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FROM MALCOLM X TO MALCOLM X LIBERATION UNIVERSITY: A  
LIBERATORY PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION, BLACK STUDENT RADICALISM  
AND BLACK INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION BUILDING 1960-  
1973

BY

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DISSERTATION

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation extends research on Malcolm X's socio-political philosophies of Black Nationalism as juxtaposed to that of educational progression for African Americans during the 'Black Power' era. The influence of Malcolm X provoked a call for 'African-centered schooling,' or institutions in the traditions of self-sufficiency, self-determination, and nationalistic pride. Malcolm X's expansive social and political thought catalyzed later practitioners of social change who stirred up the American landscape from 1965 to 1973. Black students were especially inspired by Malcolm X's evolving idealism, and their protest efforts would lead to the deconstruction of psychologically oppressive curricula in post-secondary institutions, including those predominately White. Student organizations such as the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Black Panther Party (BPP), the US Organization, the Council of Independent Black Institutions, the Student Organization of Black Unity (SOBU), and the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC) effectuated change nationally in the interests of a global vision of Pan-Africanism. In addition, educational institutions such as Malcolm X Liberation University first in Raleigh-Durham, then Greensboro, North Carolina, illustrate the successful ideological connection between Malcolm X and Black Nationalism. MXLU, for all its deficiencies, was a place where the librated hopes of many Black folks came to fruition.

*This work is dedicated to Rosa Mae and Carl Thomas Carpenter, (Grandma and Grandpa). I miss you both dearly and not a day goes by that I don't thank the Most High for the blessing of having had you both in my life. Thank you for all that you ever gave me in life and love.*

*To my mother, Janice M. Benson, I can never repay you for your patience and love. Thank you for believing in me and for always supporting my efforts (...when the rubber hits the road...).*

*To the Most High God, Yeshua/Jesus, from which all things have been made possible and brought into existence. Thank you for the strength and fortitude to continue to struggle and endure through the toughest times. I am forever grateful.*

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Regional Library of Chicago; Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature; the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign Archives and Special Collections. In Knoxville, Tennessee, the University of Tennessee Special Collections Library. In Durham, North Carolina, the Duke University Archives.

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To my church home, The Israel of God in Chicago and all affiliates domestic and international, may all physical and spiritual Israel continue to awaken for the improvement of all of the sons and daughters of the creation. Shalom.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Objectives

This study examines the history of the Pan-Africanist educational institution, Malcolm X Liberation University, as the extension of an educational and social philosophy of Malcolm X. This project places emphasis on the time period of 1960 to 1973 and includes the following: the transition of the Civil Rights Movement into the era of Black Power, the emergence and educational influence of Malcolm X as a proponent of Black Nationalism, and the ideological evolution of the Black Student Movement in the context of the 1960s to the mid 1970s.

Malcolm X Liberation University (MXLU) emerged in Greensboro, North Carolina, as the product of the national Black Student Movement that began during the era commonly referred to as the Civil Rights Movement. This movement began with ‘sit-in’ demonstrations and largely expanded to include Black college students’ participation nationwide by the late 1950s through the 1960s.<sup>1</sup> During this era there existed the Nation of Islam, a mass based and growing Black Nationalist organization whose activities extended the nationalist legacy and sentiments of the 1920s Garvey Movement. This non-secular Black Nationalist organization, which fused a doctrine of Islam, Christianity and Black separatist teachings, would produce a spokesman and activist who

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<sup>1</sup> Merrill Proudfoot, *Diary of a Sit-In* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), xxiii; Claybourne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 1995), 1, 4, 215.

reinvigorated the philosophy of Black Nationalism for the Black masses.<sup>2</sup> That person became known as Malcolm X.

For many, Malcolm X represented an overwhelming majority of Black folks who wanted social, political and economic empowerment as opposed to mere social integration. In addition, Malcolm X came to personify the dissatisfied and dormant voice of Black folks and the desire for public expression of the pain and ills that masses of Black folks had endured under the discriminatory conditions of American society. As a member and national spokesman for the Nation of Islam and later as a leading Pan-Africanist for the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), Malcolm X is considered by many Black Freedom Movement historians as the embodiment of the 1960s Black Nationalist revival.<sup>3</sup>

One of the challenges that this project engages in is the formulation of a Malcolm X educational philosophy. Malcolm X never provided an explicit philosophy of education. However, Malcolm X in life and death became a prototype for those who sought to transform themselves and develop Black consciousness. By studying Malcolm X's career through the use of texts, audio, and film documentary I have been able to interpret an educational philosophy that spans from Malcolm's childhood up to and beyond his assassination on February 21, 1965.

Central to this study will be the use of this philosophy as a theoretical framework from which the Black Student Movement and independent Black educational institution building emerged in the latter 1960s, continuing through the mid 1970s. This framework

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<sup>2</sup> C. Eric Lincoln, *Black Muslims in America* (Beacon Press, 1973); Karl Evanzz, *The Messenger: The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad* (New York: Panthenon Books, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> William L. Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993).

of a Malcolm X educational philosophy will aid in understanding the development of Black student consciousness as well as how the practical application of Black Nationalism manifested in the form of an educational institution. Further, this study attempts to answer the following questions as trajectories of this dissertation:

- What were the educational philosophies and ideals of Malcolm X and how did these philosophies come to fruition and evolve during his career?
- How did the ideas of Malcolm X help to shape the change of Black consciousness' and ideology in the post-secondary arena?
- How did Malcolm X's philosophies transition into educational initiatives for Black college youth?
- What were the major goals and objectives of Black college student organizations in the context of the Black Power era?
- What were the ideological shifts (i.e. Black Nationalist, Pan-Africanist, Revolutionary Nationalist, Marxist-Leninist) that took place in Black student organizations in the context of the Black Power/Pan-Africanist movements and why?
- Did MXLU's school operations engage the educational philosophies of Malcolm X in the context of a changing Black Power era; what factors led to the closing of the institution?

### Significance of the Study

The historical legacy of the Black Power Movement of the United States has been propagated as a tumultuous era that did little to transform the American social, political, and cultural landscape for Black folks in the United States. Because of scholarship that demonizes the Black Power Movement, the era has been reduced to one of violence and erratic behavior that only produced slogans and pseudo-imagery of a 'militant' Black aesthetic. A social, political, and cultural increase of Black consciousness is never associated with the Black Power Movement. In addition, the absence of scholarship that promotes the historical legacy of viable alternative educational institution building as a

product of the era remains grossly underdeveloped. Black Power scholarship fails to consistently connect the era that began for many in 1966 to the evolution of the Black Freedom struggle that spurred the later resurgence of Pan-Africanism.

According to the work of Muhammad Ahmad (Maxwell Stanford, Jr.), *We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations 1960-1975*, the application of the dialectical and historical materialist approach must be considered as an analytical framework in understanding the inter-connectedness of radical Black organizations of the Black Power era. Stanford remarks,

The dialectical method begins with the assumption that no phenomenon in nature can be understood in isolation. Phenomena must be considered in connection with the surrounding conditions, and cannot be understood or explained unless considered in connection with the surrounding conditions, and cannot be understood or explained unless considered as inseparably connected to them. No historical force is considered a separate entity, but is rather considered an interconnected force, which affects and is affected by other phenomenon in the world system.<sup>4</sup>

A major reason why Ahmad's work is important is because it provides much-needed historical and intellectual association between Black social movements and the ideological underpinnings of Black student activism. I argue that the influence of Malcolm X as a catalyst for the ideological shift is undervalued and that there needs to be more scholarship that re-centers the use of Black radical thought as the framework for understanding Black social movements.

An area of scholarship that has not been critically interrogated or fully considered is the area of Malcolm X's impact on the Black Student Movement out of which the slogan of 'Black Power' was espoused. Many participants in the Black Student

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<sup>4</sup> Muhammad Ahmad, *We Will Return in the Worldwind: Black Radical Organizations 1960-1975* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing, 2007), 308.

Movement during the late 1960s consider Malcolm X as the most “profound external force for the radicalization of students within the crucible of the Black Struggle for human rights.”<sup>5</sup> “Malcolm's encounters with grassroots and student activists spoke directly to this solidarity and reveal the force of a dialectical relationship that helped propel the Black Power phase of a larger freedom struggle.”<sup>6</sup> The influence of Malcolm X on the Black Student Movement is paramount with regard to the development of Black consciousness. Malcolm X's activism enabled him to engage an overwhelmingly vast majority of student audiences as spokesman for the Nation of Islam and then later as the chairman of the OAAU. He was passionate about students. The one thing that he may have loved more than engaging students was education itself.

The significance of this study is that it provides a critical historical analysis of Black student activity and educational institution building around the tenets of a Malcolm X educational philosophy inspired by Black Nationalism. This project advances scholarship on the recent emergence of literature that aims to shift the perceptions of Black Power era activity. In addition, this work aids in altering the understanding of Malcolm X's legacy as manifested through the organizations, activities and educational initiatives produced in the Black Power era. The resulting outcome is an expansive view of Malcolm X as a force of social pedagogy.

### Methodology

The task of researching the past of Malcolm X through the Black Power Movement to include the educational institutions of the late 1960s to mid 1970s was not

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<sup>5</sup> Winston Grady-Willis, *Challenging US. Apartheid: Atlanta and Black Struggles for Human Rights 1960-1977*, (Duke University Press, 2006).; For an extensive work on the contributions on Malcolm's influence on the Black Student Movement, see Harry Edwards' *Black Students* (New York: The Free Press, 1970).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

be a a simple undertaking. The process of uncovering data that correlates to this project involved research at more than one national archival site. Because the scope of this project involves between fifteen and twenty years of time and includes two major American social movements (the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power/Pan-Africanist Movement), a diverse array of sites was visited and findings integrated to argue the relationship between a Malcolm X philosophy of education, Black Student activism, and educational institution building manifested in MXLU.

Thus, the development of the aforementioned thesis is contingent upon what was presented from the collections of various individuals, organizations, and government agencies at archival sites. Though historical methods are relied on, the limitations of archives—“that [they] can fail scholars because there is too much to collect”—are always present.<sup>7</sup> That being the case, historians are well aware that the historical method of gathering information is not limited to archival sites and primary documentation. The oral history retrieved from interviews, film analysis, audio recordings and tertiary resources supplements archival data collection.

Data collection for this project involved various sites throughout the United States, including New York City; the District of Columbia; Knoxville, Tennessee; Charleston, South Carolina; Atlanta, Georgia; Chicago; and Urbana-Champaign Illinois.

