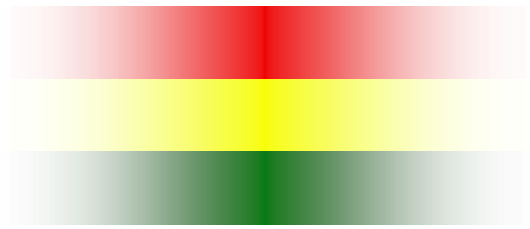
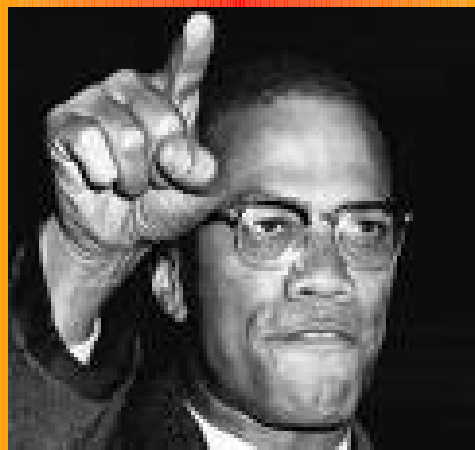


Afrikan Liberation Day

2009



Afrikan Freedom means Defeating Neo-colonialism



The  
**Afrikan Liberation  
Strategy  
Of  
Malcolm X**

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

The Pan Afrikan People's Phone-in  
Every Sunday 10pm – 12midnight

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***The Pan-Afrikan People's Phone-in*** is a space for themed interactive discussions conducted over the airwaves and cyberspace. The themes are focused around issues affecting Afrikan people both locally and globally.

***The Pan-Afrikan People's Phone-in*** regularly features guests from revolutionary Pan-Afrikanist organisations. From time to time others including non-Afrikan guests will be invited to contribute. The activities of all guests will be examined on the basis of their relevance to Afrikan people locally and worldwide. Interviews and presentations with guests will set the scene for the more general discussion (in the second half of the programme) where listeners will be invited to phone in, ask questions and contribute.

***Spread the word:*** Please tell all of your family, friends, fellow organisation members, colleagues, associates and other networks about the show. Encourage them to listen.

# **The Afrikan Liberation Strategy of Malcolm X**

## **1 A Diasporan Afrikan worldview - seen through the eyes of Malcolm X's**

### **1.1 Unveiling the strategic message of Malcolm X**

It is surprising just how little attention has been given to unearthing and communicating the Afrikan liberation strategy of Malcolm X. Forces opposed to Afrikan liberation have set about hiding his liberation message behind artificial smokescreens. A variety of techniques have been employed; for instance: (i): his involvement in criminal activities as a young man is often pushed to the fore in order to tarnish his image; (ii) since Malcolm's strategic message only emerged in the last year of his life, another smokescreen has been to concentrate only on his interpretation of the world prior to that time; and (iii) perhaps the biggest smokescreen of all has been the blatant distortion of his message on Afrikan people's right to defend themselves. His detractors have deliberately and misleadingly portrayed Malcolm as a 'man of violence'.

It is even possible that one of Malcolm's greatest assets may have been specifically highlighted with a view to obscuring the strategic plans that he was seeking to guide Diasporan Afrikan people towards. Malcolm was a brilliant orator – a genius with words. The power of his smartly composed sentences coupled with his razor sharp debating ability has caused some people to genuinely admire him on the basis of his outstanding abilities as a communicator. Some may have been so impressed with his chosen form of communication that they may not necessarily have captured the essence of his strategic Afrikan liberation messages.

### **1.2 Malcolm X's aim: start with the end in sight**

Malcolm X moved from being a commentator on matters relevant to Afrikan people, to being a Pan-Afrikan strategist. His strategy highlighted the particular contribution of Diasporan Afrikan people in the overall process of the liberation struggle and how this contributed to their own liberation in the West. However, he was murdered before he had the opportunity to put his strategy into place. Despite this terrible tragedy, he has left a legacy through his last year of speeches that allow us to piece together key elements of the liberation strategy that he intended to follow.

Malcolm X made it clear that the liberation of the Afrikan continent was of primary importance to the liberation of Afrikan people everywhere in the world. An examination of his ideas demonstrates that this was one of four basic premises underpinning the Afrikan liberation aim that he espoused. These premises are:

- Afrikan people must win Afrika to be liberated (Clark, 2003, p. 265);
- Afrikan liberation will occur only after Afrikan people have collectively taken full exclusive control of Afrika's land (Breitman, 2002, p. 19-22);
- A liberated Afrika will provide protection for her children in the Diaspora (Breitman, 2002, p. 89/90);  
and
- The Afrikan motherland cannot be truly free until her children in the Diaspora are also free (Breitman, 2002, p. 91).

