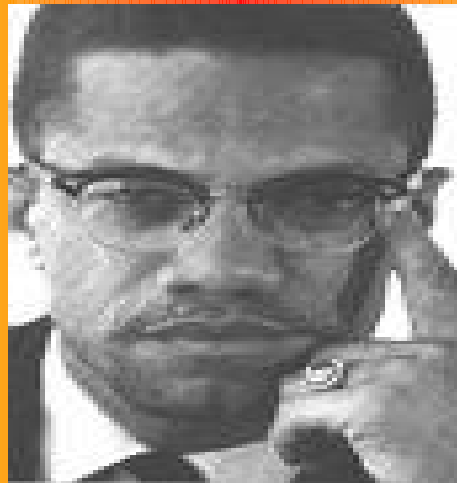


Afrikan Liberation Day

2009



Afrikan Freedom means Defeating Neo-colonialism



# Malcolm X

Supplemented

# Nationalism

with

# Internationalism

The Pan-Afrikan Society Community Forum – [www.pascf.org.uk](http://www.pascf.org.uk)

# **Malcolm X Strengthened Nationalism with Internationalism**

## **1 Indications of shifts in Malcolm X's ideological development and progression**

### **1.1 Malcolm X's development was heavily influenced by continental Afrikan leaders**

One researcher has identified a number of areas where Malcolm X's ideological position remained consistent both before and after his extended visits to Afrika and Arabia in 1964. Malcolm X consistently maintained positions such as: Afrikan people can only get their freedom by fighting for it; Afrikan people must rely on themselves and control their own struggle; Afrikan people must determine their own strategy and tactics; Uncle Toms must be exposed and opposed; Afrikan people must select their own leaders; there is no liberal solution to equality between Afrikan people and Europeans (Breitman, 1988, p. 26). This is not an exhaustive list of the areas where Malcolm X's ideological position remained unchanged. For instance his position on working in solidarity with Arabs and Asians remained consistent throughout. However, the crucial point is that there were parts of Malcolm X's ideological approach to liberation that remained the same, whilst there were also significant parts that changed.

One of the reasons why that there can be no doubt that Malcolm X went through a significant ideological change in the last year of his life is that time and time again he told us that he changed. Not only did he tell us that he changed, but he repeatedly pointed us to one of the most critical milestones that provided a catalyst for his ideological changes. For instance on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1965 he said:

"... after leaving Arabia I had gone into Afrika. I had had an opportunity to hold long discussions with Julius Nyerere in what's now Tanzania; with Jomo Kenyatta, the President of Kenya, the Republic of Kenya; long discussions with Milton Obote of Uganda; President Azikiwe of Nigeria; President Nkrumah of Ghana; and President Sekou Toure of Guinea. And the understanding that I got from conversations with these men – the understanding that I got broadened my scope so much that I felt I could see the problems confronting Black people in America and the Western hemisphere with much greater clarity." (Clark, 2003, p. 113)

On 18<sup>th</sup> February 1965 he repeated the names of the many Afrikan presidents with whom he had met and then commented:

"... I won't hesitate to say that conversations with these men broadened my scope tremendously, beyond what it was before I went over there. And I felt when I came back, that the things that I had learned would be constructive, or could be used constructively by Black people in this country in our struggle for human dignity." (Clark, 2003, p. 213)

There were many other occasions in the final months of his life when he expressed similar sentiments (Breitman, 2003, p. 182/3; Clark, 2003, p. 81/2). One possible interpretation is that Malcolm X underwent a programme of training with leaders at home in the motherland and this assisted him in becoming a genuine leader in the Afrikan Diaspora. Whether or not this process was formal, semi-formal or informal is a secondary issue. The fact is that Malcolm X dialogued with Afrikan leaders, worked co-operatively with them and set about creating an umbrella

organisation for Afrikan people in the Diaspora. Throughout this process he was careful to ensure that the Diasporan organisation was modelled on and had strong working links with the umbrella organisation of Afrikan governments on the continent.

However, the main point here is that if Malcolm X himself is telling us that his ideological scope was broadened during 1964; that he could now see problems confronting Afrikan people in the Diaspora more clearly; and that his encounters with numerous Afrikan presidents, all of whom subscribed to socialism, were the reason for his new enhanced ideological position, then there is little or no basis for arguing that he did not undergo a progressive ideological development.

## **1.2 There is more to the Afrikan revolution than race**

The fact that Malcolm X made very little reference to his time in Arabia whilst making repeated references to his meetings with Afrikan leaders in the motherland is compelling evidence that his knew ideas were Afrikan centred in the sense that they were genuinely derived from Afrika. Furthermore, Malcolm X also gave us very clear indicators as to the nature of the ideological development that he underwent. For instance on 18<sup>th</sup> February 1965 he said:

"It is incorrect to classify the revolt of the [Afrikan] as simply a racial conflict of black against white, or as a purely American problem. Rather we are today seeing a global rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor, the exploited against the exploiter.

The [Afrikan] revolution is not a racial revolt. We are interested in living in brotherhood with anyone really interested in living in accordance with it. But the white man has long since preached an empty doctrine of brotherhood which means little more than a passive acceptance of his fate by the [Afrikan] ... " (Breitman, 2002, p. 238/9)

Malcolm is highlighting the fact that the notion of race is, by itself, insufficient to explain the entire nature of the Afrikan revolution. Even though race is a part of the Afrikan revolution, an important and integral part of the Afrikan revolution, by itself cannot explain the motivation of the Afrikan revolution. Furthermore, he is demonstrating that the Afrikan revolution cannot be confined within any national borders. The Afrikan revolution is global in its own right, but it is also part of a wider global revolution, based not on race or nations, but on the central conflict of the oppressed world majority and their minority elite oppressors.

Malcolm X was clear that the Afrikan revolution was not designed to defeat other races; it was not a vehicle for race war. Rather it was designed to defeat the system that is the source of racism. Malcolm confirmed this when he told us that Afrikan people were willing to live peacefully with all other people on earth, provided those others were genuinely willing to reciprocate. Europeans more than any other racial group have so far failed to reciprocate; in so far as they have failed, they have sided with the enemy's power structure.

### **1.3 Imperialism and colonialism are Afrika's enemy's slave systems**

Another indicator of the significant ideological development in Malcolm X's Afrikan liberation analysis comes from his improved analysis of the nature and constitution of Afrikan people's enemy. He had formerly regarded the white man as the devil or the white man as the enemy (Haley, 1968, p. 371 & 392/3; Breitman, 2002, p. 17). However, as the following statement shows, his analysis of the enemy became more sophisticated. He made it clear that he no longer condemned whites for being white (Haley, 1968, p. 38/9). He came to realise that:

"... colonialism and imperialism, as the slave system of the West is called, is not something that's just confined to England or France or [US Satan]. But the interests in this country are in cahoots with the interests in France and the interests in Britain. It's one huge complex or combine and it creates ... an international power structure. And this international power structure is used to suppress the masses of dark-skinned people all over the world and exploit them of their natural resources. So that the era in which you and I have been living in the past ten years most specifically has experienced an upsurge on the part of the Black man in Afrika against the power structure. He wants his freedom." (Clark, 2003, p. 79/80)

Malcolm left us in no doubt that there was an international power structure – which he also referred to as capitalism - oppressing Afrikan and other people. It was this international power structure that was the real enemy of Afrikan people; it was this international power structure that the Afrikan revolution had to contribute to destroying.

