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**May 25: Celebration of An Aspiration  
By Netfa Freeman  
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What is liberation? What is the existence of liberation like? While most holidays or commemorations celebrate people and things for whom or what they were, there are some that celebrate things as we aspire them to be. The latter is what can be said about May 25th when we celebrate African Liberation Day, often referred to as Africa Day.

Is African Liberation Day recognition of the rising tide of national independence that swept Africa and the Diaspora, or is it recognition of the continuing struggle for a completely liberated African world, free from all the vestiges of colonialism and neo-colonialism? The answer should not only be sought in history but also determined on the basis of which is more conducive to Africa's progress. Which best addresses the current exigencies of the African world?

History teaches that the origins of African Liberation Day are in the first Conference of Independent African States, which took place on April 15, 1958, in the Ghanaian capital of Accra. African leaders and political activists joined representatives from the governments of Ghana, Ethiopia, Liberia, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, The United Arab Republic (a federation of Egypt and Syria), representatives of the National Liberation Front of Algeria and the Union of Cameroonian Peoples.

This represented the first Pan-African Conference held on African soil, expressing the collective disgust of African people with the system of colonialism and imperialism.

This conference defined Pan-Africanism as "the total liberation and unification of Africa

under scientific socialism”, laid out a strategy for coordinating the liberation of the rest of Africa and looked forward to the eventual complete unification of the entire continent. The Conference called for the founding of Africa Freedom Day, a day to “mark each year the onward progress of the liberation movement and to symbolize the determination of the People of Africa to free themselves from foreign domination and exploitation.”

Five years later in the city of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia another historic meeting occurred. On May 25, 1963, leaders of thirty-two independent African States met to form the Organization of African Unity (OAU). By then over two thirds of the continent had achieved independence from colonial rule. This historic meeting changed the date of Africa Freedom Day from April 15th to May 25th and renamed the occasion African Liberation Day (ALD).

Since then ALD has been held on May 25th in every corner of the African world. It marks the last stage of African people's struggle against imperialism, demanding the African masses to coordinate efforts on a global scale and for the intellectual and professional classes to fulfill a heightened obligation.

Africa's intellectual and professional classes must not forget that we are only such because generations of our people, past and present, have struggled and suffered. This means that our obligation is to embrace the theoretical and scientific ground work laid down throughout the generations, put it into practice and use it to better the masses of Africa's children scattered and suffering across the globe. Countless great leaders have practiced and written about the African revolution. African intellectuals and professionals must study this so we can know why we occupy this designation and how we can pick up where generations before have left off.

In order to do this we must collectively examine the theories and practices that characterized the various stages and phases of our struggle for liberation. In other words African people must work and study together within organizations that exist for the expressed purpose of the liberation of Africa.

Because those historic meetings/conferences called for the “unification of Africa under scientific socialism” this means our generation's mission as agents for Africa's liberation is to make this a reality. We should not allow the current propaganda interests of the global order to make taboo the terminology, theories and lessons that have been accumulated by martyrs like Kwame Nkrumah, Walter Rodney, Sekou Ture, Shirley DuBois, Thomas Sankara, M'Baliala Camara, Samora Machel, Malcolm X, and so many others.

Revolution is a concept that must be resurrected in the African world, as it currently is in Latin America. Countries like Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia are boldly showing us that we must hold fast on ideals of socialism and revolution. If “a better world is possible” then Africa's rich legacy of struggle and natural potential requires that a revolutionary Pan-Africanism become possible.

The difference between a revolutionary African and someone else is that whether they are a doctor, lawyer, engineer, carpenter, farmer, professor, educator, student, or whatever; a revolutionary African uses their attributes and skills to stimulate an

organized mass movement that is working for profound positive change. This is the definition of revolution. Many freedom fighters before us, and today call for concrete and working relationships among African/Black people worldwide. Not a rhetorical or symbolic relationship and cannot simply be an economic one but a growing, moving, permanent political phenomenon.

Concrete relationships mean systematic, streamlined and consistent lines of communication between the African continent and the Diaspora; joint projects, programs and institutions that engage us on a global scale and that are socialist in nature.

ALD should be an occasion to remind and reinforce African people and the world of these exigencies. Anything lesser expression is to adulterate its purpose and its legacy. As the liberation struggle continues, ALD should be an opportunity for us to become more politically educated about the history and ever changing realities of Africa and her Diaspora, in addition to Africa's relationship to the struggles of other oppressed peoples of the world.

It must become an occasion for highlighting and hearing directly from men, women and youth who are on the front line of the struggle for Pan-Africanism and other just struggles. ALD celebrates the glorious and rich culture of Africa, but more importantly it is a chance to dedicate and rededicate our energies and our creativity to an African Revolution.

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