### Study's Outline

Chapter Two presents the life of Malcolm X and a critical examination of his encounters with education. The chapter traces Malcolm X from childhood up to his emergence as the national spokesman for the NOI The second half of the chapter integrates the development of the Black Student Movement as an outgrowth of the Civil

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 39.

Rights Movement and provides a discussion of the polarization of the ideologies of “integration” and “nationalism.” The third chapter will culminate with a discussion of the ideological shift of the Black Student Movement and the critical involvement of Malcolm X as a catalyst for the Black Student Movement’s use of ‘nationalism’ during the latter part of the 1960s.

Chapter Three introduces the work and ideological underpinnings of Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) and the development of the organization as situated vis-a-vis the relationship forged with Malcolm X prior to the of the Black student group’s inception. This chapter provides an all too important historical contextualization for SNCC’s gradual move toward a more revolutionary, nationalistic approach to the movement. It threads the ideological influences of Malcolm X through an evolving Black Student Movement that, in many cases, struggles with question of theory and practice. Most importantly, this chapter highlights the historical evidence of overt displays of nationalism in the Black Student Movement that coalesced with the activity of the more visible Civil Rights Movement. Much of this nationalistic activity not only pre-dates the 1966 call for Black Power, but it also shows the impetus for such as call by 1966, removing the phenomenon out of historical isolation. The latter part of this chapter introduces Malcolm X Liberation University (MXLU) as an institution resulting in the call for Black representation and Black Studies nationwide.<sup>8</sup>

Chapters Four and Five concentrate largely on the emergence and development of MXLU. Chapter Four focuses on the historical development of MXLU, beginning in 1969, through the planning and mobilization for African Liberation Day of 1972.

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<sup>8</sup> Clayborn Carson, *In Struggle*, 135-136.; Muhammad Ahmad, “On the Black Student Movement 1960-1970”; Papers of the Revolutionary Action Movement 1962-1996. Reel 17.

Chapter Five analyzes the aims/objectives, curriculum, operations and leadership of MXLU.

Chapter Six turns to the Student Organization of Black Unity (SOBU), a Black student group centralized in Greensboro, North Carolina, that aided greatly in the ideological development of MXLU. Most important in the explication of SOBU is parsing out its fraternal relationship with MXLU during the school's development. The ideological shifts of SOBU, which evolved out of a Pan-Africanist approach to the movement, provide a basis of understanding some of the more critical influences that guided the direction of student development as well as the overall aims and objectives of other groups after 1971.

The culminating chapter, Chapter Seven, collapses the work of MXLU, SOBU, and the emerging African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC) into the greater context of the Black Liberation Movement.<sup>9</sup> With an examination of why MXLU ultimately faced closure, the importance of Black student organizing in bringing about ALD will be focused upon. The complex and multi-faceted activity of SOBU became critical as the Black student organization and its partner educational institution both fully embraced leftist principles and eventually created sectarianism in the process.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Karen Brodtkin Sacks, *Caring by the Hour: Women, Work, and Organizing at Duke Medical Center*. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 43, 112; Signe Waller, *Love and Revolution: A Political Memoir: People's History of the Greensboro Massacre, Its Setting and Aftermath*. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002), 39-59.

<sup>10</sup> Cedric Johnson, "From Popular Anti-Imperialism to Sectarianism: The African Liberation Support Committee and Black Power Radicals," *New Political Science*, Volume 25, no.4 (December 2003): 478-507. Woodard, *A Nation within a Nation*, 175.



## CHAPTER 2

### MALCOLM X AND/AS SOCIAL PEDAGOGY: A CRITICAL HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

*Education is first...Education is the first step towards  
solving any problem that exists anywhere  
on this Earth which involves people  
who are oppressed.*

*-Malcolm X<sup>1</sup>*

Malcolm X has been interpreted by many as a man who encompassed the spirit of a revitalized interpretation of the Black Nationalist tradition. For many, Malcolm X exemplified the embodiment of Black militancy opposed to social assimilation, integration, and passive action thought to be attributed to the 'traditional' Civil Rights Movement. For many, Malcolm X represented the restlessness of Black urban decay that roared with a voice of aggression and pain that had never been heard but was self-determined to shout from a platform on which that pain had been built. Malcolm X, in life and in death has been cast as a 'firebrand' and agitator of hate toward white America and toward the 'old guard' Civil Rights leadership that sought to secure a place for African Americans in the house of the American establishment. Malcolm X meant much to many in both life and death. For those who grew dissatisfied with marching, singing and only pseudo-gain for a small segment of the African-American masses, Malcolm X represented a most critical element in the struggle for Black liberation. Malcolm X represented the fight that lay dormant in all those who sought freedom...*by any means necessary.*

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<sup>1</sup> P. Lee, "A Conversation with Malcolm X." *The Michigan Citizen*. Best Efforts, Inc. (February 21-27, 1999), B8.

The importance of Malcolm X with regard to his social, political and historical influence was and is an area of discussion that has produced critical scholarship. The scholarship regarding Malcolm X has arguably been an ideological base for comprehending the historical significance of Black Nationalism for the latter part of the twentieth century. Many black scholars and activists in the tradition of Malcolm X have not only cited Malcolm as a catalyst for their initial critique of the American capitalist system but also refer to him as the one who first voiced openly what they had always been told not to even think, if they wanted to stay alive in the American system.

In life and in death the ideation of Malcolm X remains controversial. For this reason many scholars have made attempts to defame the legacy of Malcolm X by attempting to frame his work and his legacy as one not to be revisited. One such scholar who asserts such a perspective is Dr. Adolph Reed in political science at the New School for Social Research. In Reed's work, *"Stirrings in the Jug: Black Politics in the Post-Segregation Era,"* Reed argues,

Because Malcolm has no agency at all, he is now even more a hologram of social forces than he was for my generation. The inchoate, often apparently inconsistent trajectory of his thought makes him an especially plastic symbol in the present context.<sup>2</sup>

The critical error of Reed and those in the tradition of slandering the legacy of Malcolm X is that this form of scholarship conveniently omits the trajectory of the Civil Rights Movement that morphed into the era of 'Black Power.' A significant portion of the ideological motivation for this segment of the Black Freedom Struggle is credited to the presence and tireless work of Malcolm X. Harper notes, "More than any other

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<sup>2</sup> Adolph Reed Jr. *Stirrings in the Jug: Black Politics in the Post-Segregation Era.* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 223.

person, Malcolm X was responsible for the new militancy that entered the movement in 1965.”<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the ideological presence of Malcolm X was more than a mere influence. The phenomenon of his unrecognized legacy (what I refer to as his educational philosophy) led to the formation of organizations in the tradition of a revitalized adaptation of Black Nationalism. The work of Malcolm X is pedagogical not only for Black folks and the Black Power Movement but for all those who find themselves captivated by his life.

In this work, I will argue that the presence of Malcolm X during the Civil Rights represented more than over-simplified catch phrases and sound bites. The existence of Malcolm X motivated the youth of the era to question their existence in oppressive conditions. His presence in life and death effectuated a call for a national elevation of consciousness and self-reliance for Black youth and activists alike, and for changes that came to fruition in the form of the Black Student Movement, Black Studies programs, Black Educational Institutions and a shift in the Black aesthetic.

I aggressively contend that a critical component of Malcolm X as social pedagogy is due in large part to the educational philosophy of Malcolm X. This educational philosophy was exemplified in the work of Malcolm X as a member of the Nation of Islam (N.O.I) as well as the Chairman of the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU). This paper will fully delineate the educational philosophy of Malcolm X, made applicable for both personal edification and aiding the consciousness of the Black masses. This educational philosophy will be expounded upon throughout this paper to

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<sup>3</sup> Frederick D. Harper, “The Influence of Malcolm X on Black Militancy,” *Journal of Black Studies*, 1, no. 4. (Jun., 1971), 387-402.

include how the ideals of Malcolm X came to fruition as well as the adjustments Malcolm made in his ideals until his untimely death in 1965.

In addition to the aforementioned, this work will highlight how Malcolm X's philosophies transitioned into educational initiatives that assisted in designing a new paradigm of consciousness for Black youth in the post-secondary arena. Lastly, this work will discuss what historians and scholars have failed to include with relation to Malcolm X as a catalyst for Black Power Era educational initiatives.

#### A Malcolm X Philosophy of Education?: A Critically Interpretive Historical Methodology

To fully explicate the ideological underpinnings of a Malcolm X philosophy of education, a critical interpretive methodology will be employed, using a number of primary and tertiary sources. A critical aspect of the research process was to critically examine the stages in which Malcolm X's educational experiences came to fruition until his death in 1965.

In *Transformational Leadership of Malcolm X* by Najee Muhammad, Muhammad points out, “Malcolm X manifested five stages in the development of his transformational legacy.”<sup>4</sup> These stages must be analyzed to fully gain an effective interpretation of Malcolm X's educational and intellectual growth in relation to the impact that he would have on Blacks. According to Muhammad, the stages are as follows:

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<sup>4</sup> Najee E. Muhammad, “The Transformational Leadership of Malcolm X,” *The Initiative Anthology*. First posted April 6, 2004. [www.muohio.edu/InitiativeAnthology/](http://www.muohio.edu/InitiativeAnthology/) [www.muohio.edu/InitiativeAnthology/](http://www.muohio.edu/InitiativeAnthology/)

Stage 1: *School leader (1932-1940)*

Malcolm excelled in school and was voted to class president. At this time Malcolm is also faced with the life-altering occurrence from his grade school teacher, Mr. Ostrowski.

Stage 2: *Street leader (1940-1948)*

Malcolm would develop into a hustler and also inherit the savvy and ability to 'code switch' which would enhance his future leadership skills and appeal for the masses.

Stage 3: *Prison leader (1948-1952)*

Malcolm would be reinvigorated as an intellectual and scholar in prison. Malcolm would also hone his oratorical skills as a debate team captain.

Stage 4: *National Spokesman for the Nation of Islam (1952-1964)*

As a minister for the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X consistently refers to his intellectual development as a product of Elijah Muhammad and for being provided with the social and political platform from which he gained national prominence. However, this stage is critical for the re-examination of the labor intensive pace that Malcolm X had disciplined himself under for the growth of the NOI. In addition, this stage highlights the educational influences that Malcolm X provided as an NOI leader.

