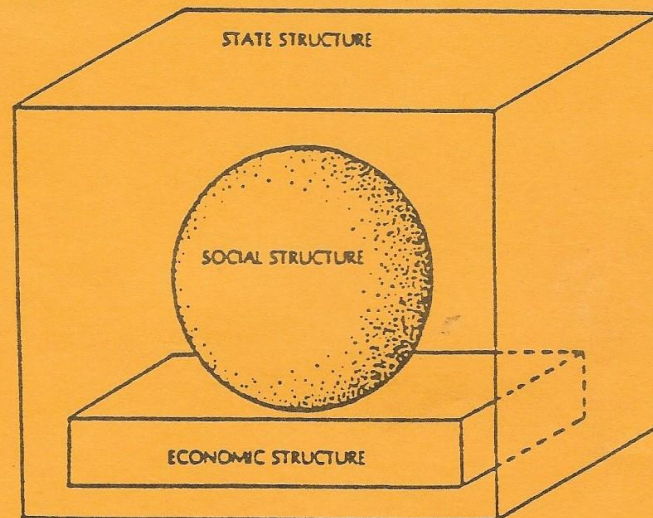


The Macro-Level Theory of Human Organization



A MAJOR PREMISE USED IN THE WORK
OF
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1991 Revision

**A MACRO-LEVEL THEORY OF HUMAN
ORGANIZATION
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Major Organizations

The three most fundamental and decisive forms of human organization are (1) the social structure, (2) the economic structure, and (3) the state structure.

1. The Social Structure. People are born into primary organizations - principally the family - and create, enter and shape other organizations. The social structure is defined by *shared beliefs* among a given people, about life and death, collective personality, and formal interpersonal relationships. The people and their beliefs encompass and support, in the social structure, certain *systems*, which manifest themselves as institutions. The most important aspects of these systems are, first, that they guide behavior and thereby add to the predictability of human life and its sense of order, and second they are intended to be less mortal than any single individual. The major systems of the social structure are families, schools, spiritual and anti-spiritual systems, health systems, and of course, patterns of deference. These systems, or institutions, administer and perpetuate a generally fixed universe of beliefs.

2. The Economic Structure. The social structure inherits or quickly gives birth to an economic structure (or has one forced upon it) because *some* humans must work in order to produce the goods and services which humans generally believe they need for survival and comfort. Humans use *space* (including, of course, land) and *tools* to produce these goods and services. Therefore, the means of production and the relationship of people to production and to each other in production are the basic determinants of the formal dimensions of the economic structure. This *mode of production*, in turn, tends to shape the institutions of the social structure, identified

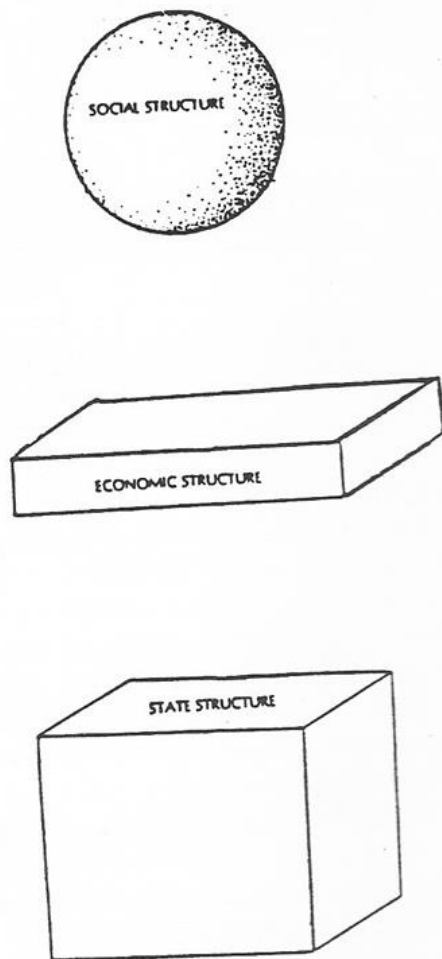


Figure 1. The Three Major Forms of Human Organization.

above, as well as the institutions of the *state* structure, identified below. The economic structure creates institutions also. These institutions primarily perpetuate *interests* rather than beliefs. They are organizations of owners, organizations of merchants or allocators, organizations of administrators, organizations of "regular" workers, and organizations of workers with closely guarded skills and knowledge.¹ These associations interact through various corporations dominated by the owners in capitalist economies and, mainly, by the managers in socialist economies.