## **2 Malcolm X supplemented nationalism with internationalism**

### **2.1 Nationalism was Malcolm X's foundation**

In 1964 Malcolm X made a number of statements confirming that he was a 'Black nationalist'; he also went into some detail explaining what he meant by this term. Later that year, Malcolm X went abroad and spent 26 weeks outside US Satan. There were two trips, each of them taking in Afrika and Arabia. The first lasted from 13<sup>th</sup> April to 23<sup>rd</sup> May and the second from 9<sup>th</sup> July to 24<sup>th</sup> November (Breitman, p. 73, 88 & 104). After his return Malcolm X made other statements which suggest that he went through some kind of change in how he viewed and interpreted 'Black nationalism'. From his own testimony, Malcolm X's change on nationalism and other related issues was heavily influenced by his life changing sojourns.

The nature of the changes in Malcolm X's nationalist outlook has been the subject of significant debate. However, there is enough information available to help clarify: (i) the type of nationalism that Malcolm X originally adhered to; (ii) whether or not he altered his brand of nationalism; and (iii) whether he was exclusively a nationalist in the sense that there were no other aspects to his ideology. One way of clarifying these areas is to examine Malcolm X's words on nationalism before and after his 1964 overseas trips. For instance, on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1964, before going on his first trip he defined what he meant by the:

"... political, economic, and social philosophy [of] Black Nationalism ... The political philosophy of Black Nationalism only means that the black man should control the politics and the politicians in his own community. The -- The time -- The time

when white people can come in our community and get us to vote for them so that they can be our political leaders and tell us what to do and what not to do is long gone ... the time when that same white man, knowing that your eyes are too far open, can send another negro into the community and get you and me to support him so he can use him to lead us astray -- those days are long gone too ... We must understand the politics of our community and we must know what politics is supposed to produce. We must know what part politics play in our lives. And until we become politically mature we will always be misled, lead astray, or deceived or manoeuvred into supporting someone politically who doesn't have the good of our community at heart ... The economic philosophy of Black Nationalism only means that we should own and operate and control the economy of our community. You would never found -- you can't open up a black store in a white community. White men won't even patronize you. And he's not wrong. He's got sense enough to look out for himself. You the one who don't have sense enough to look out for yourself ... The white man is too intelligent to let someone else come and gain control of the economy of his community. But you will let anyone come in and take control of the economy of your community, control the housing, control the education, control the jobs, control the businesses, under the pre-text that you want to integrate. No, you outta your mind ... The social philosophy of Black Nationalism only means that we have to get together and remove the evils, the vices, alcoholism, drug addiction and other evils that are destroying the moral fibre of our community." (Breitman, 2002, p. 51-3; Ovenden, 1992, p. 69)

## **2.2 Some weaknesses in Diasporan Afrikan nationalism**

This approach to nationalism is admirable as a declaration of an intention to empower Afrikan people oppressed in a foreign nation. However, it suffers from the fundamental problem that it is a landless brand of nationalism which, to be frank, is a contradiction in terms. Any nationalism that does not have sovereignty over land or at least the aim of achieving sovereignty over a land mass is not true nationalism. A week before giving this definition, Malcolm X reminded us that land is the basis of all independence, freedom, justice and equality (Breitman, 2002, p. 21). It is likely therefore, that the glaring weakness of landlessness in this brand of nationalism contributed to Malcolm X reconsidering his position.

By 18<sup>th</sup> January 1965 it became clear that Malcolm, triggered by an earlier meeting with the Algerian ambassador to Ghana, had developed serious concerns about whether the 'Black nationalism' that he had previously described could solve Afrikan people's problems. Whilst openly reflecting on the issue he said:

"So, I had to do a lot of thinking and reappraising of my definition of Black Nationalism. Can we sum up the solution to the problems confronting our people as Black Nationalism? And if you notice, I haven't been using the expression for several months. But I still would be hard pressed to give a specific definition of the over-all philosophy which I think is necessary for the liberation of black people in this country." (Breitman, 2002, p. 234; Breitman, 2003, p. 181)

Malcolm X was deeply contemplating and reflecting on the effectiveness of his notion of 'Black nationalism'. He was sufficiently concerned at what he was now beginning to regard as its short comings, that he had even stopped using the term. His earlier notion of 'black nationalism' focused on Afrikan people taking control of their communities. Even beyond the blatant contradiction of its landlessness, that interpretation of nationalism had

another obvious weakness - it was strictly local in its scope thereby completely lacking an international dimension. This brand of nationalism was limited to the idea of empowering Afrikan people to do for themselves, by themselves in their own localities. There was no mention of empowering Afrikan communities to do for themselves in the context of developing strong links with non-Afrikan communities locally, nationally or internationally. This interpretation of nationalism was also content with the idea of confronting Europeans, without going further; it made no explicit mention of the system which gave a disproportionate amount of power to Europeans.

It is also possible that Malcolm X became aware of some additional shortcomings in his earlier approach to nationalism. For instance, it failed to take the power of the state into account. The state is the most powerful entity within a nation. In US Satan the state is controlled by capitalist corporations and acts in their interests. Those corporations operate in an international basis – their oppressive interests are not bound by US Satan national borders or government. Part of the capitalist corporations' power comes from their control of an international network of capitalist states, not just the US Satan state. The corporate-state partnership ultimately means that no matter how many politicians and shops etc. Afrikan people control in their local communities, they will not be able to control their own destiny inside US Satan, or anywhere else without displacing the capitalist corporations that control the state. If those Afrikan communities really want to be self-determining, they have to take control of the US Satan state.

The raw truth is that if Afrikan people take over a particular community in US Satan, the state has the power to take their control away. It can use its raw military might to invade and conquer that community as it did with the so called 'Black Wall Street' on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1921 (Black Wall Street). It can cut off supplies of electricity, gas, water and oil to that community. It can cordon off that community and prevent any or all supplies from reaching that community's shops, wholesalers and factories – as the Zionist monstrosity Israel is currently doing to the Palestinians (Israeli blockade).

Local control is therefore not a solution to the fundamental problems confronting Afrikan people; if it was, the South Afrikan apartheid regime would never have willingly handed Bantustans or so called independent homelands to Zulu, Swazi and other indigenous southern Afrikan peoples (Taylor, 1991, p. 2); nor would US Satan have created 'reserves' for the true owners of the American continent – the American Indians (Pieterse, 1986, p. 35-50).

### **2.3 Internationalising the Diasporan Afrikan struggle**

Even if there are doubts about how clear Malcolm X was on the shortcomings mentioned above, there can be no doubt that he understood the issues surrounding the scale, power and scope of the oppressive system. Implicit within Malcolm X's thinking was the idea that humanity needed to organise on a scale large enough to challenge the oppressive system. For instance, it is obvious that he understood that individuals cannot defeat the international system of oppression; that families cannot defeat the international system of oppression; that neither

clans nor communities are capable of defeating the international system of oppression; that even tribes and nations are incapable of defeating the international system of oppression.