Stage 5: *International Pan-African leader (March 1964-February 1965)*

Malcolm X would establish two organizations: the Muslim Mosque, Inc. (MMI) and the Organization of Afro American Unity (OAAU). Malcolm X's domestic and international appeal as a leader enabled him to have an impact socially to transform and elevate the consciousness of all people worldwide.<sup>5</sup>

By critically analyzing the stages of Malcolm X's life from an educational and historical perspective, one is able to examine the progression of Malcolm X's life as his educational philosophy unfolds. Furthermore, each stage of educational development for Malcolm X must be correlated to an occurrence in his life that led to his scholastic development. By making this connection, one is able to observe that Malcolm X's

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

educational impact is not isolated or divorced from the context of larger social and political issues.

To identify an educational philosophy of Malcolm X, an analysis of Malcolm X's speeches, video documentation and all archival data found in text form was essential. Since Malcolm X spoke extensively at educational institutions around the world, it was critical to compare the rhetoric of Malcolm X as he matured and made modifications to his own ideation.

Much of the work that establishes Malcolm X as the ideological vanguard of a revitalized version of Black Nationalism engages Malcolm socially and politically. However, most of the scholarship has not identified a Malcolm X philosophy of education. In many works of historians, such as William Sales' *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity* and Louis A. DeCaro's *On the Side of My People: A Religious Life of Malcolm X*, Malcolm X is discussed as a scholar and educator, but there are oversights with regard to his educational philosophy. In addition, scholarship that examines the educational impact of Malcolm X as social pedagogy is nearly void. Therefore, an analysis of Malcolm X's influence through his own educational and scholarly endeavors has been examined.

The critical engagement of a Malcolm X educational philosophy is definitely impelled by Malcolm's larger socio-political philosophy of Black Nationalism. Through looking at his philosophy, one can compare the impact of subsequent movements that developed in the tradition of Malcolm X.

But for most historians and some social scientists, Malcolm's education is not separated from the larger frames of Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism enough to fully appreciate the impact of his educational philosophy. An example of brilliant work that examines Malcolm's educational impact but does not sufficiently outline an educational philosophy comes from the scholar/activist Dr. Maulana Karenga.

Dr. Karenga's work entitled *The Socio-Political Philosophy of Malcolm X*, published in the *Western Journal of Black Studies* in the winter of 1979, critically interprets the social and political aspects of Malcolm X's philosophy for Blacks throughout the diaspora. Dr. Karenga identifies Malcolm X's socio-political philosophy as having nine core concepts. Within the nine categories, Dr. Karenga's analysis of Malcolm's educational legacy is broken into four core concepts. According to Dr. Karenga, Malcolm X's impact on education is as such:

1. Model Maulana/Model Master-Teacher:  
"He had an uncanny ability to redefine the world in Black and simple, yet profound and image-laden terms. He often taught by analogy exposing the mystifying power relations of society and the world."
2. Model Student:  
"It is undoubtedly his dedicated and disciplined study which eventually made him a master-teacher...Malcolm stressed that when he came out of captivity, he continued to study and read diligently even while traveling, never feeling he knew or had read enough."
2. Critical Thinker:  
"... [Malcolm] was profound and structured in his presentations. His logic was incisive, and he enjoyed the meticulous development of each point he made. He had joined the debating society in captivity to give expression to the wealth of knowledge his abundant reading and rich and instructive experience had yielded."

3. Accent on Youth:

“Malcolm saw Black youth as the fundamental element in the construction of Black people's future.” Malcolm X would charge the youth with the essential task of learning to think for themselves.<sup>6</sup>

Dr. Najee E. Muhammad of Ohio University work is equally significant due to the specific job that his scholarship does in broaching the formulation of Malcolm X's philosophy of education:

Very little is written about the educational Malcolm, or the genesis of his educational development, his educational philosophy or, further, his influence on African education in the United States and Pan-African thought.<sup>7</sup>

Many would be led to believe that Malcolm X did not articulate a set of educational beliefs that would correlate to an educational philosophy. Moreover, much of the work that credits Malcolm X's scholastic ability is not translated as a major element in helping to raise consciousness for the subsequent generations that espoused “Black Power.” Muhammad argues, “Lack of information on the educational Malcolm could be interpreted to mean that people of African descent from the United States are void and incapable of having an educational philosophy and are ahistorical entities.”<sup>8</sup>

Dr. Muhammad's contribution to the legacy of a Malcolm X educational philosophy can be broken down into five components extracted through historical analysis. According to Muhammad,

1. ...his realization that educational system in the United States miseducates and ideologically manages through disinformation. When asked: “What do you think is responsible for the race prejudice in the U.S.? Malcolm responded:

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<sup>6</sup> Maulana Karenga, “The Socio-Political Philosophy of Malcolm X,” *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 3, no. 4. (Winter 1979): 251-262.

<sup>7</sup> Najee Muhammad, “The Educational Development of Malcolm X,” *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 26, no. 4 (2002): 240-248.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.



*Ignorance and greed. And a skillfully designed program of miseducation that goes along with the American system of exploitation and oppression...So it takes education to eliminate [ignorance and greed]. And just because you have colleges and universities in the American educational system are skillfully used to miseducate.*

2. ...his steadfast commitment to education and history as a means to expose miseducation, specifically the miseducation of African people:

*...Of all our studies, history is best qualified to reward our research. And when you see that you've got problems, all you have to do is examine the historic method used all over the world by others who have problems similar to yours. Once you see how they got theirs straight, then you know how you can get yours straight.*

3. ...his profound respect for the written word and reading;
4. ...his willingness to revise his position based on new knowledge and information;
5. ...his open-mindedness. Malcolm was asked about his education and educational development, to which he replied:

*I finished the eighth grade in Mason, Michigan...My high school was the black ghetto of Roxbury [MA]. My college was the streets of Harlem. And my masters was taken in prison.<sup>9</sup>*

Dr. Muhammad's assessment of Malcolm X's educational philosophy is accurate.

However, to supplement this interpretation of an educational philosophy of Malcolm X, it desperately needs to be added that Malcolm X's philosophy transcended Malcolm's life to motivate the Black Power generation. Again, it is critical to note that the educational philosophy of Malcolm X elevated consciousness on a domestic and international scale as evidence has suggested in the previous sections of this work.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 247.

From Malcolm Little to Malcolm X

*What happens to a dream deferred?*

*Does it dry up  
like a raisin in the sun?  
Or fester like a sore--  
and then run?  
Does it stink like rotten meat?  
Or crust and sugar over--  
like a syrupy sweet?  
Maybe it just sags  
like a heavy load.  
Or does it explode?*

*--Langston Hughes<sup>10</sup>*

In *The Autobiography of Malcolm X as told to Alex Haley*, Malcolm gives a vivid account of a childhood experience that “...was to become the first major turning point of [his] life.”<sup>11</sup> Malcolm was completing his seventh grade year of junior high school. He recounts this description of his English teacher:

He [Mr. Ostrowski] was a tall, rather reddish white man and he had a thick mustache. I had gotten some of my best marks under him, and he had always made me feel that he like me. He was, as I have mentioned, a natural-born “advisor,” about what you ought to read, to do, or think—about any and everything.<sup>12</sup>

Clearly, Malcolm held his teacher in rather high regard. Malcolm's acceleration in school may even have been attributed to the factor of him not only being an intelligent young person but also the fact that Malcolm was one of the school's top students.<sup>13</sup> Much of the racism Malcolm experienced as a student before his interaction with Mr. Ostrowski had been what Malcolm would consider as mild. He explains this in the chapter entitled

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<sup>10</sup> Langston Hughes.

<sup>11</sup> Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X as Told to Alex Haley* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1964), 43.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

“Mascot” when he still gave Whites the benefit of the doubt: “Some of the white kids at school, I found, were even friendlier than some of those in Lansing [Michigan] had been. Though some, including the teachers, called me “nigger,” it was easy to see that they didn't mean any more harm by it...”<sup>14</sup>

Mr. Ostrowski was inclined to inquire about students' future career goals, and on this particular day, he engaged Malcolm. Malcolm was asked about his plans in life and whether or not he had been giving them much thought. “Well yes, sir, I've been thinking I'd like to be a lawyer,” Malcolm answered. “Lansing certainly had no Negro lawyers—or doctors either—in those days, to hold up an image I might have aspired to. All I really knew for certain was that a lawyer didn't wash dishes, as I was doing.”<sup>15</sup>

For Malcolm, this answer was only adequate seeing as how he had excelled academically and was also voted class president in grade school. Malcolm foresaw in himself the ability to become someone of importance and a career in law would enable him to surpass society's projected placement of him only being able to provide manual labor. He not only felt sincere about his reply to Mr. Ostrowski, he also trusted his teacher enough to confide in him something that he was passionate about. Nonetheless, the reply that Malcolm received in response to his dream was one that did not correlate to a trusting relationship between student and teacher. Mr. Ostrowski's reply was earth shattering. Malcolm narrates,

Mr. Ostrowski looked surprised, I remember, and leaned back in chair and clasped his hands behind his head. He kind of half-smiled and said, “Malcolm, one of life's first needs is for us to be realistic. Don't misunderstand me, now. We all here like you, you know that. But you've got to be realistic about being a

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

nigger. A lawyer—that's no realistic goal for a nigger. You need to think about something you *can* be. You're good with your hands—making things. Everybody admires you carpentry shop work. Why don't you plan on carpentry? People like you as a person—you'd get all kinds of work.<sup>16</sup>

This response changed Malcolm's understanding of himself in school and in relation to his peers. Malcolm would refer to that moment as 'life-altering' and that he could not stop thinking about Mr. Ostrowski's comments.<sup>17</sup> Malcolm actually felt that if his teacher had encouraged him to become a lawyer that he would have found traditional success and been granted access to the Black bourgeoisie that he would later aggressively criticize as a minister for the Nation of Islam.<sup>18</sup>

It is clear that Malcolm, at this juncture in his life, had not yet developed a deep seated disdain for White people or even thought much about the pejorative terms that White people consistently used to describe him. His experiences as a young person during life in Lansing, Michigan, were normalized based on the societal norms correlating with the existence of Black people in America. However, as the aforementioned states, Malcolm would be forever changed by his interaction that fateful, or providential, day:

Instead of a renewed sense of pride, he was subjected to fresh feelings of shame and anger: success for a "nigger" meant being a carpenter, being a good boy until his dying day! He had been fooled, deceived, tricked. He had been led to believe that skin color did not matter. Now it was clear that only skin color mattered, that therefore his soul was irremediably black. His white mask had been stripped away. But at the same time, his teacher's appearance of paternal benevolence had disappeared.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>19</sup> Eugene Victor Wolfenstein, *The Victims of Democracy: Malcolm X and the Black Revolution*. (Berkley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1981), 151.