3. The State Structure. The state structure arises because *leaders* actualize a need felt by them and the majority of people to protect and maintain their *social and economic structures*. (It may be true, of course, that the *leaders* have convinced the masses that their interest in maintaining the social and economic structures are mutually great.) Generally the society and the economy have surrendered to the state all legitimate, direct, ultimate, and supreme coercive power over the people and the land. The state structure inherently sets the borders for the territory, *the space*, in which that coercive power is authoritative; the state structure defines, always in response to the demands of any successfully competing *state*, the ways in which that coercive power is limited *within* the space claimed by the state and the way in which the state is limited in its relations with other states. The state's authority over space is called *sovereignty*. Theoretically and practically states have varying degrees of sovereignty and independence. The dominant institutions of the state structure are the army and police, a visible executive or

¹ In non-market societies a class of privileged functionaries, generally, makes allocation decisions about goods and services and capital. As for "workers with closely guarded skills and knowledge," these are the wealthy, new class of the post-industrial societies. They are the physicians, the scientist, engineers, bankers, brokers, insurance specialists, lawyers, architects, government contract specialists, and major managers.

executive body, courts, and a pattern or system for expressions of the popular will.² The state has people, land, and government.³ Government is the formal group of people who exercise the power of the state.

The Dynamics of Major Organizations

In his perceptive classic, *The Power Elite*, written at the beginning of our present half-century, C. Wright Mills argues that the dominant institutions of our life are the economy, the state, and the army.⁴ He was, of course, impressed by the awesome power of the military over the lives of young men in particular and the whole of human life. He was impressed and concerned over the power and sudden growth of the military-industrial complex. Obviously he made a strong case. It was not (on this point) a conclusive one. The army is authentically a part of the state structure - indeed, its most salient part. In the United States, moreover, it is the *industrial* side of the complex, not the military side which benefits most and is in control.

² Usually these systems include formal political parties. But the people "speak" even when repressed, so that, even in states with one or more political parties and parliaments, riots, demonstrations and flight sometimes appear to be institutionalized. Of course, systems of information gatherers of state secret service always constitute institutions.

³ Article 1 of the *The Convention on Rights and Duties of States*, done at Montevideo, Uruguay, 26 December 1933, 49 Stat. 3097, T.S. No. 881, 3 Bevans 145, 165, L.N.T.S. 19. Article One also gives a fourth characteristic of the state: the "capacity to enter into relations with the other states." Such a state is a person of international law.

⁴ C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (1956), reprinted in part in *American Politics, Policies, and Priorities*, 4th ed., edited by Alan Shank (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1984), p.9

The weakness of the social structure (Mills particularly names church and school) which Mills proclaims and Marx previously certified, is relative not absolute. Church and school are *purveyors* of values, and while it is true that churchmen and academics remain competitors for maximum leadership in the society, it is ultimately the *values*, rather than the purveyors, with which the state and economic structure most contend. Values, supported by the state, bred the *patriotism* which yielded the sacrifices of young men in World War II and Korea. But it is values, sprung like stubborn flowers from the social structure, which, against the wishes of the state, have caused educated young men in the United States in 1985 and for several years past to desert high-paid service as officers in the Navy and Air Force.⁵

As an earlier indication of the power of the social structure in the United States, the *state* destroyed the mode of production (the slave economy) which the Confederate States knew, and imposed laws to make the United States a multi-racial democracy. (That is, the laws of the immediate post-Civil War era sought to provide political participation to Black males and human rights for all the people formerly held as slaves.) But within 20 years after the election of Rutherford B. Hayes as President of the United States in 1876, the social structure of the white South, supported by the *social structure* of the white North, had reimposed its *value* of white supremacy upon the society (where it had only been challenged and not displaced, in any event, compelling the state both to reverse itself and to buttress this social value with new law. It is crucial to appreciate that those who reimposed the social structure's value of white supremacy were, at the time of their military, terroristic strikes, initially agents of the social structure, *not* the state structure. During the period in which Klan types destroyed the Reconstruction governments and seized governmental machinery for themselves,

⁵ George C. Wilson, "Family Values, Not Finances, Are Downing Military Pilots." *The Washington Post* Newspaper, 6 October 1985, p.A1.

they were outside of the governmental structures and not in control of them.

The social structure, the state structure, and the economic structure are the three most potent forms of human organization.