Malcolm X was very specific about his Afrikan liberation remit. Time and time again he reminded us that he was focusing on resolving the plight of the 22 million Diasporan Afrikan people oppressed within the borders of US Satan (Breitman, 2002, p. 38). His aim was to create for them living conditions free from racist oppression. This would help to create a situation where they could genuinely experience equality, freedom, peace and security (Breitman, 2003, p. 61).

However, this aim could not be achieved in isolation. The 22 million Diasporan Afrikan people in US Satan were part of the wider Afrikan Diaspora in the West - which Malcolm estimated to be in the order of 100 million people (Clark, 2003, p. 81). The freedom of Afrikan people in US Satan was inextricably linked to the freedom of Diasporan Afrikan people in other parts of the Western world. This group included Diasporan Afrikan people in North, South and Central America, including the Caribbean islands. It also included Diasporan Afrikan people in Europe many of whom had emigrated there from the Americas (Breitman, 2003, p. 60).

Afrikan people in the Diaspora could only be free when their mortal enemy and oppressor – the capitalist system or as Malcolm called it the international power structure – was destroyed (Clark, 2003, p. 79/80). They therefore had a common interest in grouping together to work for capitalism's destruction. However, even when Afrikan people in the Diaspora united and put all of their resources together, they remained seriously outnumbered and lacked the power to control the capitalist state machinery because they were seriously outflanked and outgunned.

In order to be able to tranquillise, subdue or even destroy the oppressive anti-Afrikan capitalist system, it was necessary to have a totally liberated Afrikan motherland (Clark, 2003, p. 64 & 265). A liberated Afrika would be in a position to offer protection to her oppressed children in the Afrikan Diaspora. A strong continental wide government could use its power in the international arena to force Western capitalist governments to respect the human rights of Afrikan people who were oppressed within Western nations' borders (Breitman, 2002, p. 89-91).

The role of continental Afrikan governments in protecting Diasporan Afrikan people placed a special duty on another important group of Afrikan people. This was the group of Afrikan people born in the Diaspora, but who had made the conscious decision to repatriate back to the Afrikan continent. They had a special duty to build fighting organisations aimed at freeing Afrikan people in the Western Diaspora. Their principle duty was to lobby Afrikan continental governments with a view to encouraging them to actively defend their oppressed children in the Western Diaspora (Clark, 2003, p. 78/9).

The liberation of the Afrikan motherland was therefore the critical catalyst in the process of freeing Afrikan people everywhere. This means that Afrika and the liberation of Afrika is of primary importance to Afrikan people everywhere (Clark, 2003, p. 183). This in turn means that there is a duty on all Afrikan people, everywhere in the world to play a part in the process of liberating the Afrikan continent. However, since the Afrikan motherland cannot truly be free if her children in the Diaspora are not free, there is a corresponding

duty on Afrikan people on the continent to work towards the freedom of their sisters and brothers who were stolen and then left stranded in the Western Diaspora (Breitman, 2002, p. 110).

### **1.3 Malcolm X's two pronged approach to Afrikan liberation**

This analysis helped to produce one of the distinguishing features of Malcolm X's strategy i.e. the two pronged approach to Afrikan liberation: (i) the internal struggle of Diasporan Afrikan people fighting the capitalist system in its own centres; and (ii) the international struggle of Diasporan Afrikan people in the capitalist centres which involves them linking up with oppressed Afrikan and non-Afrikan communities around the world to fight the international capitalist power structure (Clark, 2003, p. 106).

Through the gallant efforts of the continental Afrikan masses, the Afrikan motherland was experiencing a prolific phase of 'independence'. However, Afrika was still not free. Afrikan people on the motherland were held down by colonialism, settler colonialism and neo-colonialism. It was therefore necessary to help to create a situation where Afrika was ripe for liberation. In order to create such conditions, capitalism had to be attacked on several different fronts across the whole world simultaneously. These simultaneous assaults would force capitalism to spread its resources thinly across the globe. This, in turn, would mean that it could not hold down all of its colonies at once. This would leave the way clear for some of the colonies to break away from capitalist control, emancipate themselves and then fight for the freedom of those colonies that had not yet broken away.