This crucial juncture for Malcolm is of critical significance due to the subsequent events that plagued Malcolm X and led to his incarceration in 1946. At twenty years of age, Malcolm would be convicted of charges of burglary and be sent to Charleston State Prison.<sup>20</sup> There he would gain a reputation of being anti-God. Malcolm states that, “I would pace for hours like a caged leopard, viciously cursing aloud to myself. And my targets were the Bible and God...Eventually, the men in the cellblock had a name for me: “Satan.” Because of my anti-religious attitude.”<sup>21</sup>

Malcolm entered into prison with a drug habit and continued to feed his addiction for narcotics while in prison. “He continued to pursue his former pastime of getting high, sometime by purchasing nutmeg (which, in the right quantity, would produce a “high” comparable to the use of marijuana), and sometimes by obtaining drugs that were smuggled in and sold by correction officers.”<sup>22</sup> However, after spending a little over two years incarcerated, he would begin a metaphysical transformation, eventually leading to the development of the religious conversion to the Nation of Islam under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad. This transformation began with the educational reincarnation of Malcolm that will be discussed in subsequent sections. Karl Evanzz notes, “with nothing but time on his hands, Malcolm X had spent the last two years of his incarceration reading books on classical literature, philosophy, psychology, and history. He had been aided by some of the best minds in the nation, students at Harvard who taught classes at the Norfolk Prison Colony during his stay.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X as Told to Alex Haley*, 176.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>22</sup> Louis A. DeCaro, Jr., *On the Side of My People: A Religious Life of Malcolm X* (New York & London: New York University Press, 1996), 75.

<sup>23</sup> Karl Evanzz, *The Judas Factor: The Plot to Kill Malcolm X*, (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1992), 31.

During the year of 1948, Malcolm's brother Philbert wrote him a letter in which he explained "he had discovered the natural religion for the black man." Philbert belonged now, he said, to something called "the Nation of Islam,"<sup>24</sup> Malcolm was informed that he should also pray to Allah for deliverance. Shortly after, Malcolm would receive a letter from his other brother, Reginald, in which Reginald sent the following instructions: "Malcolm, don't eat any more pork, and don't smoke any more cigarettes. I'll show you how to get out of prison."<sup>25</sup> Malcolm did not immediately take his brothers' advice but eventually figured that there might be an angle of sorts that he could work to 'hustle' his way out of prison if he listened to them.

Malcolm would soon discover the sincerity of the information provided by his family and not long after convert to the Nation of Islam in the same year. Under the guidance and teachings of Elijah Muhammad who was considered to be the "Messenger of Allah," Malcolm wrote dozens of letters pledging himself to the teachings of the Nation of Islam.<sup>26</sup> Evanzz writes, "Beyond swearing off alcohol, cigarettes, and narcotics, [Malcolm] also stopped eating pork. By 1950, he was a new man. His faith put him on the front page of an issue of the *Springfield Union* that year after he and several other Muslims staged a protest over the poor quality of the food in the Norfolk Prison Colony and the denial there of religious freedom."<sup>27</sup> After his parole was denied in 1951 for inflammatory letters sent to state officials condemning the domestic and international practices of the United States government Malcolm Little would eventually

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<sup>24</sup> Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X as Told to Alex Haley*, 179.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>26</sup> Karl Evanzz, *The Messenger: The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1999), 162.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

be granted parole a year later in 1952. No longer a social deviant, his transformation while in prison produced the young Nation of Islam minister, Malcolm X.<sup>28</sup>

*Minister Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam (NOI):  
Organizational Growth and Educational Structure*

In July 1952, a newly paroled Malcolm X was released from prison to reside with his brother Wilfred in Michigan.<sup>29</sup> During this time Malcolm took a job at a local factory and become a student minister in the Nation of Islam.

Malcolm quickly noted that the combined attendance of the Detroit and Chicago temples was only about two hundred. Though another eight temples comprised the movement, its total membership at the time was only about four hundred. Encouraged by Elijah Muhammad's tableside declaration that the Detroit temple should have "thousands" of members and that the movement should be recruiting young people, Malcolm immediately began to give thought to how the Nation could be expanded. "I made up my mind," Malcolm said later, "that we were going to follow that advice."<sup>30</sup>

Malcolm's rapport and techniques of recruitment were phenomenal. With the zeal and determination to increase the growth of the Nation of Islam, he tripled the membership in the Detroit mosque by the year of 1954.<sup>31</sup> A gifted orator, Malcolm had the ability to "fish" converts into the fold for the Nation of Islam and later became the assistant minister in the Detroit mosque. The Detroit Mosque, called the Holy Temple of Islam, stood out from other churches in the ghetto, "The Holy Temple of Islam represented an alternative to the storefront churches on every corner in the ghetto, where the ministers all seemed to have received their divinity degrees from the "Howlin Wolf Seminary."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Karl Evanzz, *The Judas Factor: The Plot to Kill Malcolm X*, 28.

<sup>29</sup> Louis A. DeCaro, Jr., *On the Side of My People: A Religious Life of Malcolm X*, 95.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>31</sup> Karl Evanzz, *The Messenger: The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad*, 162.

<sup>32</sup> Karl Evanzz, *The Judas Factor: The Plot to Kill Malcolm X*, 39.

Malcolm's energy and determination were so apparent that Elijah Muhammad quickly appointed him to build temples and convert new members to the Nation of Islam nationwide. Malcolm made stops in Joliet, Illinois, then Cleveland and Dayton, Ohio, and from there, in Camden, Patterson, and Jersey City, New Jersey. Malcolm opened a new temple at each stop and after only three years out of prison, he had established more than twenty-seven temples from the barely seven temples existing when he first joined the Nation of Islam out of prison in 1952.<sup>33</sup>

Not only was membership expanding; its quality was improving noticeably. For the first time in the twenty-five year history of the Nation of Islam, the sect was attracting followers who reflected the demographics of the African American community—scores of college students, teachers, policemen and firemen, and skilled laborers needed by the Nation of Islam. These new, better-educated converts, Malcolm X had hoped, could educate and help find employment for the hundreds of former prisoners and high school dropouts groping for a way out of poverty.<sup>34</sup>

The education that Malcolm hoped for would be produced as a component of the Nation of Islam's organizational infrastructure. The NOI would establish schools for not only education of the youth membership of the Nation of Islam, but also for a critical adult educational component for the effective reinforcement of NOI doctrine.

The leadership of the Nation of Islam established by the work of Fard Muhammad, Elijah Muhammad and the youthful ministerial actions of those like Malcolm X and his brothers enabled the organization to found the University of Islam. The University of Islam was a combined educational institution of an elementary and a secondary school. The aims and objectives of the school were to provide a curriculum to the members of the organization that reinforced the teachings of: higher mathematics,

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.



astronomy, and the “ending of the spook civilization.”<sup>35</sup> It also included teachings specifically designed for women: “He Elijah Muhammad had created the Muslim Girls Training Class, which taught young Muslim women the principles of home economics and how to be proper wives and mothers.”<sup>36</sup>

The school of the Nation of Islam became attractive to both members and non-members of the organization mainly because of the 'alternative' education provided by the Nation of Islam. An example of this is provided in the work of C. Eric Lincoln whose work on the Nation of Islam, *The Black Muslims in America*, documents the then short history of the organization during the latter part of the 1950s into the early 1960s. Lincoln gives explicit insight into the infrastructure of the Nation of Islam, which includes extensive information on the educational component of the organization obtained from interviews with sympathizers of the Nation of Islam and its schools. One Chicago woman, when asked whether or not she would be sending her children to the school, replied,

Well, no sir...But my husband, he's been talking about it. Whatever he says. They teach the children how to behave up there and they teach them something about ourselves, too—all about what the black people have done in the world, not just the white. You ought to know something about your own people, don't you think? Especially if you're going to live in a free country.<sup>37</sup>

The schools and curriculum of the Nation of Islam School became a very powerful tool in the recruiting efforts of the organization. Much of this correlated with a generation of African Americans who either did not receive an education or whose education was not reflective of lived cultural racial experiences. The Nation of Islam's

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<sup>35</sup> C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America* (Beacon Press, 1973), 16. *This book was originated as a dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment for the authors Doctorate of Philosophy.*

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 34.

curriculum emphasized the history of Black people in America as well as the African civilizations of the pre-colonial era.<sup>38</sup> Lincoln observes that “many lower class Blacks find this approach, for all its exaggerations, a welcome change from the white-oriented teaching in nearly all public schools, which has so long cast Black children adrift in a sea of non-identity and non-belonging.”<sup>39</sup>

The structure of the Nation of Islam schools consisted of a fifty weeklong school year. The Black Muslims strongly felt the condition of Blacks in America meant no time could be afforded for frivolous activity. The schools did not provide extra-curricular activities only a 'serious' approach to knowledge.<sup>40</sup> For example, Lincoln cites, “The children are separated by sex. In some schools boys attend in the morning, girls in the afternoon. There are no play or rest periods. No time off for lunch. The boys wear jackets (except in summer) and ties. The girls dress in ankle-length flowing white gowns with matching head wraps.”<sup>41</sup> One Nation of Islam minister would remark that, “Coeducation does not exist in the Muhammad Universities of Islam. Coeducation is the Western way of educating youth. Separate education is the Islamic way of educating youth...it is a fact that coeducation does not and will not foster a moral education.”<sup>42</sup>

Though the youth education component of the Nation of Islam was crucial, it was but one facet of total education for the organization. The Nation of Islam's highest importance was placed on the special education of wives and mothers who were members of the organization: “The MGT (Muslim Girls Training) as it is generally known concentrates primarily on the art of home making. It meets on week nights at the local

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

temples and the women are taught how to sew, cook, keep house, rear their children, care for their husbands, and how to behave at home and abroad.”<sup>43</sup>

The Nation of Islam's organizational structure and educational requirements and resources enabled the members of the organization to increase 'consciousness' and instill the motivations of learning through racial and cultural pride. Hence, from the aforementioned information presented, one could ascertain that the scholastic development of Malcolm X can be credited to the educational operation of the Nation of Islam. However, this is only partially the case with regards to the scholarly development of Malcolm X. The proceeding section on the scholastic development of Malcolm X will provide valuable insight into the beginnings of Malcolm X's educational philosophy. The development of Malcolm X's scholarly paradigm can be partially attributed the Nation of Islam, but not in total.