There is a sense in which the state structure is the weakest of the three major forms of human organization. It is unquestionably the least autonomous. But the purpose of the state structure is to protect the other two structures, and the state *does* possess the legitimated power to exercise, against the people, the ultimate sanction of death.

Fundamentally, of course, the three structures are about people; they are, in fact, about the *same* people. Consequently they intersect and interact. In this interaction the social structure and the economic structure are in a close and symbiotic relationship.

Karl Marx has suggested that the economic structure is "*base*" and the social structure is "*superstructure*." Superstructure rests upon and depends on the base.

Indeed, *superstructure* for Marx included not only customs and mores and the formal institutions of family, school, and church, but also the *laws*.⁶ Thus, in this key formulation, Marx fused the concepts of state structure and social structure and needlessly blurred the distinctive and essential functions of the state structure. He and his collaborator, Frederick Engels, focused only on the origin of the state in irreconcilable class contradictions and on the

⁶ An important formulation of this idea appears in Karl Marx's Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) quoted in R. Miliband, *Marxism & Politics* (Oxford U. Press, 1977), p. 7.

purpose of the state as an instrument of ruling class oppression and exploitation of the masses.⁷

But the distinctive and essential functions of the state structure are (1) to protect the economic structure and the social structure, (2) to set limits on the authoritative exercise of sanctions (i.e., to set the limits of sovereignty), and (3) to provide geographical borders and thereby generate an authoritative sense of unity and collective identity for *the people* involved in all three structures.

Marx recognized the socializing function of the law, the state, but ascribed to the state structure no essential role as protector of authentic national personality against external attack. In fact, for Marx there was no "authentic national personality." The working men have no country," he and Engels proclaimed in *The Communist Manifesto*. The true consciousness of the worker is an internationalist consciousness, not a nationalist consciousness. State membership - and the more fundamental *nation* membership - were (in our era, prior to the Soviet revolution, and today *outside* of the Socialist states) merely reflections of bourgeois property relationships. Concepts of *state* and *nation* serve the ruling class, not the workers. Workers, until the end of false consciousness, remain tools of the state which is under control of the bourgeoisie, in international wars, which are really wars against the oppressed masses. So reasoned Marx and Engels.

By contrast this *macro-level theory of human organization* contends that an authentic national personality is an inevitable product of the social structure. It exists, or begins evolving, *before* the state comes about. Sometimes the state and its citizenship are coterminous with the national personality, or nation. The nation and national personality, however, have *evolved* from the social structure: they

⁷ See, for instance, V. I. Lenin, *State and Revolution* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), p. 8.

have come about by *people*, over decades, being welded together by access to a common gene pool, and by a common history, viewed from the same perspective and being identified with a definite land mass. The *state*, as opposed to the nation and national personality, can be brought about instantaneously, so to speak, by the will of a single, successful, group of actors. Thus, the United States, as a state, was brought about on July Fourth, 1776, by an act of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and their associates. They created it to protect their own way of life and personality against being reduced, as they put it, " under absolute Despotism."

Similarly the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as a state, was brought about by an act of Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks on 25 October 1917. They were following the injunction of the Communist Manifesto, that " the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to the leading class of *the* nation, must constitute itself the nation" (emphasis in the original) in order to do away with class distinctions and public power (i.e., *the state*) and create " a vast association of the whole people." In short, the Soviet *state* was created to protect a new national personality, *the class of the proletariat*, which was evolving out of industrialization, and to install this minority class as the dominant class in the social and economic structures for the purpose of converting all the people to the new national personality and ending all classes.

Here there is an important reinforcement of the recurring Marxian recognition of several classes within the state and, moreover, of a *dominant* class in the state. But this macro-level theory of human organization additionally posits that within the state there is usually one dominant *nation*, with one or more subordinate nations, each with its own social structure or *residuals* of its own social structure. The "national personality" which the state protects is that of the dominant nation.⁸ Leaders of that dominant nation

⁸ Sometimes the grouping of different nations, in the same state, sharing the same territory, is the result of

typically constitute the ruling class for the entire body of people grouped within the *sovereignty* which the state defines.