All of these social aggregates lack the power that is necessary to overthrow the international capitalist system which dominates the world. The only way to defeat a powerful international system of oppression is for the oppressed to collaborate on a global basis in order to confront it internationally. This is what Malcolm X was alluding to when he said:

“... we know too little about our ... relationship with the freedom struggle of people all over the world ... we have always thought that we were struggling by ourselves, and most Afro-Americans will tell you just that – that we’re a minority. By thinking we’re a minority, we struggle like a minority. We struggle like we’re an underdog. We struggle like all of the odds are against us. This type of struggle takes place only because we don’t yet know where we fit in the scheme of things. We’ve been manoeuvred out of a position where we could rightly know and understand where we fit into the scheme of things. It’s impossible for you and me to know where we stand until we look around on this entire earth. Not just look around Harlem or New York, or Mississippi, or America – we have got to look all around this earth. We don’t know where we stand until we know where America stands. You don’t know where you stand in America until you know where America stands in the world. We don’t know where you and I stand in this context, known to us as America, until we know where America stands in the world contexts.” (Breitman, 2002, p. 135)

Malcolm X left us with no doubt about his position because he repeated this internationalist theme over and over again. He emphasised it in virtually every speech that he made after his return from Afrika on 24<sup>th</sup> November 1964 (Breitman, 2002, p. 104). The following quotations are typical of his new improved analysis of how to go about solving the problems of Diasporan Afrikan people:

“... the basic problem that exists between Black and white people [is] not confined to the local level, but [is] confined to the international level, global level on this earth today. When you look at it in that context, you’ll understand it. But if you only try to look at it in the local context, you’ll never understand it. You have to see the trend that is taking place on earth.” (Clark, 2003, p. 151) ... [and] ... “Just as racism has become an international thing, the fight against it is also becoming international. Those who were the victims of it and were kept apart from each other are beginning to compare notes. They are beginning to find that it doesn’t stem from their country alone. It is international. We intend to fight it internationally.” (Clark, 2003, p. 71) ... [and] ... “Today, power is international, real power is international; today real power is not local. The only kind of power that can help you and me is international power, not local power. Any power that is local, if it’s real power, is only a reflection of a part of that international power.” (Breitman, 2002, p. 148)

Malcolm’s words demonstrate that he was now secure in his understanding that a co-ordinated international challenge was necessary for the overthrow of the power system. He was also clear that racism emanated from the international power system. This meant that it would require the collective efforts of oppressed people all around the world to defeat its racist oppression. Therefore, in order to defeat racism in US Satan, it was

necessary to engage and align with Afrikan and non-Afrikan forces external to US Satan. Working in unison would give them the collective power to impact either positively or negatively on US Satan's corporate-state interests. This combined political and economic power would allow them to force concessions from US Satan, despite its superior military power. Malcolm X further re-affirmed his view that without external pressure, US Satan racism would make no concessions to Afrikan people's demands when he said:

"Never at any time in the history of our people in this country have we made advances or progress in any way based on the internal good will of this country. We have made advances in this country only when this country was under pressure from forces above and beyond its control. The internal moral consciousness of this country is bankrupt." (Breitman, 2002, p. 161)

#### **2.4 Internationalising the struggle as a tactic against divide and rule**

The defeat of US Satan also required an end to infighting amongst oppressed groups. In practical terms, this meant active co-operation within and between individual Diasporan Afrikan communities; between Afrikan people in the Diaspora and their sisters and brothers on the continent; and between Afrikan people and other oppressed racial groups such as Arabs and Asians. Oppressed people had to put aside their local and national differences and raise the level of their analysis in order to understand the nature of the real enemy. Malcolm X's warning on the question of countering the divide and rule tactics of the international power structure was stark. He said:

"As long as we're fighting each other, we can't get at the man who should be fought against from the start. Do you understand? Once we see the strategy that they use at the international level, then we can better understand the strategy that they use at the national and at the local level." (Breitman, 2002, p. 150)

As brilliant as his oratory was, Malcolm was more than just a man of words. Through the OAAU, he had already begun the process of nurturing positive working relationships in order to make these internationalist networks a real part of its programme. On 14<sup>th</sup> February 1965 he said:

"... one of our first programmes is to take our problems out of the civil rights context and place it at the international level, of human rights, so that the entire world can have a voice in our struggle. If we keep it at civil rights, then the only place we can turn for allies is within the domestic confines of America. But when you make it a human rights struggle, it becomes international, and then you can open the door to all types of advice and support from our brothers in Afrika, Latin America, Asia and elsewhere. So it is very, very important – that's our international aim, that's our external aim." (Clark, 2003, p. 106)

#### **2.5 Malcolm X supplemented nationalism with internationalism**

The evidence of his words leave no doubt that Malcolm X was an internationalist. However, there is no evidence to confirm that Malcolm abandoned nationalism; in fact the evidence suggests that he maintained it and used it as his ideological foundation. In fact, instead of abandoning nationalism he interrogated its weaknesses with a view to finding solutions to them. In this way he made it more relevant as a tool in the liberation challenges confronting Afrikan people in the Diaspora. Out of that process of interrogation, he grounded his notion of nationalism by

linking Diasporan Afrikan struggles to continental Afrikan people's struggle for sovereignty over the Afrikan land mass.

In retrospect it can also be seen that he expanded his notion of nationalism by supplementing it with internationalism. This new formula brought his ideology to a standard that was more appropriate for dealing with the global scale of the enemy that was the source of Afrikan people's fundamental problems. Malcolm X was therefore simultaneously an Afrikan nationalist and an internationalist who operated this dual strategy in a framework of anti-imperialism. These three elements combined are important parts of the anti-capitalist objective of Pan-Afrikanism – which is the unification and liberation of Afrika under a just social system.

## **2.6 Alliances: an inseparable element of internationalism**

One of the critical ingredients of internationalism is the willingness of its adherents to, not only develop links with progressive forces in other nations, but to actively enter into alliances with them. Malcolm X was completely open about his willingness to engage in acts of solidarity and enter into anti-imperialist alliances with fellow Afrikan people as well as non-Afrikans. For instance, on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1964, Malcolm X stated:

“We have to realise what part our struggle has in the over-all world struggle. Secondly, we need allies ... when we realise how large the world is and how many different people there are in it, and how closely they resemble us, then we turn to them for some sort of help or aid or to form alliances, then we'll make a little faster progress.” (Breitman, 2002, p. 107)

Malcolm X was not naïve about the potential difficulties of alliances. He fully understood that alliances can and do sometimes lead to outcomes that are neither intended nor desired. As the following example demonstrates, he pointed out some of the contradictions in the alliances that he was aware of. He said:

“... instead of you and me running around here seeking allies in our struggle for freedom in the Irish neighbourhood or the Jewish neighbourhood or the Italian neighbourhood, we need to seek some allies among people who look something like we do.” (Breitman, 2003, p. 62)

There were many examples of betrayal on the part of the alleged allies whose interests were really tied up with the capitalist enemy. Since it was a problem that he was familiar with, Malcolm X already had a proposal for some kind of solution. It began with recognising that the world was bigger than the neighbourhoods of New York. His was an international solution which involved developing alliances beyond the reach of US Satan by linking with oppressed people with an anti-capitalist agenda, all over the world. He explained:

“You've only got friends when you get outside the confines of North America. You've got friends in Afrika, friends in Asia, friends in Latin America.” (Breitman, 2003, p. 108)

## **2.7 Towards an OAAU policy on alliances**

Malcolm X's words provide strong clues about the policies of the OAAU on how to engage in anti-imperialist alliances. He said:

"We will work with anybody who is sincerely interested in eliminating injustices that Negroes suffer at the hands of Uncle Sam." (Breitman, 2003, p. 29) ... [and] ... "We condemn our enemies, not the enemies of our enemies. We condemn our enemies." (Breitman, 2003, p. 83) ... [and] ... "I'm for brotherhood for everybody, but I don't believe in forcing brotherhood upon people who don't want it. Let us practice brotherhood among ourselves, and if others want to practice brotherhood with us, we're for practicing it with them also. But I don't think that we should run around trying to love somebody who doesn't love us." (Breitman, 1989, p. 144)