#### Malcolm X: Scholar and Educational Philosophy:

*I finished the eight grade in Mason, Michigan.  
My high school was the black ghetto of Roxbury,  
Massachusetts. My college was in the streets of  
Harlem and my master's was taken in prison.*

--Malcolm X<sup>44</sup>

*When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions.  
You do not have to tell him to stand here or go yonder. He will find his 'proper place'  
and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without  
being told. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit.*

--Carter G. Woodson<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 134-135.

<sup>44</sup> Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X as Told to Alex Haley*, 325.

<sup>45</sup> Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1990).

## Malcolm X: Education for Self-Reliance

The birth of Malcolm X as a scholar is often attributed to the aggressive approach that he used in advancing his thirst for knowledge. Malcolm X on several occasions is cited as being an individual that read voraciously. Reading was the basis of his intellectual development throughout his career and this diligent work ethic extended to his colleagues as well.<sup>46</sup> However, the association of an educational philosophy as it extends from the academic motivations of Malcolm X are never attributed to the man or juxtaposed to the subsequent generations of Black Student activists that were motivated by his words and actions. This section will provide a critical examination of not only the beginnings and maturation of Malcolm X as a scholar but the educational philosophy that evolved during and after his lifetime.

During Malcolm's imprisonment, he attributed the decline of his academic skills to all of the time that he spent as a hustler and street person. Paradoxically, in the *Autobiography of Malcolm X as told to Alex Haley*, Malcolm X speaks extensively on how his time in prison reinvigorated the enthusiasm for learning that had been extinguished by the 'advice' of Mr. Ostrowski. Malcolm mentions a fellow inmate by the name of 'Bimbi' for whom he had considerable admiration. Bimbi's sheer intelligence and intellectualism awoke an excitement in Malcolm that was more than what was needed for him to become self-motivated on his own quest for knowledge. Malcolm describes Bimbi's influence this way:

He would have a cluster of people riveted, often on odd subjects you would never think of. He would prove to us, dipping into the science of human behavior, that the only difference between us and the outside people was that we had been

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<sup>46</sup> William W. Sales, Jr., *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity* (Boston: South End Press, 1994), 55.

caught. He liked to talk about historical events and figures...I wasn't the first inmate who had never heard of Thoreau until Bimbi expounded upon him. Bimbi was known as the library's best customer. What fascinated me with him most of all was that he was the first man I had ever seen command total respect...with his words.<sup>47</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Malcolm would comment on how he had regressed academically as a result of his days on the street. He notes, "...the streets had erased everything I'd ever learned in school; I didn't know a verb from a house."<sup>48</sup> According to other sources, Malcolm may have not given himself enough credit here, the implication being that he over-emphasized the Nation of Islam's role in his education out of indebtedness to the organization that provided him a national platform. Louis DeCaro Jr. points out in his book, *On the Side of My People: A Religious Life of Malcolm X*, it is stated that "according to the results of a test he took in the first few months of his incarceration, his reading ability was evaluated as "good" and his arithmetical ability (even though he seems to have disliked math) was "high average." In addition, "it is also significant that both his abstract reasoning and his "range of information" skills were rated superior."<sup>49</sup> Malcolm's major concern was improvement of his penmanship. Upon the advice of his sister Hilda, Malcolm would take correspondence courses and improve his writing. He then progressed from his scholastic development in English and Latin to learn word derivations.<sup>50</sup>

Malcolm would also study and copy out the entire dictionary as a tutorial reference for his scholastic advancement and for improved reading comprehension. He reminisces, "I'd never realized so many words existed! I didn't know *which* words I

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<sup>47</sup> Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X as Told to Alex Haley*, 178.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 178-179.

<sup>49</sup> Louis DeCaro, Jr., *On the Side of My People: A Religious Life of Malcolm X*, 78-79.

<sup>50</sup> Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X as Told to Alex Haley*, 178-179.

needed to learn. Finally, just to start some action, I began copying...I was so fascinated that I went on—I copied the dictionary's next page...during the rest of my time in prison I would guess I wrote a million words.”<sup>51</sup> Malcolm’s love of reading would be the basis from which he would expand his oratorical style and learning aptitude. He claims, “anyone who has read a great deal can imagine the new world that opened. Let me tell you something: from then until I left prison, in every free moment I had, if I was not reading in the library, I was reading on my bunk.”<sup>52</sup>

Malcolm would attribute his access to academic materials to the Norfolk Prison Colony library as well as the classes taught by the instructors from Harvard and Boston universities. He mentions, “an inmate was smiled upon if he demonstrated an unusually intense interest in books. Malcolm's knowledge base would expand through the works of Will Durant's *Story of Civilization*, H.G. Wells' *Outline of History*, W.E.B. DuBois' *Souls of Black Folk*, Carter G. Woodson's *Negro History*, J.A. Rogers' three volume of *Sex and Race* and Gregor Mendel's *Findings in Genetics* just to name a few.”<sup>53</sup>

Malcolm's addiction to learning through reading became so heightened that when the prison library was not able to quench his insatiable desire to obtain materials, he would have his older sister, Ella smuggle books in with his nephew. Malcolm's nephew, Rodnell P. Collins, recounts in *Seventh Child: A Family Memoir of Malcolm X*, that he (Collins) would at times have to smuggle the books in his pants for his uncle Malcolm who had taken a keen interest in studying law while in prison.<sup>54</sup> This love affair with

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 210-202.

<sup>54</sup> Rodnell P. Collins with Peter Bailey, *Seventh Child: A Family Memoir of Malcolm X*. (New York: Kensington Publishing Corp, 1998), 81.

books and reading would continue long past Malcolm's days of incarceration, even his death in 1965. According to Malcolm,

I have often reflected upon the new vistas that reading opened to me. I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life. As I see it today, the ability to read awoke inside me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive. I certainly wasn't seeking any degree, the way a college confers a status symbol upon its students. My homemade education gave me with every additional book that I read, a little bit more sensitivity to the deafness, dumbness and blindness that was afflicting the black race in America. Not long ago, an English writer telephoned me from London, asking questions. One was "What's your alma mater?" I told him, "Books."<sup>55</sup>

The "homemade" prison education or unconventional training to which Malcolm X refers is best described through the theoretical lens of Julius K. Nyerere's philosophy of "Education for Self-Reliance." Nyerere states "that [because] pre-colonial Africa did not have 'schools'--except for short periods of initiation in some tribes—did not mean that the children were not educated. They learned by living and doing...education was thus 'informal'; every adult was a teacher to a greater or lesser degree. But this lack of formality did not mean that there was no education, nor did it affect its importance to the society."<sup>56</sup>

Malcolm X's scholarly endeavors, about which he may have seemed a bit nonchalant, equates through his own practice into an educational philosophy for 'self-reliance.' The fact that Malcolm only formally finished the eighth grade means his intellectual training was not only self-imposed but developed for conditions in which he would have to rely on himself. As a minister for the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X would develop a public speaking class for younger ministers who aspired to head their own

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<sup>55</sup> Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X as Told to Alex Haley*, 206.

<sup>56</sup> Julius K. Nyerere, *Ujamaa, Essays on Socialism* (Dar es Salaam, Nairobi, London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 44-45.

temples within the organization.<sup>57</sup> Benjamin Karim, former Nation of Islam member and founding member of Organization of Afro-American Unity, reports,

Malcolm X ran the Public Speaking class for brothers who wanted to be ministers. The curriculum was ancient history broken down into the Hittites, the Egyptians, the Assyrians, and Babylonians all the way up through the Persians and Rome, the Crusades and the Moors in Spain. We had to read every newspaper, the N.Y. Times, the U.S. News and World Report, the Chinese Peking Review, London Times. Every week we had to keep abreast and see historically how everything came to this point, the history of slavery...This was the class that he set up. There is no college class, calculus, trigonometry that was as rough as that Public Speaking Class.<sup>58</sup>

#### Malcolm X's Educational Philosophy: The Importance of History

For Malcolm X, the critical study of history for the re-examination of contemporary phenomena was essential in his not only as a scholar but also as an educator of the masses of Black people. But Malcolm relied on the scholarship of history for selfish reasons as well as for the education of his peer. “He did not approach history as a means by which contemporary problems could be analyzed by revealing the causes which created them. By studying the history of contemporary oppression, Malcolm said that its origins would be exposed, contemporary problems diagnosed and solutions advanced, Karim notes.”<sup>59</sup>

Malcolm would synergize a speaking style that related history to the current issues of the masses and used metaphors and parables to engage his audience in critical thought. When Malcolm addressed an audience, he would use the time allotted as a time of instruction and not just sensationalism. For example, on January 24, 1965, Malcolm X

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<sup>57</sup> William W. Sales, *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity*, 55.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 56.



rouses a crowd of the Organization of Afro-American Unity with the following history claims:

When you deal with the past, you're dealing with history you're dealing actually with origin of a thing. When you know the origin, you know the cause. If you don't know the origin, you don't know the cause. And if you don't know the cause, you don't know the reason, you're just cut off, you're left standing in mid-air. So the past deals with history or the origin of anything—the origin of a person, the origin of a nation, the origin of an incident. And when you know the origin, then you get a better understanding of the causes that produce whatever originated there and its reason for originating and its reason for being.<sup>60</sup>

Malcolm X excavated history for a better understanding of the conditions that Blacks faced because he understood that the conditions were not in isolation from a larger societal context. Malcolm X's educational philosophy, which comprised the *discipline* of history, went beyond Malcolm's lectures to practice. He would form a wide variation of alliances as head of the Nation of Islam's Temple #7 in Harlem, New York. He had a critical understanding of the traditional ways in which Black people communicated political attitudes and he took advantage of the informal encounters he would have with people as a way to build a future alliance or a learning/teachable moment.<sup>61</sup>

Because Malcolm X respected and had the ability to retain the traditional methods of building alliances, he was able to move people. In addition, “Malcolm defined history not just as what was in books but also as that which could be validated by the collective experiences of Black people.”<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Malcolm X, *Malcolm X on Afro-American History* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), 4.

<sup>61</sup> William W. Sales, *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity*, 57.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

## Malcolm X's Philosophy Of Education: Youth Emphasis & Community Appeal

Malcolm X became significant to many African-Americans because of his ability to relate to the problems of the community. He understood the language of a people on the social periphery and who, in many cases, like him, aggressively opposed assimilative practices that were recommended for integration. For Malcolm X, integration was not an option. Respect and all rights due fellow human beings were the only answer, not to be negotiated. More importantly, Black folks needed an individual who could voice the frustrations of the masses in a language and style that was relatable. This is why so many loved Malcolm X and what made his educational methodology so effective to and for the Black masses.