The Marxists focus on the *class* analysis of the phenomenon of dominance and subordination within the state. They generally fail to give emphatic recognition to the presence within the state of *subordinated nations* - each with class divisions of its own (which are, of course, subordinated to and more or less shaped and enfeebled by the class structure of the dominant nation).⁹

accommodation. In such a situation the terms of sovereignty-sharing may or may not be stated in explicit constitutional provisions. However, the place of the different nations with respect to one another, the place of their respective peoples, is always fixed by the *accepted patterns of deference*, which are the fundamental guideposts of the social structure of the dominant group or of the interaction between the nearly equal accommodating groups. Where two or more nations have reached accommodation, sharing sovereignty, as in Belgium, Yugoslavia, or Nigeria, the state structure is officially required to protect the constituent nations and personalities. It is an empirical question whether, in any example, the new composite nation being created is largely a reflection of one dominant nation.

⁹ Lenin and Stalin faced head-on the practical question of the presence of national minorities and non-independent nations within Russia and the other capitalist empires. (National minorities are immigrant citizens of independent states which exist elsewhere.) For socialist states Lenin and Stalin espoused the important principle of self-determination for the nations, and in the Soviet Union they put in place a system of national cultural autonomy, subject to the over-riding state commitment to create a new, *internationalist* Soviet personality with a single common language. The Soviet Union's 15 Union Republics, 20 Autonomous Republics, 8 Autonomous Regions, and 10 National Areas generally correspond to the historic territory of nations within the USSR. Yugoslavia, another socialist state, recognizes five nations within the state. Democracy and cross-national institutions act against

Marx and Engels focus on the origin of the state in irreconcilable class antagonisms and on the purpose of the state as a tool of exploitation of the masses by the rulers. They come closest to acknowledging the role of the state in *external defense*, although obliquely, in the passage of the *Manifesto* which states:

In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end.¹⁰

It seems clear that even for "communist" states, at least during the transition to socialism and from socialism to communism, the state structure serves the distinctive and essential functions identified above:

1. protection of the social and economic structures;
2. delimitation of sovereignty, and
3. contribution to a sense of unity and collective identity by establishing geographical borders.

segregation. But the basic Marxian theory of class struggle obscures the presence *and oppression* of nations *within* the state and focuses on the hegemony of the dominant class of the dominant nation within the state.

¹⁰ Following the revolution which established the Soviet Union, Lenin and the other Marxist leaders of the new government quickly experienced the necessity of the state's role not simply in crushing the internal bourgeoisie but in defending sovereignty and the new national/international personality they envisioned for the society, from *external* attack.

Design of the Dynamics

Given these functions, the state structure is best envisioned as a *cube* (with its definite borders), surrounding the social and economic structures. The social and economic structures are in symbiotic relationship. Much as in the Marxian formulation, the economic structure is *base* while the social structure is super-structure. Here this juxtaposition acknowledges the great influence of the economic structure over the character of the social structure, but it does not concede the power of ultimate determination to the economic structure.

Leaders of the social structure and the economic structure both seek to control the state structure. But the men and institutions of the economic structure are usually successful - even when, or after, the military seizes power in its own name.

The simple design of Figure 2, focusing on the three most important forms of human organization, does not include any representation of the nation, or the several nations, which exist within any given state. Yet clearly the *nation* as a form of human organization is only a little less important than the three other forms.

We have discussed the differences between the nation and state. A chief difference is that the nation evolves, while the state can be created almost instantaneously. Additionally, the nation may exist without any formal government, or with a very weak one.

But how are the nation and the social structure, the society, distinguished? Are they the same?

We have already defined the social structure as those institutions and values which bind a people and provide their identity. Such is also the fundamental substance of the nation. The nation is the social structure and the economic structure. Nevertheless, as long as the binding values and perspective of the social structure are not

obliterated, the nation continues to exist even when its economic structure, the people and land, are under control of a conqueror. The binding values and historically developed perspective of the social structure and access to a common gene pool are what matters.

But the nation is still more.

The nation is, additionally, the palpable expression of a single people's political aspirations. (The single, distinct people have become such, as We have seen, through sharing gene pool, values, experiences, and perspective over time.) The people organized as a nation aspire to exercise the power of a state. The people organized as a nation aspire to exercise the ultimate sanction within the territory claimed by the nation. The least the nation settles for politically, remaining a nation, is some control over the life of the people.

When a nation does achieve state power, it then becomes a nation-state. A nation-state is a nation, a distinctly evolved people, where the state and its sovereignty are coterminous with the nation and its inherent political aspirations.