In addition to confirming the fact that the OAAU engaged in inter-racial alliances, the quotes above reveal a number of strands of the organisation's policy including: (i) a stipulation that alliances had to advance Afrikan people's quest for justice in US Satan; (ii) a preference for alliances with people suffering the negative effects of racist oppression; (iii) a preference for alliances with groups outside the borders and domination of US Satan; (iv) an understanding that alliance partners would not normally be on the receiving end of the OAAU's public criticism; (v) an understanding that the OAAU was not begging other parties for alliances – it would only align itself with those forces that actively wanted to engage; and (vi) a firm understanding that external i.e. non-Afrikan alliances were secondary to the pursuit of unity amongst Afrikan people in the Diaspora. The OAAU's position on alliances was not merely a theoretical one. It had already actively engaged in the process of building alliances – including inter-racial alliances. In Malcolm X's words:

"We've already gotten promises of support from many different organisations in this country and from many different leaders in this country and from many different independent nations in Afrika, Asia, and Latin America." (Breitman, 2003, p. 80/1)

The OAAU's primary purpose was to unite all Afrikan people in the Western Diaspora (Breitman, 2003, p. 60). It was intended to be a fighting organisation operating for Diasporan Afrikan people's self defence and freedom (Clark, 2003, p. 106/6). Its main task was to prosecute the Diasporan element of the global Afrikan liberation strategy on the internal battle front of the capitalist enemy. It also had a duty to co-ordinate its activities with both Afrikan people and non-Africans are fighting on the various international battle fronts around the world (Clark, 2003, p. 106). The alliances that Malcolm X was referring to were: (i) those that linked Afrikan people as a united front around the world; and (ii) those that linked Afrikan freedom fighters with non-Afrikan freedom fighters.

## **3 The Afrikan element of Malcolm X's internationalist agenda**

### **3.1 International 'alliances' among Afrikan people: building Pan-Afrikan unity**

Malcolm X saw his remit as helping to organise a specific section of the world's Afrikan population. Initially he focused only on the plight of Afrikan people oppressed inside the borders of US Satan (Breitman, 2002, p. 38).

However, as he began to see the international dimension of the Afrikan liberation struggle more clearly, he expanded his vision and with it his constituency. His improving analysis brought the following explanation:

"... when I speak of the Afro-American, I am not just speaking of the twenty-two million of us living in [US Satan]. But the Afro-American is that large number of people in the Western Hemisphere, from the southernmost tip of South America, to the northernmost tip of North America, all of whom have a common heritage and a common origin when you go back into the history of these people ... there are four spheres of influence in the Western hemisphere, where black people are concerned. There is the Spanish influence, which means that Spain formerly colonised a certain area of the western hemisphere. There's the French sphere of influence, which means that area that she formerly colonised. The area that the British formerly colonised. And those of us who are in [US Satan]." (Clark, 2003, p. 149)

The expanded constituency also included Diasporan Afrikan people in Europe and repatriated Diasporan Afrikan people living on the Afrikan continent – the latter was the group that had initially triggered the idea of forming the OAAU. Malcolm X's constituency now included:

"... the Afro-American community in France ... the West Indian community, which is the Afro-American community in England ..." (Clark, 2003, p. 125) ... [and] "... anyone of Afrikan descent, with Afrikan blood ... any one of our [Diasporan] sisters and brothers from the Afrikan continent." (Breitman, 2003, p. 62)

The OAAU was therefore a mechanism for uniting Afrikan people in the Western Diaspora. Beyond that, it had a role in organising at a higher level i.e. global Afrikan unity. Malcolm X saw the tightening of relations between continental and Diasporan Afrikan people as an essential ingredient in the Afrikan liberation process. The continent was definitely the leader of the Afrikan revolution, but the fortunes of both Afrikan sub-groups were inextricably linked; one could not be free without the other being free (Breitman, 2003, p. 62 & 168). As Afrikan people on the continent began to reclaim the Afrikan land, not only did they empower themselves, but their success also empowered their sisters and brothers in the Diaspora. He explained that:

"... the basic difference between the struggle of the Black man in the Western Hemisphere today from the past: he has a new sense of dignity; he has a new sense of urgency. And above all else, he sees now that he has allies. He sees that the brothers on the Afrikan continent, who have merged and gotten independent states, can see that they have an obligation to the lost brother who went astray and then found himself today in a foreign land. They are obligated. They are just as obligated to the brother who's gone away as they are to the brother who's still at home." (Clark, 2003, p. 63)

### **3.2 The primacy of Afrika: the continent must be free**

Malcolm X grew into being an internationalist who, throughout the entirety of his growth period, retained his nationalist foundations. He translated this combination of nationalism and internationalism into practice by making Afrika the primary component of his approach to liberation. Malcolm X acknowledged that internationalism 'fed the flames of nationalism and freedom' therefore, the purpose of his internationalism was to

strengthen his nationalism (Clark, 2003, p. 163). This approach was consistent with that of Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah whose interpretation of internationalism had implicit within it a recognition of Afrika for the Afrikans; Asia for the Asians; Europe for the Europeans; which also implies America for the American Indians and Australia for the Aborigines (Milne, 2001, p. 29/30).

Against this internationalist background, the OAAU's role was: (i) to align itself with non-Afrikan forces fighting the racist system; (ii) to link with fellow Afrikan people across the Diaspora and on the continent; and (iii) to fight the racist system from within its own communities. This permutation of proposed areas for action was to be prioritised on the basis that unity amongst Afrikan people is primary. Malcolm X put it this way:

"I regard Afrika as my fatherland. I am primarily interested in seeing it become completely free of outside political and economic influence that has dominated and exploited it." (Clark, 2003, p. 265)

Afrika was not regarded as primary for romantic reasons. Malcolm X saw that it was in the interest of Afrikan people everywhere that Afrika was free. The Afrikan continent had to be primary because virtually every Afrikan person in the world would experience an improvement in their situation if Afrika achieved genuine freedom. In Malcolm X's view Diasporan Afrikan people were bound to:

"... help Afrika in its struggle to free itself from Western domination. No matter where the Black man is, he will never be respected until Afrika is a world power" (Clark, 2003, p. 183) ... [furthermore] ... "The Black man himself will only be respected when Afrika is united, is respected, is strong. Therefore it is in the interests of us in [US Satan] and the Caribbean to see that the Afrikan continent is strong and able to back us up when needed." (Clark, 2003, p. 64)

### **3.3 Continental Afrikan liberation leads to Diasporan freedom**

The primacy of Afrika is based on recognising that the liberation of the Afrikan continent provides a powerbase which ignites and triggers the freedom of Afrikan people outside Afrika. It recognises that genuine Afrikan continental freedom eventually leads to Diasporan Afrikan freedom. This process was repeatedly emphasised by Malcolm X. For instance he said:

"So as the Afrikan nations gained their independence and the image of the Afrikan continent began to change, to the same degree that the image of Afrika switched from negative to positive, subconsciously, the Black man in the Western hemisphere, in his subconscious mind, began to identify with the emerging positive Afrikan image ... when he saw the Black man on the Afrikan continent taking a stand, he became filled with the desire to take a stand ... when we began to read about Jomo Kenyatta and the Mau Mau and others, then you find Black people in the country begin to think along the same line." (Clark, 2003, p. 166)

Malcolm X also highlighted the fact that the process of Afrikan liberation does more than boost the self-esteem and raise the consciousness of Afrikan people, it actively encourages them to unite. He said:

“As the Afrikan nations become independent and mould a new image, a positive image, a militant image, an upright image, the image of a man not a boy – how has this affected the Black man in the Western hemisphere? It has taken the Black man in the Caribbean and given him some pride. It has given pride to the black man in Latin America and has given pride right here to people in [US Satan]. So that when the Black revolution begins to roll on the Afrikan continent, it affects the Black man in [US Satan] and affects the relationship between the Black man and the white man in [US Satan].

