to sleep by theories about progressive forces in the World Revolution . . . No matter what people profess they take care of themselves and their people first!

Now, it seems to me that those of us who would claim to be revolutionaries or claim to work for the people must at all times work to bring the African Revolution to fruition. To do this we must work to avoid pitfalls in both theory and practice which do nothing but hinder and the development of our struggle. These pitfalls are there in our view of the struggle in Africa and our involvement in the struggle in the United States.

Let us look at Africa first. There seems to be little debate that Africa is a key part of the struggle for the total liberation of the Black man throughout the world. Yet it is not enough just say that. We must also understand the realities and the difficulties that face Africa today. Let me just deal with two aspects of the struggle for the complete liberation of Africa:

1. The Southern Africa-Guinea Bissau question
2. The importance of Progressive Countries such as Tanzania and Guinea

I will spend the most time on the southern Africa question, because this is the issue being pushed most at this time.

The Liberation of Southern Africa is a crucial one for people of African descent at this point in our history. It is crucial because it not only speaks to the question of Africa's Liberation, but it is also directly related to the white man's continuing capacity to control the world. Let us not for one moment be naive about what Southern Africa means to the continued imperialist domination of African people and other people of color in this world. People seek

(cont'd on pg. 16)

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Cont'd from Pg. 11

of Vietnam because it is in the news. But, make no mistake about it, one of the keys to total economic existence of the European-American world is Africa.

The problem of Southern Africa is not simply South Africa and Portugal it is about all of the white peoples in this world. Brothers and Sisters we have not yet really seen a struggle until we see the one that is on the way — when we as African People finally decide for real that the political-economic control of Southern Africa and all of Africa for that matter must be put into the hands of revolutionary African people.

The significance of Southern Africa, then, makes it incumbent on us as rational thinking people to be objective and scientific in our analysis of just what is happening and what ultimately must be done if we are to seriously consider the question of the Liberation of Southern Africa.

I have been very disturbed about a type of attitude that seems to be prevalent among many so-called Black experts of the African scene. There seem to be Black people in our midst who actually believe that the problem in Southern Africa is jobs, or that the problem is lack of industrial growth, or that the problem is a misunderstanding on the part of the U. S. Government as to the effect of their foreign policy on Southern Africa or Africa in general.

Brothers and Sisters, let us equivocate no longer — let us no longer trick ourselves with nonsensical reasoning. The question in Southern Africa is who will control — who will exercise the power over the production and distribution of goods and services, the mechanisms of force and violence and the minds of the people. You see the line of reasoning mentioned above will invariably lead us into irrational positions and arguments. We are constantly explaining what we are against. We are against apartheid, we are against discrimination, we are against disparity in wages. All of these "we are against" positions as an answer to the problem are a reflection of our own political ineptness inside this country.

Let us equivocate no longer — let us no longer trick ourselves with non sensical reasoning. The question in Southern Africa is who will control . . .

We view Africa from the frame of reference of a slave mentality that has been reformed by a moderate supply of material goods given to us by our masters. We over here have somehow interpreted a poverty program job, a middle management job with ITT, a government job as being indications of freedom and progress. So, now we are turning to our Brothers and Sisters on the continent and telling them that they too can be "free" if those same jobs and those same material goods are made available to them by the same slave masters who have reformed our existence but deftly avoided the question of freedom and self-determination. Who said jobs were the problem? Who said American investment was needed? Did the PAC say it? Did ANC say it? Did MPLA say it? Did FRELIMO say it? Who said it? Polaroid said it! General Motors said it! Gulf Oil said it! And true to form once they said it, then we obedient followers of the white man's gospel chimed in. So now we have in our midst the disciples of the white man's new rationale for the continued control of the lives of African people.

Black man! Black woman! How could you form your mouth to suggest that the existence of General Motors in South Africa will somehow exert a moderating force on the South African government. Does it represent a moderating force on the U. S. Government in relationship to Black people in this country? Or more to the point, have you ever known reactionary force to cast itself out — as General Motors is in fact the government of the U. S. A., and economic interest such as General Motors is the government of South Africa, because he who controls the economy ultimately controls the State.

The plain fact is that the export of U. S. capital is increasing the misery of our people. It is helping to deter the Liberation struggles for the time being, and even where it does give jobs, it effects only a

small number of African people and it ends up creating a whole new level of petty bourgeois Black people who will move to stifle the legitimate concern of the masses for Democracy and self-determination.

Right about now some of us are beginning to say yes. Yes, all that may be true, but you are not dealing with reality. You are not being practical. The reality is that U. S. investments are there, and we must work from where things are — this is the only practical way. I can only answer you in this way — the practical thing for the Vietnam people to do is to give up, because the U. S. is too powerful. The practical thing for Mao Tse Tung would have been not to walk 6,000 miles, because it was too far. The practical thing for PAIGC to do is to give up, because too many people are still being killed — who decides what is practical? The reality is that the Brothers and Sisters in Southern Africa who are struggling have made that decision. They believe the only practical solution for them is armed struggle.

Now, if we are going to support the Brothers and Sisters then we should accept their definition of what is practical and then move to help them reach their objective using the methodology they decided was practical given the objective conditions in which they live.

If we are going to support our Brothers and Sisters who are fighting in Southern Africa then we should accept their definition of what is practical given the objective conditions in which they live.

You see the "practical" people ultimately end up vacillating at best and developing a Wilkins-Bond mentality at worst. We end up talking about the practicality of dialogue, we end up talking about learning to live with the white settlers of South Africa, Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe as neighbors — end up talking about the improbability of armed struggle, even as it continues to develop.

PART II,
NEXT ISSUE