Beyond its national territory such a nation-state might exercise some degree of sovereignty over aliens as Great Britain, a nation-state, does today over Northern Ireland and did formerly over Nigeria or as France, another nation-state, has done in the past over Senegal and Cochin-China. But the *state* of such a nation-state remains the state of the nation: it serves the nation first and foremost, and it serves the aliens who have been drawn under the nation-state's sovereignty only secondarily and usually, incidentally. Indeed, such nation-states usually exploit the aliens for the dominant nation's benefit. The aliens remain aliens in fact, whatever the political relationships put into the nation-state's law in attempts to

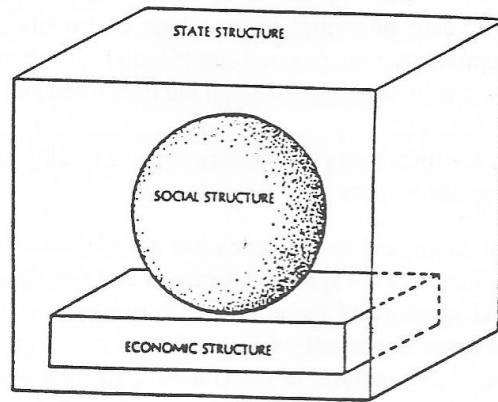


Figure 2. The Relationship of the Three Major Forms of Human Organization.

(Illustration by Paula Stanley)

legitimize the nation-state's dominance. This is the classic form of imperialism.

In the world today there are few nation-states but many nations. These nations are composed necessarily of peoples who have evolved as distinct peoples over time, and who at some point have held - or aspired to hold - the powers of a state. But most nations today are not nation-states. Most nations today are embraced as constituent parts of greater states, which are usually the work of a single dominant nation, or small combination of such nations, and in which most nations are not co-equal but dominated and exploited.

Thus, within every state today there is usually one dominant nation and one or more dominated nations.

The dominated nations each has a social structure. But that social structure is always subordinate to and greatly influenced by the social structure of the dominant nation. More, the dominant social structure is generally able to enforce its rules through the state structure. For example, in the United States the white dominant social structure is able to enforce its value of the monogamous marriage and family (i.e., one man, one woman, and children) upon the subordinate Indian and New African social structure *through the laws* of the American state structure, despite the fact that plural marriage has historic significance for the New Afrikan (and some Indian) social structure and evident present utility.

Because of the constant interaction between people of the subordinate nations and those of the dominant nation in the centers of the dominant nation - as in the big cities of the United States and South Africa, for example - it is possible to say there is one social structure, and within that social structure the peoples of the subordinate nations have their subordinate roles. There is a dominant pattern of deference (who owes deference to whom) which pervades all the social structures and emanates from the

dominant social structure. Everyone knows the pattern of deference, and most observe it.

To sum up. A state is created by a dominant nation to protect and perpetuate the social and economic structures of that dominant nation.

Sometimes the nation and state are coterminous, in terms of people, land, and the reach of sovereignty. It is, then, a nation-state. Alien nations and states are sometimes brought within the outer reaches of the nation-state's sovereignty for purposes of exploitation or other convenience; they are not absorbed into the dominant nation. They are often provided a form, usually fictitious,



of membership in the dominant state. This is imperialism as We came to know it between Columbus and the 1960s.

Usually, today, states have within them two or more nations. One of these is usually dominant.

The subordinate nation or nations usually retain their individual social structures, or residuals thereof, but in the population and work centers of the dominant nation there is one social structure, and the people of the subordinate nations have their subordinate positions within that social structure. An agreed pattern of deference governs the interactions of the peoples of dominant and dominated nations.