However, in order to achieve this level of co-ordination, alliances were necessary with groups of non-Africans who because they were similarly oppressed by capitalism, had a lot to gain from its destruction (Breitman, 2002, p. 107). The Afrikan liberation movement in US Satan had experienced significant setbacks from alliances with non-Afrikan forces in US Satan (Breitman, 2003, p. 62). These setbacks were often the result of the US Satan government's underhanded destructive influences. This was evidence that allies could not necessarily be trusted, but it was not evidence that it was tactically incorrect to engage in alliances with non-Africans (Clark, 2003, p. 96 & 163). Future alliances would be struck internationally, mostly outside the legal jurisdiction of US Satan as a tactic to reduce its undermining and destructive influences (Breitman, 2003, p. 108).

### **1.4 The necessity of effective organisation**

It was impossible to achieve these aims or any part of the Afrikan liberation strategy without the creation of an effective Afrikan liberation organisation. The building of an effective organisation would give Afrikan people in the Diaspora the power to act in their own best interests (Breitman, 2003, p. 87). The organisation that Malcolm X was creating as a vehicle for carrying forward the specific actions required by the strategy was the Organisation of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) (Clark, 2003, p. 113).

The OAAU's primary purpose was to unite all Afrikan people in the Western Diaspora (Breitman, 2003, p. 60). It would be a fighting organisation operating for Diasporan Afrikan people's self defence and freedom (Clark, 2003, p. 106/6). It would prosecute the Diasporan element of the Afrikan liberation strategy on two fronts (i)

the internal battle front and (ii) the international battle front (Clark, 2003, p. 106). It would also employ political education as a vital tool in the process of taking control of Afrikan majority communities and beyond that for transforming the revolutionary consciousness of its members (Breitman, 2002, p. 219 & 250; Breitman, 2003, p. 20).

## **2 The internal battle front – revolution in the belly of the capitalist monster**

### **2.1 Afrikan battle fronts are part of a world full of battle fronts**

Malcolm X understood that in a situation of worldwide revolutionary war there would be a multiplicity of different but related battle fronts located all around the world. Some of those battle fronts would be in the heart of the capitalist centres. Afrikan people in capitalist centres such as US Satan were on a critical battle front. Against that background, their first duty was to unite with other Afrikan people in their localities in order to defend themselves and contribute to the destruction of capitalism (Breitman, 2003, p. 24).

Afrikan people's next duty was to consolidate their positions by linking forces with other oppressed groups in the capitalist centres (Clark, 2003, p. 80). These coalitions could then use their combined strength to confront capitalism from within i.e. at its weakest point. Capitalism's internal battle fronts and the role of oppressed groups within them were critical because the nature of the struggle there could ultimately help to destroy the capitalist beast from within (Clark, 2003, 62/3, 124/5 & 166).

It was essential that the struggle on capitalism's internal battle front was unified and highly organised. Any Afrikan organisation operating on this front had to actively engage in the political education of Diasporan Afrikan people. This would contribute to raising their understanding of their common quest for justice. It would also have to focus on those aspects that unite Afrikan people such as the common struggle against racial oppression. Conversely, it would have to de-emphasise contentious areas which tend to promote divisions and splits such as religious differences (Clark, 2003, p. 168 & 262).

### **2.2 Organised self-defence on the internal battle front**

All of these conditions contributed to the creation of Malcolm's Afrikan focused organisation - the OAAU. Its internal role was to focus on the issues that impacted on Diasporan Afrikan communities locally. It was given the specific remit of actively involving itself in all issues affecting Diasporan Afrikan people in their local communities (Clark, 2003, p. 134). Its job was to lead the organised struggle of Diasporan Afrikan people in the belly of the capitalist beast. That struggle would be multi-dimensional taking on both defensive and proactive postures. Its defensive tasks included fighting all of the negative political, economic and social conditions confronting Diasporan Afrikan communities (Clark, 2003, p. 106). Amongst other things, this meant tackling:

- The problems posed by landlords, politicians and merchants who pimp off of Diasporan Afrikan communities through highly organised, sometimes even institutionalised systems of theft (Clark, 2003, p. 157);
- Problems such as bad housing, bad schooling and inferior jobs which plagued Diasporan Afrikan communities (Clark, 2003, p. 101);

- The problem of organised crime which was really controlled from behind the scenes by policemen carrying out a policy of anti-Diasporan Afrikan containment (Breitman, 2003, p. 74); and
- Evils and vices such as alcoholism, drug addiction and prostitution that were destroying the moral fibre of Diasporan Afrikan majority communities (Breitman, 2002, p. 52; Ovenden, 1992, p. 69).