When the Black man in the Caribbean sees the brother on the continent of Afrika wake up and rise up, the Black man in the Caribbean begins to stick out his chest and stand up. Now when the Black man goes to England, he’s right inside the English power structure, ready to give it trouble. When the Black man from the French West Indies goes to France, why the effect upon him of the Afrikan revolution is the same as the effect upon us here in [US Satan] by the Afrikan revolution. This is what you have to understand ... as the Afrikan nation got its independence and changed its image, we became proud of it, we began to have something in common to that same degree. So whereas it was formerly difficult to unite Black people, today it is easier to unite Black people. Where formerly Black people didn’t want to come together with Black people, but only with white people, today you find black people want to come together with Black people. All they need is someone to start the ball rolling ... as the brothers on the Afrikan continent lead the way, it has an effect upon the brothers here in the Western hemisphere.” (Clark, 2003, p. 124/5)

The impact of a rising Afrikan continent on Diasporan Afrikan people went beyond unity alone. It was unity with a purpose – a militant liberation purpose. That clear purpose brought the kind of militant actions that put fear into the hearts of those who control the capitalist system. Malcolm X outlined the process as follows:

“Afrika is emerging. It’s making the Black man in the Western hemisphere more militant. It’s making him shift from negative to positive in his image of himself and in his confidence in himself. He sees himself as a new man. He’s beginning to identify himself with new forces. Whereas in the past, he thought of his problem as one of civil rights – which made it a domestic issue, which kept it confined to the jurisdiction of [US Satan], a jurisdiction in which he could only seek the aid of white liberals within ... [US Satan] – today the Black man in the Western hemisphere, especially in [US Satan], is beginning to see where his problem is not one of civil rights, but rather it is one of human rights. And in the human rights context, it becomes a human rights issue. It ceases to be a Negro problem, it ceases to be an American problem. It becomes a human problem, a problem of human rights, a problem of humanity, a problem of the world.” (Clark, 2003, p. 62/3)

As Afrika rises and Diasporan Afrikan people rise up in the capitalist centres, capitalism intensified its savage attacks against the already oppressed Diasporan Afrikan people within its borders. In order to provide Diasporan Afrikan people with some level of defence, Malcolm X advocated the internationalising of Diasporan Afrikan people’s struggles. This tactic allowed other peoples in the world, both Afrikan and non-Afrikan, the opportunity to condemn and possibly even sanction US Satan for its anti-Afrikan inhumane conduct. This anti-racist policy was later put into practice against the fascist apartheid regimes of ‘Rhodesia’ and ‘South Afrika’ with some degree of success (Christie, 1989, p. 110 & 156; Mandela, 1996, p. 697).

### **3.4 The Afrikan liberation struggle is one struggle**

In order to assist the momentum of the Afrikan liberation process throughout Afrika and to ensure that continental Afrikan people upheld a commitment to their Diasporan sisters and brothers, Malcolm X developed the OAAU as a formal organisational framework. He regarded this action as the launch pad for the single most important initiative in the liberation struggle Afrikan people in the Diaspora. He said:

“In my opinion, the greatest accomplishment that was made in the struggle of the Black man in [US Satan] in 1964 towards some kind of real progress was the successful linking together of our problem with the Afrikan problem, or making our problem a world problem.” (Breitman, 2002, p. 162) ... [therefore] “... we set up the Organisation of Afro-American Unity and took immediate steps to make certain that we would be in direct contact with our Afrikan brothers on the Afrikan continent.” (Clark, 2003, p. 125/6)

The idea that the Afrikan liberation struggle is one unified struggle, against a common enemy, was now firmly cemented at the heart of Malcolm X's approach to Afrikan liberation. He stressed this point a number of times in a variety of ways, including the following:

“I have been almost fanatically stressing the importance of the Afro-American uniting with the Afrikan and working as a coalition ...” (Clark, 2003, p. 79; Breitman, 2002, p. 179) ... [and] “... you can't separate the Afrikan revolution from the mood of the Black man in America. Neither could the colonisation of Afrika be separated from the menial position of the Black man in this country was satisfied to stay in for so long. Since Afrika has gotten its independence through revolution, you'll notice the stepped-up cry against discrimination that has appeared in the Black community. (Breitman, 2003, p. 183) ... [therefore] “... we believe that it is one struggle in South Afrika, Angola, Mozambique and Alabama. They are all the same struggle.” (Clark, 2003, p. 70)

Malcolm X saw it as the job of repatriated Diasporan Afrikan people to keep pressuring and thereby reminding Afrikan continental governments about their duty to protect their children in the Diaspora. This calibre of lobbying would operate to cement the relationship between the continent and the Diaspora, whilst simultaneously contributing to the freedom of Afrikan people everywhere in the world. What was being developed was a complicated network of formal global scale relationships between Afrikan people.

Today, we would be less likely to use the term 'alliance' to describe the process of building bridges and networks between Afrikan people in different parts of the world. We would be more likely to think of this as a process of building Afrikan unity i.e. Pan-Afrikanism. Even though Malcolm X used the term 'alliance' instead, his words and actions are a clear indication that this part of his internationalist approach was working towards Pan-Afrikanism.

### **3.5 Capitalism seeks to isolate liberation struggles**

Malcolm X pointed out that, Afrikan people's mortal enemy – capitalism i.e. the racist international power structure – has also become aware that the Afrikan liberation struggle is one struggle. He highlighted the way in which those that control the racist system:

“... are beginning to see that this struggle on the outside by the Black man is affecting, infecting the black man who is on the inside of that structure ... just as the external forces pose a grave threat, they can now see that the internal forces pose an even greater threat. But the internal forces pose a greater threat only when they have properly analysed the situation and know what the stakes really are.” (Clark, 2003, p. 80; Breitman, 2003, p. 180)

For Malcolm X the racist system also understood that the Afrikan struggle, which has the most profound revolutionary potential, was its biggest problem. As the revolutionary consciousness of Afrikan people living in the capitalist centres begins to rise, they are increasingly feared as the ‘enemy within’ who must be contained. As Malcolm X put it:

“Tonight one of the things that has to be stressed is that which has not only [US Satan] very much worried, but which also has France ... Britain, and most of the powers who formerly were known as colonial powers worried also, and that primarily is the Afrikan revolution. They are more concerned with the revolution that is taking place on the Afrikan continent than they are with the revolution in Asia and in Latin America. And this is because there are so many people of Afrikan ancestry within the domestic confines or jurisdiction of these various governments.” (Clark, 2003, p. 77)

“... when [Afrikan people] migrate to England, they pose a problem for the English ... when they migrate to France, they pose a problem for the French ... when they awaken ... the Black man in [US Satan], then it poses a problem for the white man here in [US Satan] ... don't you think that the problem that the white man in [US Satan] has is unique. France is having the same problem. And ... Britain is having the same problem ... the Afrikan community in France, has begun to organise amongst themselves, and is frightening France to death. And the same thing is happening in England ... the West Indians in England, along with the Afrikan community in England, along with the Asians in England, began to organise and work in co-ordination with each other. And this has posed England a very serious problem.” (Clark, 2003, p. 150/1)

The racist system has already made contingency plans to prevent Afrikan people in the Diaspora from rising up against it. One part of those plans consists of blocking and containing their rising consciousness through an intense process of indoctrination. Malcolm X explained that:

“When they think that an explosive era is coming up, then they grab their press again and begin to shower the [Afrikan] public, to make it appear that all [Afrikans] are satisfied. Because if you know that your dissatisfied all by yourself and ten others aren't, you play it cool; but you know if all ten of you are dissatisfied, you get with it. We'll, this is what the man knows. The man knows that if these [Afrikans] find out how dissatisfied they really are – and all of them, even Uncle Tom is

dissatisfied, he's just playing his part for now – this is what makes them frightened. It frightens them in France, it frightens them in England and it frightens them in [US Satan]." (Clark, 2003, p. 104)

## **4 The non-Afrikan element of Malcolm X's internationalist agenda**

### **4.1 Malcolm X's support for positive Afrikan relations with Arabs and Asians**

Malcolm X argued that the darker skinned people of the world should co-ordinate their struggles against the system that was responsible for racial oppression. He was in favour of continental and Diasporan Afrikan people building international and local anti-imperialist alliances with Arabs, Asians and even Europeans. His main pre-condition for the building of effective alliances was that Afrikan people should first organise effectively amongst themselves. Time and time again he pointed to the Bandung conference as the critically important milestone that empowered the world's oppressed darker skinned people. Among the newly empowered were continental Afrikan people who after centuries of oppression, reclaimed their lands and re-establish their nations. Malcolm X's support for alliances between Afrikan people, Arabs and Asians is self-evident:

"... the power of the oppressed black, brown, red and yellow people began at the Bandung conference, which was a coalition between the Arab and the Asian and the Afrikan, and how much pressure they've been able to put on the oppressor since then." (Breitman, 2002, p. 149)

"At the Bandung Conference in 1955, one of the first and best steps towards independence for non-white people took place. The people of Africa and Asia and Latin America were able to get together. They sat down, they realised that they had differences. They agreed not to place any emphasis any longer on these differences, but to submerge their areas of differences and place emphasis upon areas where they had something in common ... [This] produced the spirit of Bandung. So that the people who were oppressed, who had no jet planes, no nuclear weapons, no armies, no navies – and despite the fact that they did not have this, their unity alone was sufficient to enable them, over a period of years to manoeuvre and make it possible for other nations in Asia to become independent, and many more nations in Afrika to become independent ... by 1959, many of you will recall how colonialism on the Afrikan continent had already begun to collapse. It began to collapse because the spirit of Afrikan nationalism had been fanned from a spark to a roaring flame. And it made it impossible for the colonial powers to stay there by force. Formerly when the Afrikans were fearful, the colonial power could come up with a battle ship, or threaten to land an army, or something like that and the oppressed people would submit and go ahead being colonised for a while longer ... by 1959, all of the fear had left the Afrikan continent and the Asian continent. And because this fear was gone, especially in regards to the colonial powers of Europe, it made it impossible for them to continue to stay in there by the same methods that they had employed up to that time." (Clark, 2003, p. 56/7).

"Along about 1955 they had the Bandung conference in Indonesia. And at that time, the Afrikans, the Asians, the Arabs, all of the non-white people got together and agreed to de-emphasise their differences and emphasise what they had in common, and form a working unity. And it was the working unity – the spirit of Bandung created a working unity that made it possible for the Asians, who were oppressed, the Afrikans, who were oppressed, and others who were oppressed to work together towards gaining independence for these other people. And it was the spirit of Bandung that brought into existence

this working unity that made it possible for nations that didn't have a chance to become independent to come into their independence." (Clark, 2003, p. 96).

"Back in '55 in Indonesia – Bandung – they had a conference of dark skinned people. The people of Afrika and Asia came together for the first time in centuries. They had no nuclear weapons, they had no air fleets, no navy. But they discussed their plight and they found that there was one thing that we all had in common – oppression, exploitation and suffering. And we had a common oppressor, a common exploiter ... We had differences. Some were Buddhists, some were, Hindus some were Christians, some were Moslems, some didn't have any religion at all. But with all the differences that existed, they agreed on one thing, the spirit of Bandung was, from there on in, to de-emphasise the areas of difference and emphasise the areas that we had in common ... it was the spirit of Bandung that fed the flames of nationalism and freedom, not only in Asia, but especially on the Afrikan continent ... And that spirit didn't stay on the Afrikan continent. It somehow or other, it slipped into the Western Hemisphere and got into the heart and mind and the soul of the Black man in the Western Hemisphere who supposedly had been separate from the Afrikan continent for almost 400 years." (Clark, 2003, p. 163).

There are consistent themes that flow from Malcolm X's analysis. At Bandung, Afrikan people, Asians, Arabs and South Americans came together to create a multi-lateral network of anti-imperialist internationalist alliances. They submerged their differences and emphasised their common agenda. They developed working unity aimed at fighting racist oppression and reclaiming their land from their common enemy, the imperialist oppressors. There were many benefits that flowed from their anti-imperialist internationalist inter-racial co-operation. Firstly, their internationalist co-operation 'fed the flames' of each of their nationalist struggles against imperialism making it possible for them to politically out manoeuvre US Satan and other capitalist nations despite their lack of military might. Secondly, it stimulated local and nationalist liberation struggles in Afrika, Asia and Arabia, triggering the process of national independence in each of those parts of the world.

In Afrika, there was the historic problem of Arabs invading and occupying the north of the continent. However, 'the spirit of Bandung' fostered co-operation between Afrikan people and Arabs living on the Afrikan continent. Its legacy contributed to the success of the First Conference of Independent Afrikan States and the First All-Afrikan People's Conference, both held in Accra, Ghana in 1958. These conferences, both of which were attended by Afrikan and North Afrikan Arab delegates, spearheaded the wave of independence that swept across Afrika in the early 1960's.

#### **4.2 Alliances on capitalism's internal front**

As has already been mentioned, Malcolm X recognised the importance of Diasporan Afrikan people organising against the racist system in the capitalist heartlands. However, even a united and organised body of Diasporan Afrikan people in the belly of the capitalist beast remained significantly outnumbered. Regardless of Diasporan Afrikan people's level of heroism, effort, determination and commitment, US Satan capitalism and the other capitalist centres remained overwhelmingly powerful in their homelands. This meant that it was unwise of Diasporan Afrikan people to try to fight capitalism by themselves. Malcolm X therefore recommended that

Diasporan Afrikan people join forces with other racially oppressed peoples in the capitalist heartlands. His comments on this tactic included:

“Just as the external forces pose a grave threat, they can now see that the internal forces pose an even greater threat. But the internal forces pose an even greater threat only when they have properly analysed the situation and know what the stakes really are ... advocating a coalition of Afrikans, Afro-Americans, Arabs, and Asians who live within the structure ... automatically has upset France, which is supposed to be one of the most liberal – hah! – countries on earth, and it made them expose their hand. England the same way.” (Clark, 2003, p. 80).

“And when the West Indian community, which is an Afro-American community in England, begins to unite and then unite also with the Afrikan community in England and reach out and get the Asian community, it’s trouble for old John Bull. Trouble that he never foresaw before. And this is something that he has to face up to.” (Clark, 2003, p. 125).

However, Malcolm X was under no illusions about the limitations of this tactic in the context of the overall anti-imperialist struggle. Even the combined efforts of Diasporan Afrikan and other oppressed people within US Satan’s borders would not be able to destroy their common oppressor through their independent local efforts. Malcolm X therefore concluded that there was no local solution to the problems confronting Afrikan people in the Diaspora. They had no choice but to internationalise their local and national liberation struggles (Breitman, 2002, p. 108, 148 & 161; Clark, 2003, p. 71 & 151); it was the most effective way of defending themselves and the only way that they could achieve liberation.