Historian, Dr. John Henrik Clarke juxtaposes Malcolm's speaking effectiveness juxtaposed to that of Dr. Martin Luther King.

When inquiring of some the next day who had heard Dr. King, they would typically respond as to how moved they were by his oratory. When asked, however, what did King say they usually could not remember the specifics of his discourse. On the other hand, those who had heard Malcolm X speak, when asked the next day about the experience would typically respond “Malcolm said” and then recall the specifics of Malcolm's line of argument and his factual verifications.<sup>63</sup>

Malcolm understood that his ability to relate to Blacks was critical as well as the discernable factor between him and the more socially accepted civil rights leadership of the era. As Clarke states, Malcolm's discourse was one that resonated with people as well one they could retain for future reference. He informed his audience in a way that motivated and edified. Malcolm understood that the society in which he existed required Blacks to earn their leadership positions even if some positions were more so that of

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 209.

spokesmen for the people than others. According to Malcolm, the impersonal relationship between the Black masses and the leadership of the “big named Negro leaders was [due to] their lack of...any true rapport with the ghetto Negroes.”<sup>64</sup>

Malcolm X stated that even though he could speak over the airwaves of the major television networks at educational institutions such as Harvard and Tuskegee he had the ability to speak with the Black middle class as well as the ghetto blacks as well.

Malcolm said “because I had been a hustler, I knew better than all whites knew and better than nearly all of the black “leaders knew, that actually the most dangerous black man in America was the ghetto hustler.”<sup>65</sup> Malcolm attested,

“I knew that the ghetto people knew that I never left the ghetto in spirit, and I never left if physically any more than I had to. I had a ghetto instinct; for instance. I could feel if tension was beyond normal in a ghetto audience. And I could speak and understand the ghetto's language. There was an example of this that always flew to my mind every time I heard some of the “big name” Negro “leaders” declaring they “spoke for” the ghetto Black people.”<sup>66</sup>

That Malcolm's educational philosophy was comprehensible and beneficial is apparent from the national demand for Malcolm to give college lectures. The invitations for Malcolm to talk to students always superseded those Elijah Muhammad received, and Malcolm would develop a preference for speaking on college campuses for the same reasons he loved to address Black masses: “The college sessions never failed to be exhilarating. They never failed in helping me to further my own education.”<sup>67</sup>

While a minister of the Nation of Islam and during his short period free from the confines of the NOI, Malcolm worked at a frenetic pace to keep engagements at colleges

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<sup>64</sup> Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X as Told to Malcolm X*, 357.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 358.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 357-358.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 324-325.

and universities across the country in an effort to increase the consciousness of Black youth. Hence, the majority of his engagements were at educational institutions:

When the *New York Times* poll was published, I had spoken at well over fifty colleges and universities, like Brown, Harvard, Yale, Columbia and Rutgers in the Ivy League and others throughout the country. Right now, I have invitations from Cornell, Princeton and probably a dozen others, as soon as my time and their available dates can be scheduled together. Among Negro institutions, I had been to Atlanta University and Clark College down in Atlanta, to Howard University in Washington, D.C. and to a number of others with small student bodies.<sup>68</sup>

According to Dr. Harry Edwards in his work *Black Students*, “Malcolm X's message to Black students was clear, concise and unmistakably explicit.”<sup>69</sup> He presented to Black Students a philosophy and directives that changed their perspectives as well as ignited the Black Student Movement.<sup>70</sup>

First: Black students must control their own communities and the resources and institutions of those communities. Black students must turn 'inward' to build institutions and support the Black community.

Second: Black students must not hesitate to use whatever means necessary to accomplish those goals. Black students must hold authorities accountable and not tolerate oppressive guidelines enacted through the use of curriculum and denial of scholastic liberty.

Third: Black students must develop an ethic—and he proposed Black Nationalism—that would unify them and prevent any outside group from ever again taking control of Black movements and communities. Black students needed to make a connection with African nations for the engagement of Black Internationalism.

Fourth: Black students must recognize that their primary enemy was, is, and has always been the legally established institutions and government of the United States' whose efforts were to maintain the status quo through psychologically oppressive measures.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X as Told to Alex Haley*, 324.

<sup>69</sup> Harry Edwards, *Black Students* (New York: The Free Press, 1970), 44-52.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

## Malcolm X: An Expansive Educational Philosophy

The quest for knowledge can lead to the opportunity to inform others of information that one has encountered as well as new discoveries. Absolutely crucial to this search for truth is the ability to be critical of one's self and to constantly assess information. Malcolm X exemplified this kind of scholarly humility; his life's lessons enabled him to be liberal in thought and action. In addition, he was courageous enough to disclose his errors publicly and show that not even those held in the highest regard are infallible and that no train of thought should be static. This component of Malcolm's educational philosophy, that is, his own self-critique, was invaluable because it enabled him to grow as an intellectual as well as forge domestic and international alliances based on the universal need to improve human life regardless of racial differences. According to Malcolm,

All of us should be critics of each other. Whenever you can't stand criticism you can never grow...I think that we accomplish more when we sit down...and iron out whatever differences that may exist and try and then do something constructive for the benefit of our people...I don't think that we should be above criticism. I don't think that anyone should be above criticism.<sup>72</sup>

A critical example of Malcolm X's expansive self-educational experience is correlative with the evolution of his disposition regarding Whites. Many Malcolm X historians will disagree with this point based on Malcolm's speeches, which may come across as ambivalent. At a meeting of the Organization of Afro-American Unity, for example, shortly before his death, Malcolm was challenged to “ ‘tell us where you're at with them white folks.’ His response was, ‘I haven't changed. I just see things on a

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<sup>72</sup> Malcolm X, *Malcolm X: The Last Speeches* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1989), 87.

broader scale.” But later in the same statement, he referred to the white man as “the snake.”<sup>73</sup>

The aforementioned statement is evidence in the minds of many of irrefutable proof that Malcolm X did not change his baseline opinion regarding Whites. However, I would argue that his experiences and need to struggle for social change did not allow him to remain as rigid as many would like to perceive him. The fact is much Malcolm’s rhetoric is not contextualized in a larger discourse to fully evaluate his stance on certain subjects.

My first example with Malcolm and his amended attitude towards whites comes from a moment that Malcolm X would recall during his verbal exposition to Alex Haley in the construction of his autobiography. Malcolm X spoke candidly regarding his reassessment of White America and the social and political forces that constructed the dynamics of racialized thought of all American individuals. For a long time, Malcolm reasoned that if a White person did assist him in any way then the motive was a selfish motive and so his instincts were to thoroughly investigate and examine the reasons and tendencies of that individual.<sup>74</sup> However, this attitude concerning whites was challenged when he participated in his religious pilgrimage in Mecca. Malcolm’s accommodations while abroad were provided for him by a cadre of individuals who invested their hope for the Black masses in Malcolm, and while traveling abroad, he would receive the best of treatment. Exemplary treatment came from one Dr. Abd-Al-Rahman Azzam who, as Malcolm would make mention, that if in America would have been considered “white.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Raymond Rogers & Jimmie N. Rogers, “The Evolution of the Attitude of Malcolm X toward Whites,” *Phylon* 44, no. 2. (2nd Quarter 1983), 108-115.

<sup>74</sup> Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X as Told to Alex Haley*, 383.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 383.

Malcolm would speak extensively of Dr. Azzam's hospitality and that the physician had nothing to gain and everything to possibly lose by assisting him. Malcolm recognized that those in the eastern hemisphere had followed his progression closely through the press and were well aware of the American press' propaganda about him. Nonetheless, he was still assisted by one who he himself would have considered to be phenotypically White. After spending one night in the home of his host, Malcolm comments,

That morning was when I first began to reappraise the "white man." It was when I first began to perceive that "white man," as commonly used, means complexion only secondarily; primarily it described attitudes and actions. In America, "white man" meant specific attitudes and actions toward the black man, and toward all other non-white men. But in the Muslim world, I had seen that men with white complexions were more genuinely brotherly than anyone else had ever been. That morning was the start of a radical alteration in my whole outlook about "white" men.<sup>76</sup>

Throughout Malcolm's post-hajj conversations regarding the state of American racial conditions, he would continue to evaluate the stance he had taken regarding White America in his previous comments and speeches. Because of his 'broadened' insight, he was able to gain a panoramic view of race that included an international perspective. While discoursing about race with a White American ambassador in Africa, Malcolm would confirm, "What you are telling me is that it isn't the American white *man* who is racist, but it's the American political, economic, and social atmosphere that automatically nourishes a racist psychology in the white man."<sup>77</sup> Malcolm admitted that this conversation with the ambassador gave him newfound insight to see that White people

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 427.

are not inherently evil, but that society reinforced discriminatory practices which influenced and encouraged racist behavior.<sup>78</sup>

His former associate, Peter Bailey, considered Malcolm X a “Master Teacher” and attributed to him the ability to apply an interpretative analysis to society.<sup>79</sup> That observation should be supplemented to note that this attribute of Malcolm’s, his need to instruct, was not relegated to just Black folks. During the writing of his autobiography with Alex Haley, Malcolm was able to reflect on a regrettable moment that occurred while his expansive self-educational experiences were still maturing. Malcolm made mention of a White New England woman who had flown down to New York and had sought Malcolm out to ask what a sincere White person could do. At the time, he replied, “There was nothing that she could do.”<sup>80</sup>

Malcolm regretted that he told her that because after his reassessment of Whites, he remarks later what he would have liked to have told her:

...on the American racial level, we had to approach the black man's struggle against the white man's racism as a human problem, that we had to forget hypocritical politics and propaganda...both races, as human beings, had the obligation, the responsibility, of helping to correct America's human problem. The well-meaning white people, I said had to combat, actively and directly, the racism in other white people. And that the Black people had to build within themselves much greater awareness that along with equal rights there had to be the bearing of equal responsibilities.<sup>81</sup>

Malcolm's expansive self-education that led to such an influence on the masses also determined him to maintain the practice of self-reliance in the context of critical thought. He states, “I've had enough of someone else's propaganda... I'm for truth, no matter who

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> *The Malcolm X Encyclopedia*, 524.