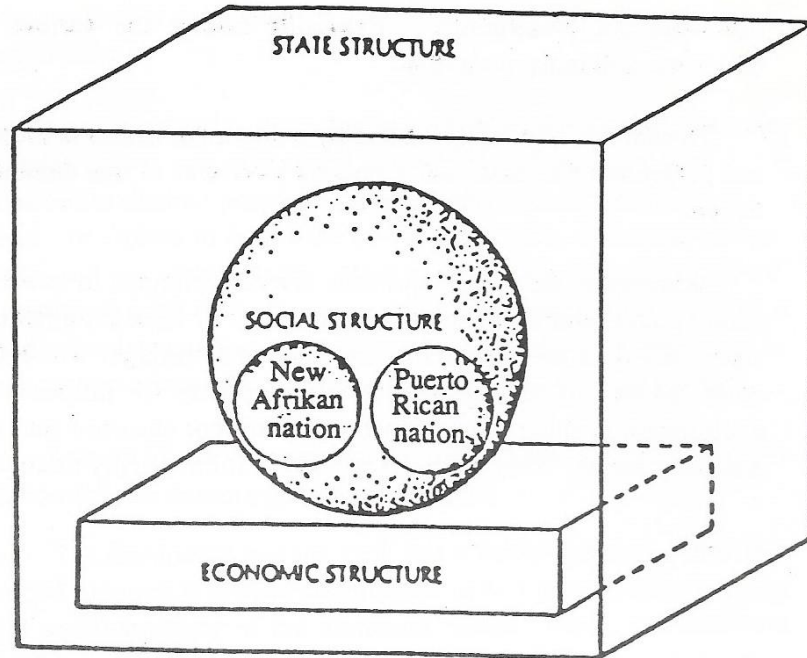
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A NOTE ON THE 1991 EDITION
The Unraveling of Nations & States

In 1991 the Soviet Union, as a state, ceased to exist. During the same period a similar fate seemed inevitable for Yugoslavia. The *fissures* which destroyed these powerful states did not - as in 1989 when Communist *governments* in Europe were overthrown - arise from corruption and ineptitude of officials. These destructive fissures were, rather, along the stresses existing between the *nations within* and the state structures which sought to hold them within. Thus, in the Soviet Union, the Russian *nation*, occupying the largest territory among the 15 constituent republics, and having the largest population, led the way in destroying the Soviet state. In Yugoslavia the Croatian nation (though smaller than the Serbian nation) has played a similar role. In this way a fundamental tenet of the *Macro-Level Theory of Human Organization* is thrown into graphic relief: the nations *within* states, and their levels of oppression within the state, are important considerations in the stability of the state and cannot be safely ignored, either theoretically or practically. See Footnotes 8 and 9, pages 8-10, above.

Imari A. Obadele



THE UNITED STATES, as diagrammed above, typifies the relationship between dominant nation-states and the nations within, which they dominate. The social structure of the dominated nations remain more or less intact, but these structures are influenced by and, in the final analysis, controlled by, the social structure of the dominate nation-state. The dominant nation-state integrates the economy of the dominated nations into its own economic structure. In addition these nations usually are without meaningful state structures and are always completely dominated by the state structure of the dominant nation. In the United States there are more subordinate nations then the two shown. Principally these are the many Indian nations.

The New Afrikan Creed

1969

1. I believe in the spirituality, humanity and genius of Black people, and in our new pursuit of these values.

2. I believe in the family and the community and the community as a family, and i will work to make this concept live.

3. I believe in the community as more important than the individual.

4. I believe in constant struggle for freedom, to end oppression and build a better world. I believe in collective struggle, in fashioning victory in concert with my brothers and sisters.

5. I believe that the fundamental reason our oppression continues is that We, as a people, lack the power to control our lives.

6. I believe that the fundamental way to gain that power, and end oppression, is to build a sovereign Black nation.

7. I believe that all the land in America, upon which We have lived for a long time, which We have worked and built upon, and which We have fought to stay on, is land that belongs to us as a people.

8. I believe in the Malcolm X Doctrine: that We must organize upon this land and hold a plebiscite, to tell the world by a vote that We are free and our land independent, and that, after the vote, We must stand ready to defend ourselves, establishing the nation beyond contradiction.

9. Therefore, i pledge to struggle without cease, until We have won sovereignty. I pledge to struggle without fail until We have built a Better condition than the world has yet known.

10. I will give my life if that is necessary. I will give my time, my mind, my strength and my wealth because this IS necessary.

11. I will follow my chosen leaders and help them.

12. I will love my brothers and sisters as myself.

13. I will steal nothing from a brother or sister, cheat no brother or sister, misuse no brother or sister, inform on no brother or sister, and spread no gossip.

14. I will keep myself clean in body, dress, and speech, knowing that i am a light set on a hill, a true representative of what We are building.

15. I will be patient and uplifting with the deaf, dumb, and blind, and i will seek by word and deed to *heal* the Black family, to bring into the Movement and into the Community mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, left by the wayside.

Now, freely and of my own will, i pledge this Creed, for the sake of freedom for my people and a better world, on pain of disgrace and banishment if i prove false. For, i am no longer deaf, dumb or blind. I am, by the inspiration of our Ancestors and the Grace of our Creator a *New Afrikan!*