### **4.3 Divide and Rule to undo the spirit of Bandung**

Imperialism uses its press to actively promote divisions between all Afrikan people and the Asians and Arabs that live amongst them. The anti-‘other’ feelings exhibited by Afrikan people against other racially oppressed groups is learnt behaviour. It has been specifically created by the racist controllers of capitalism. Malcolm X described the process in the following terms:

“Afrika, because of its strategic position, faces a real crisis. The colonial vultures have no intention of giving it up without a fight. Their chief weapon is still ‘divide and conquer’. In East Afrika, there is a strong anti-Asian feeling being nourished among the Afrikans. In West Afrika there is a strong anti-Arab feeling. Where there are Arabs or Asians, there is a strong anti-Moslem feeling.” (Clark, 2003, p. 265) ... [furthermore] ... “Divisions between Afro-Asians should never be. The press is responsible for the divisions in places like British Guyana. The Blacks who imitate and succumb to this white propaganda I give the most degrading term possible: ‘Toms’”. (Clark, 2003, p. 44).

The methods used by the capitalists to create divisions between Afrikan people across the world and their local Arabian and Asian counter-parts are many and varied. However:

"The number one weapon of 20<sup>th</sup> century imperialism is Zionist dollarism, and one of the main bases for this weapon is Zionist Israel. The ever-scheming European imperialists wisely placed Israel where she could geographically divide the Arab world, infiltrate and sow the seed of dissension among African leaders and also divide the Africans against the Asians.

Zionist Israel's occupation of Arab Palestine has forced the Arab world to waste billions of precious dollars on armaments, making it impossible for these newly independent Arab nations to concentrate on strengthening the economies of their countries and elevate the living standard of their people ... the continued low standard of living in the Arab world has been skilfully used by the Zionist propagandists to make it appear to the Africans that the Arab leaders are not intellectually or technically qualified to lift the living standard of their people ... thus, indirectly 'inducing' Africans to turn away from the Arabs and towards the Israelis for teachers and technical assistance ... [imperialism] can't stand against fair competition, thus they dread Gamal Abdul Nasser's call for African-Arab Unity under Socialism." (Zionist Logic).

#### **4.4 Public interview: Malcolm X on Afrikan, Arab and Asian relations**

The following conversation is extracted from an interview with Malcolm X on the *Community Corner* radio show hosted by Bernice Bass. The interview took place on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1964. It gives a clear succinct overview of Malcolm X's position on Afrikan, Asian, Arab relations:

CALLER: I'm calling from Manhattan. I would like to ask: Why do the Arabs discriminate against the Black man? And especially I read about the Sudan where they attacked and killed Negroes just because they were black.

BASS: Perhaps Minister Malcolm X can answer that.

MALCOLM X: My own -- when I was in East Africa, I noticed that there was a strong feeling among the Africans along the East African coast against the Asians. When I went to West Africa, I noticed that there was a strong feeling among the Africans against the Arabs. And in parts of Africa where there were neither Asians or Arabs, I noticed a strong feeling among Africans -- if they were Muslim, it was against Africans who were Christian, or if they were Christian, it was against Africans who were Muslim.

And when you study the divisive forces at work on the African continent today, you'll find that these divisive forces are not indigenous to the African or the African continent, but they are coming from outside. And the powers that have ruled Africa in the past are aware that the real independence of Africa began to take its impetus from the Bandung Conference, which was a forging together of the Asian-Arab-African bloc. And this bloc, with no nuclear weapons or weapons of modern warfare, were able to gain a great deal toward independence against the European powers, because of their numerical strength, their unity.

So these powers realize that they've been pushed against the wall during recent years and the only weapon that they have against this force that has been pushing them against the wall is divide and conquer -- the tactic that they've always used. So that, if I may finish, so that in every area where you find people who have been colonized and oppressed today striving

toward freedom, you find that whereas in the past they got along, today they're fighting each other. Just like in British Guyana -- it's the Asians against the Black man. And this is not indigenous trouble that stems from the people themselves. It's instigated by outside forces. And then it's blown up to give the impression that the fight that's going on among them or between them is something other than what it actually is.

BASS: May I ask you this -- now you say this is not indigenous to the African continent and then of course, you just mentioned British Guyana. But if you look at history, don't you find that all continents or all groups of people in a wide geographical area usually come up with differences within themselves -- Canada for instance, the United States. It's not just Africa alone.

MALCOLM X: Certainly. But when these differences come up and they are normal, or natural—

BASS: Hold on just a minute.

MALCOLM X: -- you'll find that they usually take a different pattern than that which is developing on the African continent or in British Guyana. Because if the Asians and the Blacks in British Guyana could live so much in harmony together when the British were there, you tell me why now that the British are being pushed out, or they're being threatened with being pushed out, that all of a sudden the power that could push them out -- instead of pushing them out begins to fight among themselves. This is not an accident. And the same pattern is developing in different parts of the world. It's divide and conquer.

BASS: Does that answer your question, sir?

CALLER: Ma'am, for clearness' sake you should also talk about the Arabs. I think for clearness' sake you should also mention the Arab role in -- as slave traders and the hatred that would stem from that.

BASS: Did you hear that, Minister Malcolm X? Now we're going to hang up, but he's going to answer that.

MALCOLM X: I don't condone slavery, no matter who it's carried on by. And I think that -- I don't condone slavery no matter who carries it on. And I think that every power that has participated in slavery of any form on this earth, in history, has paid for it, except [US Satan]. All of your European powers that colonized, your -- the part that the Arabs played in the enslavement of Africans, all of them who played a part have lost their empire, lost their power, lost their position, except [US Satan]. [US Satan] was the recipient of the slaves, and she's the only one up till now who has yet to pay. (Bernice Bass Interview).

#### **4.5 Summary of Malcolm X's position on Afrikan relations with Arabs and Asians**

Malcolm X acknowledged that there were strong anti-Arab, anti-Asian, Anti-Moslem and anti-Christian feelings in some Afrikan communities. However, he was clear that these anti-'others' feelings were not an organic part of

Afrikan culture - they were introduced from outside. In fact, Afrikan people had a history of living in harmony with these other groups prior to independence (Clark, 2003, p. 44 & 265). These divisive ideas were deliberately planted by the outgoing colonialists in order to ferment racial confusion aimed at facilitating neo-colonial rule after independence. The heavily funded Zionist occupation of Palestine and the manipulation of the imperialist media were two of the main methods used to turn Afrikan people against Asians and Arabs (Clark, 2003, p. 44; Zionist Logic). In Malcolm X's view Afrikan people who succumbed to this colonialist sponsored manipulation and projected anti-Arab and anti-Asian sentiments were 'Uncle Toms' (Clark, 2003, p. 44; Bernice Bass).

Malcolm X taught that both continental and Diasporan Afrikan people should actively build alliances with Arabs and Asians. History has proved that Afrikan/Arab/Asian co-operation brought great dividends for each of them (Breitman, 2002, p. 149). The co-operation at Bandung was a catalyst for both Afrikan and Asian independence (Breitman, 2002, p. 149). Through that conference, the Afrikan/Arab/Asian bloc was eventually able to wield great collective power in international arenas such as the UN (Breitman, 2002, p. 149). The conference also led to independence for Afrikan and Asian nations. That wave of independence brought changes in the international political environment and in doing so, provided a degree of protection for Diasporan Afrikan people. This is evidence that Diasporan Afrikan people's local and national problems are really part of international level problems. Indeed, Malcolm X argued that there is no national level solution to their problems (Breitman, 2002, p. 108, 148 & 161; Clark, 2003, p. 71 & 151); their struggle is really part of the Afrikan revolutionary struggle, which in turn, is part of the worldwide revolutionary struggle. Diasporan Afrikan people therefore have no choice but to internationalise their local and national struggles in order to achieve victory, liberation and freedom.