### **2.3 Proactive organisation on the internal battle front**

Through its role in fighting the racism of the capitalist system in all its local manifestations, the OAAU would automatically expose violations of Diasporan Afrikan people's human rights (Clark, 2003, p. 101 & 157). The OAAU would then highlight these violations internationally as part of its proactive strategy. It would embarrass the capitalist system by linking with the continental based Organisation of Afrikan Unity (OAU) to highlight capitalism's internal racist abuses in international arenas such as the United Nations (Clark, 2003, p. 63 & 125).

The OAAU's proactive agenda was not limited to merely embarrassing capitalism. Its proactive tasks also meant that it had to gain political, economic and social control of the main structures in Diasporan Afrikan communities. (Breitman, 2002, p. 51; Ovenden, 1992, p. 69). This meant:

- Organising voter registration drives accompanied by political education aimed at taking control of Diasporan Afrikan majority neighbourhoods (Breitman, 2002, p. 51; Breitman, 2003, p. 94; Clark, 2003, p. 106);
- Developing Diasporan Afrikan owned shops, businesses and industries aimed at creating community self-employment (Breitman, 2002, p. 52);
- Establish independent publishing ventures and other media communications (Clark, 2003, p. 271);
- Encouraging the establishment of Diasporan Afrikan run experimental institutions, educational workshops, liberation schools and childcare centres (Clark, 2003, p. 273); and
- Creating and maintaining 'technical pools' of skilled Diasporan Afrikan people for deployment around the Afrikan world (Clark, 2003, p. 274).

### **2.4 Summary of strategic actions on the internal battle front**

Malcolm X's approach to the structure, unification and alignment of Afrikan people's activities in the context of the internal element of his Afrikan liberation strategy can be summarised in the following 5 points:

- Organised unity amongst Diasporan Afrikan people in the local community (Clark, 2003, p. 126);
- Organised unity amongst Diasporan Afrikan people within national borders (Clark, 2003, p. 126);
- Organised unity amongst Diasporan Afrikan people across the Afrikan Diaspora (Clark, 2003, p. 126);
- Organised unity between Diasporan Afrikan people in the Diaspora and repatriated Diasporan Afrikan people on the continent (Clark, 2003, p. 126); and
- Organised anti-imperialist alliances with oppressed non-Afrikans in the capitalist centres (Clark, 2003, p. 80 & 125).

As important as the internal battle fronts are, confrontations in these areas also had their limitations. 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 was overwhelmingly powerful in its homeland. This meant that it was unwise of Diasporan Afrikan people to try to fight capitalism by themselves. Even the combined efforts of Diasporan Afrikan and other oppressed people within US Satan's borders would not be able to destroy it 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).

### **3 International battle fronts – oppressed people fight to take back their homelands**

#### **3.1 Revolutionary battle fronts are all over the world**

From the vantage point of all Afrikan people, the most critical battle fronts were on the Afrikan motherland. Victory on these fronts would provide the foundations for the liberation of Afrikan people everywhere (Clark, 2003, p. 62/3, 124/5, 166). The prosecution of revolutionary battles taking place on the Afrikan motherland were primarily the responsibility of Afrikan sisters and brothers living back home. However, their victory was also the victory of Afrikan people in the Diaspora (Clark, 2003, p. 62/3, 124/5 & 183). Afrikan people in the Diaspora therefore had to be connected to, and be supportive of, the battles taking place on these critical Afrikan continental battle fronts (Clark, 2003, p. 63, 125/6 & 183).

#### **3.2 Internationalist co-operation means each people are responsible for their own front**

However, there were also battle fronts which would be located outside of Afrika and outside of the capitalist centres. They would be located in other colonised nations in other continents (Breitman, 2002, p. 107). What ever our differences with these other groups of people, we had a common interest in defeating the capitalist enemy and freeing ourselves from the racism of capitalism - the most oppressive force on earth (Breitman, 2002, p. 84). The victories of oppressed people in these non-Afrikan battle fronts would also indirectly contribute to the process of Afrikan liberation by weakening Afrika's capitalist oppressor enemy. All Afrikan people therefore had a vested interest in the victories of these other oppressed groups.

Whilst it was the duty of other oppressed groups to fight on their own battle fronts and not the responsibility of Afrikan people, all Afrikan people had a duty to co-ordinate with them to make their joint battles against capitalism more effective. Similarly, non-Afrikan groups suffering the oppression of capitalism had a duty to co-ordinate with Afrikan people struggling for freedom to make Afrikan battle fronts against capitalism more effective (Breitman, 2002, p. 107). Non-Afrikans had no place in the Afrikan liberation struggle unless genuine Afrikan liberation organisations invited them. The Afrikan battle fronts, together with how to prosecute liberation wars on those fronts, are the domain of the Afrikan people in that region (Brietman, 1988, p. 26).