<sup>80</sup> Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X as Told to Alex Haley*, 432.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 432.



tells it. I'm for justice, no matter who it is for or against. I'm a human being first and foremost, and as such I'm for whoever and whatever benefits humanity *as a whole*.”<sup>82</sup>

This expanding and changing educational philosophy did not cease with his reassessment of White America. Malcolm X also engaged the issue of sexism and chauvinistic behavior so prevalent in the Black Freedom Struggle. Critics of Malcolm's gender politics maintain that his stance remained consistent with the dogmatic teachings of the organization that he helped to build, the Nation of Islam. And by no means did Malcolm's gender politics render him a saint; however, my argument is that in the context of his own introspective critique, you find an individual who was not afraid to admit that his initial ideation may have been flawed. In addition, he was courageous enough to publicly admit that he taught others in error. An educational philosophy that can concede to error is valuable because through error one can make the personal amendments necessary for future progress. I contend that a critical facet of this tenet drove Malcolm X's educational philosophy. A letter that Malcolm X wrote to his cousin-in-law on the eve of his death in 1965 illustrates a clear example of this:

I taught brothers not only to deal unintelligently with the devil or the white woman, but I also taught many brothers to spit acid at the sisters. They were kept in their places—you probable didn't notice this action, but it is a fact. I taught these brothers to spit acid at the sisters. If the sister wanted to have her husband at home with her in the evening, I taught the brothers that the sisters were standing in their way; in the way of the Messenger [Elijah Muhammad], in the way of progress, in the way of God himself. I did these things brother. I must undo them.<sup>83</sup>

In spite of his acknowledged misguided teachings on sex relations, Black women in particular applauded Malcolm for didactically, audaciously and publicly identifying

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 421.

<sup>83</sup> Bettye Collier-Thomas and V.P. Franklin, ed. *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights—Black Power Movement*; Farah Jasmin Griffin, *Ironies of the Saint: Malcolm X, Black Women and the Price of Protection* (New York & London: New York University Press, 2001), 225.

the reinforcement of self-hate perpetuated by print media that degraded Black women and their physical features. “Pages of black magazines were filled with advertisements for hair straightening and skin lightening products; most sex symbols were *café au lait* at best: Lena Horne, Dorothy Dandridge, and Eartha Kitt.”<sup>84</sup> As Malcolm began to condemn Eurocentric hierarchies of beauty imposed on African American women as a form of racial oppression, he gained admiration for addressing and attacking issues that Black women faced on a continual basis.<sup>85</sup> A manifestation of Malcolm’s critique of standards of beauty is the emergence of “darker beauties like Abbey Lincoln, Cicely Tyson, and Nina Simone.”<sup>86</sup>

Like his ideas on race, Malcolm's expanding attitude toward women would also progress due to his travels and heightened international view that Black Internationalism, or Pan-Africanism, included all Africans in the diaspora. This is substantiated by an interview that Malcolm X gave in Paris, France, November 1964. In this account, Malcolm X's statement should be quoted in its entirety:

One thing that I became aware of in my traveling recently through Africa and the Middle East in every country you go to, usually the degree of progress can never be separated from the woman. If you're in a country that is progressive, then woman is progressive. If you're in a country that reflects the consciousness toward the importance of education, it's because the woman is aware of the importance of education. But in every backward country you'll find the women are backward, and in every country where education is not stressed it's because the women don't have education. So one of the things I became thoroughly convinced of in my travels is the importance of giving freedom to the woman, giving her education, and giving her the incentive to get out there and put that same spirit and understanding in her children. And frankly I am proud of the contributions women have made in the struggle for freedom and I'm one person who's for giving them all the leeway possible because they've made a greater contribution than many of us men.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 221.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Robert L. Jenkins & Mfanya Donald Tryman, ed. *The Malcolm X Encyclopedia*; Mamie Locke,

Malcolm X's philosophy of education is best described as that of a self-reliant, historically centered but potentially expansive philosophy that is inclusive of all those who seek social change. His educational experiences and ideation have even been referred to as a “non-formal community education (community based learning outside of a traditional school setting).”<sup>88</sup> This philosophy is not racially centered but is a philosophy that reinforces the importance of nationalism, community development and securing the rights of all humans.

#### Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) and the Student Movement

Upon his split with the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X would establish the Muslim Mosque, Inc. and then the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) patterned after the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Malcolm's main objective was to establish a non-secular organization for individuals who were eager to aid him in the Black Freedom Struggle but who were not committed to his religious beliefs. The OAAU would not mature to its full potential due to Malcolm's assassination, but the influence of the OAAU is definite and far-reaching with respect.

Malcolm X's educational philosophy was established as part of the aims and objectives of the OAAU platform. The educational prospectus of the organization was to work for more parental inclusion and aggressively demand that major amendments be made to school curriculum nation wide.<sup>89</sup> The educational component also stressed “the need for adult education and for job training programs that will emphasize a changing

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*Malcolm X and the Role of Women* (Westport, Connecticut & London: Greenwood Press: 2002), 23-25; Interview, Paris, France, November 1964.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 524.

<sup>89</sup> John Henrik Clarke, ed., *Malcolm X: The Man and His Times*, 338.

society in which automation plays a key role.”<sup>90</sup> Malcolm X and the OAAU foresaw education as a liberating tool that could be used to elevate “people to an unprecedented level of excellence and self-respect through their own efforts.”<sup>91</sup>

The OAAU established a school as the practical educational component of the organization. Modeled after the ‘freedom schools’ of the South, the OAAU Liberation School provided a curriculum in African and African American history, political education, and consumer information and skills. The school also administered adult education classes, and in which adult students averaged about thirty-five years of age.<sup>92</sup>

Often under acknowledged and omitted from scholarship on Malcolm X and the OAAU was the lone Asian membership of the short-lived organization, Yuri Kochiyama. A Harlem resident and close friend of Malcolm X, Yuri was one of the few individuals that Malcolm wrote to while on his travels abroad. Being of Japanese descent, Yuri became attracted to the anti-imperialist teachings of Malcolm and later joined the OAAU after Malcolm’s first African tour in 1964. Yuri attended OAAU meetings regularly and was also a fixture at the OAAU’s Liberation School. Benefiting from the diverse teachings “ranging from the Marxism of James Campbell and Richard B. Moore to the Black Nationalism of historian John Henrik Clarke and the Egyptologist Yosef ben-Jochannan,” Yuri’s initial base of nonviolent direct action and assimilationist thinking was definitely altered. Taking from a list of required readings that included Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*, Kwame Nkrumah’s *Consciencism* and Herbert Aptheker’s *American Negro Slave Revolts*, Yuri and other adult students received

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> William W. Sales, *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity*, 121-122.

instruction that consisted of lessons on self-determination, anti-capitalism and prosocialism. From these influences, Yuri, a Japanese American, became thoroughly inculcated with the history of Black people and also the importance of reconsidering her earlier positions based on the effects of the U.S. on her native land and other Asian peoples.<sup>93</sup>

From experiences of those like Yuri Kochiyama, it can be seen how Malcolm X and the OAAU could have a direct effect on the Black Student Movement in general. Scholar William Sales argues, “as much as it has been suggested that northern urban street people were Malcolm X's natural constituency, a good case could be made that students served that purpose for Malcolm X also.”<sup>94</sup>

#### The Black Student Movement & Malcolm X

*One of the first things I think young people, especially nowadays, should learn is how to see for yourself and listen for yourself and think for yourself. Then you can come to an intelligent decision for yourself. If you can form the habit of going by what you hear others say about someone, or going by what others think about someone, instead of searching that thing out for yourself and seeing for yourself, you will be walking west when you think you're going east, and you will be walking east when you think you're going west. This generation, especially of our people has a burden, more so than any other time in history. The most important thing that we can learn to do today is to think for ourselves.*

--Malcolm X<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Diane C. Fujino, *Heartbeat of Struggle: The Revolutionary Life of Yuri Kochiyama* (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 149-161.; Highly active and significant in the movement, Yuri Kochiyama's political maturation is credited to not only Malcolm X, but also Max Stanford (aka Muhammad Ahmed) who Yuri acknowledges as one of her most significant political mentors. In relation to the Black freedom struggle, Yuri Kochiyama was affiliated with not only the OAAU and RAM but she also became an official citizen of the Republic of New Afrika (RNA), which evolved out of Detroit's Malcolm X Society in 1968. Yuri played a significant role in the overall movement and was considered “the Internet in those days” by RNA member Bolanile Akinwale. Yuri was known for taking copious notes and having color-coded phone books, a photographic memory and a store house of information. She kept boxes of files and information on political prisoners. For further investigation on Yuri and the movement, please see Fujino's chapter, “Transformation of a Revolutionary Nationalist” in her seminal work *Heartbeat of Struggle*.

<sup>94</sup> William W. Sales, *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity*, 127.

<sup>95</sup> Malcolm X, *Malcolm X Talks to Young People* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1965), 3.

February 1, 1960: four freshmen of North Carolina A&T sat in a segregated Woolworths in downtown Greensboro, North Carolina. The courageous actions of these four Black young men sparked a wave of resistance throughout the cities of North Carolina and the region. “During the next two weeks, sit-ins spread to fifteen cities in five Southern states. Within the following year, over 50,000 people-most were Black, some White-participated in some kind of demonstration or another,” Ahmad recounts. As a result of students going to jail on countless occasions, hundreds of segregated lunch counters were desegregated throughout the South.<sup>96</sup> During that same year of the momentous student led sit-ins, Miss Ella Baker, a founding member and key organizer for the SCLC, organized a conference for the purpose of bringing the student leaders of the sit-ins together. With the momentum of student activity around the sit-ins increasing steadily on a national level, Baker knew that she would have to act swiftly to bring about the mass meeting in hopes of rallying young people for the benefit of even greater success of the movement. Baker, who was well aware of the politics of organizing and whose past experience had shown her how established Civil Rights organizations could co-opt the credibility of students. Baker, who was impatient and desirous to make sure this did not happen with her efforts to channel the energies of the student vanguard of the sit-in movement.<sup>97</sup>

An alumnus of Shaw University in North Carolina, Baker was able to get the SCLC to underwrite a grant for the purpose of holding the conference at her alma mater. Held on Easter weekend, April 15-17, 1960, “the result was that over two-hundred people came to the

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<sup>96</sup> Muhammad Ahmad, “On the Black Student Movement 1960-1970,” n.d. Reel 17 no. 242, The Black Power Movement; Part 3: Papers of the Revolutionary Action Movement 1962-1996, microfilm.