## **5 The politically mature Malcolm X**

### **5.1 The two categories of nationalism**

Historically some nations have used their nationalism to invade other people's land; conquer those other people and steal their land and labour – in short they have colonised other nations. This type of nationalism is automatically hostile to 'others'; it produces racism, colonialism and a whole range of other negative 'isms'. Many parts of Europe developed this expansionist hostile brand of nationalism: British, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Belgium imperialisms are examples that fit this category of nationalism. Their common feature is that they have imbedded within them hostility towards 'others'.

By contrast, there is another category of nationalisms. These nationalisms are based on the idea of previously conquered peoples struggling to regain their land and labour. These nationalisms are not based on hostility to 'others'; nor are they based on depriving 'others' of land and resources that are rightfully theirs. These nationalisms are aimed at expelling thieving invaders and re-establishing the power of self-determination for peoples whose land had previously been stolen from them.

For the last 500 years, the purpose of Afrikan nationalism has primarily been to expel European imperialism and all of its derivative systems from Afrikan land so as to re-establish Afrikan self-determination. Defeating European

imperialism has been the focus because it is the dominant imperialism in Afrika. It has disempowered both traditional Afrikan culture and Arab influenced Afrikan culture in the north of the continent. Afrikan nationalism has not been xenophobic; it has not been based on a general hostility to 'others'. On the contrary, it has consistently demonstrated a willingness to co-operate constructively with 'others' when the circumstances are right.

This analysis points to two categories of nationalism: (i) a nation with self-pride which at the same time harbours hostility to all 'others' - this is a kind of xenophobic nationalism; and (ii) a nation with self-pride which simultaneously embraces constructive relationships with 'others'. The fundamental difference between the two categories is the manner in which 'others' are treated.

## **5.2 A warped Diasporan Afrikan nationalism**

When a 'nation' does not own land, it is disempowered; it could even be argued that it is not a real nation. When a nation owns land, it has the space and power to organise the rest of its affairs in ways that best suit its people. Control of land allows its people to develop their spiritual, religious and psychological systems free from outside interference. It allows them to develop their sciences and theories of science including biology, melanin, skin colour and pseudo-science such as race etc. free from external impositions. However, none of this can be independently achieved without control of land. It is the control of a nation's land and resources that makes its people free to practice and express their true culture.

Afrikan people stranded in overtly racist countries such as US Satan have been seriously disempowered. They have little or no prospect of taking control of the land mass that they live on and as a result, a mutant regressive form of Afrikan 'nationalism' has developed. Instead of seeking control of a land base, it concentrates on pseudo-liberation issues such as skin colour, race, biology, religion, spirituality, psychology and in some cases, even the idea of common 'ancestors' flown in from outer space. This warped interpretation of Afrikan nationalism appears to have forgotten that the fundamental basis of nationalism is control of land. It therefore has no revolutionary ambition and contents itself with seeking control of its 'community'.

This warped Diasporan interpretation of Afrikan nationalism has reacted to the intense racism of US Satan by copying its enemy's nationalistic trait of hostility to 'others' and the ways of 'others'. As a reaction to Afrikan people's under class status in US Satan and the resulting ill-treatment from other nationalities, it has become hostile to Europeans, Arabs, Asians and even so called 'non-Afrikan religions' such as Christianity and Islam. The most reactionary elements can even exhibit hostility to Aborigines and American Indians. However, since its adherents do not have the power to invade and occupy these 'other' people's lands, it has resorted to dissociating from 'others', name calling and the exclusion of 'others' from spaces that it occupies as methods of exhibiting its hostility.

### **5.3 Distinguishing real Afrikan nationalism from the warped mutation**

The dividing line between hostile and embracing forms of Afrikan nationalism can be found by examining the way in which they deal with international anti-imperialist alliances, acts of solidarity and co-operation. The most reactionary elements of the hostile mutant version of Afrikan 'nationalism' absolutely and totally reject the idea of solidarity work with racially oppressed 'others' such as Arabs and Asians. Non-co-operation with these 'others' is linked to their anti-Afrikan behaviour and treated as a matter of principle.

The original i.e. embracing versions of Afrikan nationalism are open to the idea of working in solidarity with other racially oppressed groups including Arabs and Asians on a common anti-imperialist agenda. For them, the decision on whether or not to co-operate with 'others,' is a matter of tactics. Frontline Afrikan freedom fighters are interested in whether or not alliances advance the Afrikan liberation agenda. They only engage in anti-imperialist alliances with non-Afrikans as a means of strengthening Afrikan nationalism. This is the category of Afrikan nationalism that the fully matured Malcolm X belonged to.

### **5.4 A lesson from the growth of Malcolm X**

One of the most important areas of growth for Malcolm X was crossing the dividing line between the hostile and embracing versions of Afrikan nationalism. In making this transition, Malcolm X came to the realisation that hostile Afrikan nationalism was unable to offer a solution to Diasporan Afrikan people's problems. He came to realise that the solution to their problem came from internationalising Diasporan Afrikan people's struggles and making them part of the global anti-imperialist struggle. He came to realise that international co-operation in the form of alliances and acts of solidarity are a must for all people trying to free themselves from the domination of their internationally powerful common enemy – the oppressive modern slavery system - imperialism.

This points to one of the most important messages that flows from Malcolm X's life of growth – namely: if he could see the benefits of moving beyond narrow or hostile nationalism, then any nationalist has the potential to do the same; if he could come to see that the Afrikan revolution is bigger than the race issue alone, then any nationalist has the potential to do the same; if he could come to see that the European was not the enemy, but rather the international power structure created from within the European's culture was the real enemy, then any nationalist has the potential to understand the distinction.

Malcolm X understood the need to strengthen Afrikan nationalism with internationalist links and alliances. He understood that strengthening Afrikan nationalism in this way was essential for defeating imperialism. In coming to this realisation, he joined the ranks of other great Pan-Afrikanists and became one of the greatest Afrikan leaders of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Other Afrikan greats who operated at this level included Marcus Garvey and Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah who both headed Afrikan nationalist organisations that entered into anti-imperialist alliances with oppressed non-Afrikans.

In fact, one of the points that emerge from a careful examination of Afrikan revolutionary history is that alliances are a precondition for victory and liberation. The alternative is political isolation which ultimately leads to defeat. Every great Afrikan freedom fighter on the battle field has understood the need for unity amongst Afrikan freedom fighters and Afrikan alliances with oppressed non-Afrikans. The only Afrikan people that argue against alliances with non-Afrikans as a matter of 'principle' are those that are not involved in action on real battle fronts.

Part of the greatness of Malcolm X was his ability to continuously learn and grow as a human being. This is a trait which he maintained right up until the end of his life. His last 18 months provide solid proof that transformation from being a narrow or hostile Afrikan nationalist to becoming an Afrikan revolutionary freedom fighter is possible. It also makes it clear that those Afrikan 'nationalists' who currently do not understand the value of: (i) controlling Afrikan land; and (ii) engaging in tactical anti-imperialist alliances, can still learn. As they assimilate this lesson they transform their Afrikan nationalism into revolutionary Afrikan nationalism and automatically make a more constructive contribution to Afrikan people's development.

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