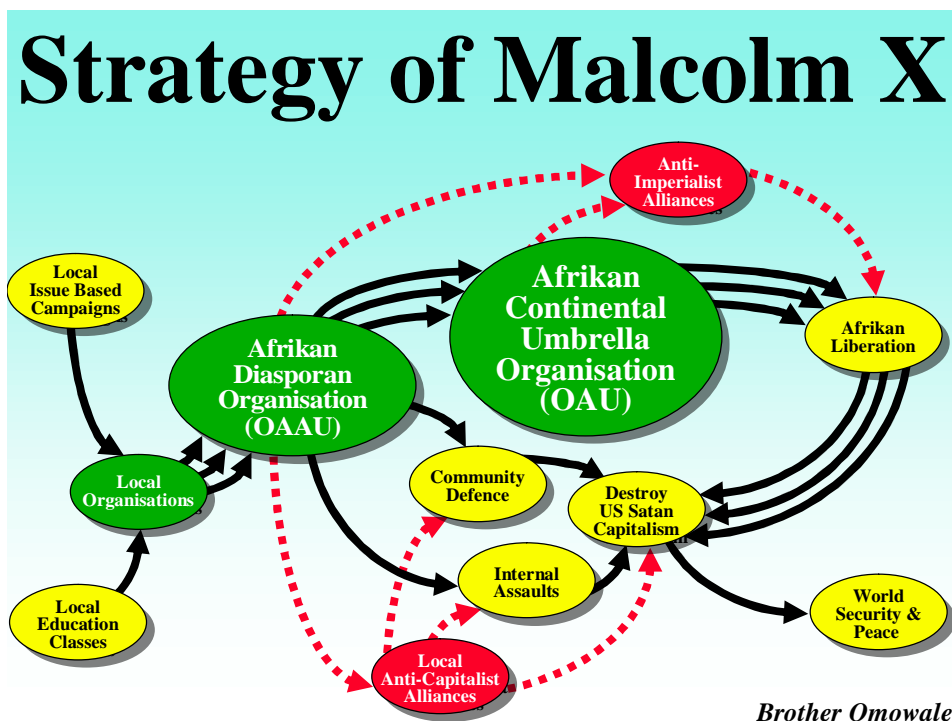
Afrikan and other oppressed people could supply each other with vital immaterial support including the provision of appropriate training as well as information about the tactics, capacity, morale and location of

enemy forces. At the material level they could supply each other with much needed military hardware to help prosecute the armed struggle phase of liberation campaigns. It is the reciprocal benefits of supporting each others activities on the worldwide multi-fronted revolutionary battle fields that provides the basis for working alliances between Afrikan people and other oppressed groups. Conversely, worldwide revolution is impossible without local and international revolutionary and anti-imperialist alliances. Revolutionary alliances are the lifeblood of the worldwide revolutionary process; they are absolutely essential for the removal of the capitalist order.

### 3.3 Summary of strategic actions on the international battle front

Malcolm X's approach to the international element of his Afrikan liberation strategy can be summarised into the following 6 points:

- Support organised unity amongst Afrikan people on the Afrikan continent (Clark, 2003, p. 62/3, 124/5 & 166)
- Organised unity between Afrikan people in US Satan and Afrikan people in all other parts of the Western Diaspora (Clark, 2003, p. 271)
- Organised unity between Afrikan people in the Diaspora and repatriated Diasporan Afrikan people on the Afrikan continent (Clark, 2003, p. 78/9)
- Linking the struggles on the Afrikan continent with Western Diasporan struggles through umbrella organisations (Clark, 2003, p. 126)
- Organised anti-imperialist solidarity with oppressed non-Europeans – locally and internationally (Clark, 2003, p. 80, 96, 125 & 163)
- Organised anti-imperialist solidarity with oppressed Europeans – locally and internationally (Breitman, 2003, p. 24)



The execution of these international strands of the strategy meant that the OAAU had to undertake the critical task of educating Afrikan people to understand the importance of internationalism. The common denominator binding all of the above mentioned sub-groups together is that they all have something positive to gain from the destruction of capitalism. Malcolm X understood that it was necessary to raise the consciousness of all members of each of the sub-groups to the point of realising the direct benefits to them of working co-operatively with other oppressed people. It was the OAAU's task to ensure that Afrikan people in the Diaspora fully understood the need for internationalist i.e. global anti-imperialist alliances, linkages and acts of solidarity (Breitman, 2002, p. 219 & 250; Breitman, 2003, p. 20).

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