<sup>97</sup> Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker & the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 242.

conference, one hundred twenty-six of them student delegates from fifty-eight different Southern communities in twelve states.” The conference produced the successful formation of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which was constructed to be the organizing epicenter for student activity in the 1960s based on the non-violent philosophies of the SCLC. The next year after the successful organizing efforts of SNCC, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) began its freedom rides on May 14, 1961 to test the Supreme Court decision that outlawed segregation in transportation terminals. In response to the efforts of CORE, White violence increased and death tolls mounted as young people continued to work and espouse the gospel of passive action to achieve the results of liberation.<sup>98</sup>

Motivated and embarrassed by the efforts of CORE and SNCC in the South, Attorney General, Robert F. Kennedy “suggested that civil rights organizations jointly sponsor a campaign to register Southern Black voters.” So the drive by organizations like SNCC was due to the federal government’s willingness to provide a level of protection, probably to benefit many of the White students who had joined in the grassroots efforts in the South. And because of federal assistance, by the fall of 1962 SNCC had become successful in mass voter registration in the rural South with an emphasis on the states of Mississippi and Georgia. Not only did these efforts gain national attention, thus providing a recruitment tool for young people on a national basis.<sup>99</sup>

In the Northern cities, the activity of the Nation of Islam was more effective due to the frequent readership of the news organ of the NOI, *Muhammad Speaks*, and because of the brash intellect and visibility of its national spokesman, Malcolm X. Many young people of both high school and college age gravitated towards the NOI as they heard Malcolm X championing the tenets of Black Nationalism with a continuous mantra for a united Black front against oppression and for the uplift of Black folks in the United States and worldwide.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.; For an in depth look into the Freedom Rides of 1961 and see the work of Raymond Arsenault, *Freedom Rides: 1961 and the Struggle for Radical Justice* (Oxford University Press).

<sup>99</sup> Muhammad Ahmad, “On the Black Student Movement 1960-1970,” n.d. Reel 17 no. 242, The Black Power Movement; Part 3: Papers of the Revolutionary Action Movement 1962-1996, microfilm.

Mystified by the enchantment of Malcolm X's rhetoric and the paramilitary discipline of the NOI's Fruit of Islam (FOI), a young Black man from Philadelphia would make his way to the NOI's Harlem Temple Number 7 to meet the man who had been labeled as a firebrand and agitator of the Civil Rights movement, Malcolm X.

On Thanksgiving day, 1962, two Black college students from Case Western University in Cleveland, Ohio (Max Stanford and Wanda Marshall) traveled from Philadelphia to Harlem to finally fulfill their intention of meeting Malcolm X and to hopefully gain his approval to join the Nation of Islam to further the goals and practices of self-determination. The two were able to engage Malcolm in a lengthy conversation; or rather, they received one of Malcolm's lectures on African-centered world history. The two also received a second lecture on mathematics from Minister Benjamin 2X. After listening to Malcolm lecture further on Black history, Stanford urgently asked if he could join the Nation of Islam and aid the cause of Elijah Muhammad and the NOI. Malcolm promptly replied, "No, you can do more for the Honorable Elijah Muhammad by organizing outside of the Nation." Within the next couple of months after meeting with Malcolm X, Stanford, Wanda Marshall and a host other Black students and youth began to conceptualize the Revolutionary Action Movement, better known as RAM.<sup>100</sup>

The historical antecedent of RAM in the overall student protest and organizing movement began out of the mostly radical White radical student organization, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). A small group of Black students of SDS who were influenced by the work of the NOI and Malcolm X began to further their ideological stance around the tenets of Black Nationalism and Black consciousness. This increase of

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.



Black activity in SDS by the Black membership evolved into the formation of a Black Nationalist student group by the fall of 1961 called Challenge. Donald Freeman, another Case Western student, spearheaded the mobilization efforts of other Black students at college campuses who were familiar with SDS but whose ideological leanings had been more nationalist. Freeman recruited them to join Challenge.<sup>101</sup> “Several of the members had been expelled from southern schools for participating in civil rights demonstrations. Others were members of the Nation of Islam and other Black Nationalist organizations.”<sup>102</sup> Because of their political maturity and grassroots organizing backgrounds, many of the new Challenge membership were primed to push the radicalism of the student movement into northern cities and potentially influence the socio-political actions of more moderate groups like SNCC in the South.<sup>103</sup>

Challenge members would later be significantly influenced by the work of scholar/activist, Harold Cruse. In the spring 1962 issue of *Studies on the Left*, Cruse published a significant article entitled, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American.” This article became required reading upon the request of Max Stanford who sensed that the more radical political explicitness that Cruse espoused in his work was what was needed in order for Challenge to steer the Black Student Movement in the direction of revolutionary Black Nationalism. Composed of students mainly from Central State University in Ohio (CSC), Wilberforce, and Case Western University of Ohio, Challenge decided that the next move for the organization would be to take over the student government at CSC.

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<sup>101</sup> Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press, 2004), 78-79.

<sup>102</sup>

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

Meetings were held with representatives from each class, fraternity and sorority. A slate was drafted and a name for the party was selected. At the meeting of the coalition party, the name Revolutionary Action Movement was chosen. But it was felt by the members at the meeting that the word revolution would scare Central State's administration so they decided to use Reform Action Movement (RAM) for the purposes of the student election. Charles "Chuck" Reed was the candidate for student body president on the RAM ticket in May 1962 at Central State College (later to become Central State University) in Wilberforce Ohio. It was called RAM, later to be known as Revolutionary Action Movement.<sup>104</sup>

RAM later developed cells in various northern cities and participated in sit-ins and protest demonstrations. Many of the RAM members were able to go back to their home communities and organize RAM chapters there, thus evolving RAM into a professional organization that consisted of students and non-students in the Black community. In accordance with the ideological development of the organization came RAM's use of revolutionary nationalism as a recruitment tool for Black students eager to embrace Black Nationalism. This was done through the establishment of their bi-monthly news organ, *Black America*, and also study groups.<sup>105</sup>

RAM members were also able to benefit from the mentorship of Malcolm X, who was able to provide feedback and direction on the early RAM documents. From a strong request of RAM's leadership, Malcolm agreed to become RAM's international spokesman. However, he informed Stanford that, "he would become RAM's spokesman; but that it would have to be secretive because the RAM International Chairman, Robert F.

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<sup>104</sup> Muhammad Ahmad (Maxwell Stanford, Jr.), *We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations 1960-1975*. (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 2007), 96-97.

<sup>105</sup> Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity*. (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press, 2004), 79.; Also see Peniel E. Joseph's "Dashikis and Democracy: Black Studies, Student Activism and the Black Power Movement" *The Journal of African American History* 88, no. 2 (Spring 2003), 182-203. Joseph posits the ideological and theoretical development of many Black students during the movement as a result of study groups and revolutionary journals and newspapers such as *Black America*, *Soulbook*, *RAM Speak*, *On Guard Muhammad Speaks*, *Freedomways*, *The Black Challenge*, *The Street Speaker* and *the Razor's Edge*.

Williams, was fugitive from 'justice' and, his association organizationally with Williams could make him indictable."<sup>106</sup>

With the emergence and development of RAM in the context of the burgeoning student movement came an organization that had the ability to complicate the ideology promoted by nationally recognized civil rights organizations. Through SNCC, the movement now found an established organization to funnel and monitor student movement (both Black and White) as an almost subordinate organization for the SCLC. However, the energies and restlessness of Black youth in the movement would make for not only agitation but also new directions and considerations as they became affected by a liberating philosophy such as the one that Malcolm X both implicitly and explicitly espoused.

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<sup>106</sup> Muhammad Ahmad, "On the Black Student Movement 1960-1970," n.d. Reel 17 no. 242, The Black Power Movement; Part 3: Papers of the Revolutionary Action Movement 1962-1996, microfilm.; Critical to the ideological maturation of RAM around Black Nationalism and communism was the relationship that members such as Max Stanford maintained with Queen Mother Audley Moore. Many of the RAM members attended meetings at Queen Mother Moore's home in Harlem in the early 1960s around issues of "Free Mae Mallory." Moore eventually became a key advisor to RAM.

## CHAPTER 3

### SOWING THE WIND.TO REAP A WHIRLWIND: IDEOLOGICAL SHIFTS AND RADICAL EXPRESSIONS IN THE BLACK STUDENT MOVEMENT 1963-1969

*How many hot-dogs and cups of coffee will Black people have to be served at newly integrated lunch counters to balance out the price in blood and human lives to desegregate those lunch counters and restaurants? How many times will we have to use formerly whites-only toilets before the ledger is balanced to the extent that the blood spilled in order to gain use of those toilets is compensated for?*<sup>1</sup>

---Black Member of SNCC 1963, *Black Students*

This chapter is intended to provide a historical trajectory of events that assisted in the radicalization of the Black Student Movement as the protest era began to evolve into a second phase of activity following the student sit-ins. Much of the activity that aided in influencing these shifts was generated from the involvement of less publicized organizations and their participation in the overall Black Freedom Movement. This chapter also contextualizes the involvement and maturation of Malcolm X in conjunction with the ideological and tactical shifts of the Black Student Movement as well. The chapter's discussion will also include an explicit historical examination of the intersections that conjoin the influence of Malcolm X and the activity of the student led groups of RAM, SNCC, the Pan-African Student Organization of the Americas (PASOA), and the Northern Student Movement (NSM). The latter part of this work highlights and introduces the evolution of the Student Organization for Black Unity (SOBU) and how Malcolm X Liberation University (MXLU) came into existence through the struggles of national campus protest during the Black Student Movement.

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<sup>1</sup> Harry Edwards, *Black Students* (Toronto and Ontario: The Free Press, 1970), 23.

By the spring of 1963, the companion activity of SNCC and the elder SCLC organizers provoked protests and revolt throughout the South through the practice of nonviolent direct action. For many of the Black college-aged protest participants involved in the movement, the beginnings of a mass shift came during the Spring months of 1963 in Birmingham, Alabama with the "Spring nonviolent offensive." "Dr. King, who had become the symbol of the direct action nonviolent struggle through the efforts of SCLC and SNCC, pushed Birmingham to the brink."<sup>2</sup> For many of the young people involved in the movement, the sight of White aggression in the form of dogs, tanks and water hoses on women and children became too much to bear, and within months of the initiatives in Birmingham--mass demonstrations led mostly by the efforts of young people--swept the South.<sup>3</sup> With regard to the tumultuous year of 1963, Scholar Clayborne Carson's seminal work, *In Struggle*, provides a critical analysis of SNCC's work and that the tactic of nonviolent direct action found the most success. According to Carson,

The protests of the spring and summer of 1963 exceeded in intensity and size anything that had preceded them. Southern Regional Council researchers estimated that during 1963, 930 public protest demonstrations took place in at least 115 cities in 11 southern states. Over 20,000 persons were arrested during these protests, compared to about 3600 arrests in the period of nonviolent protests prior to the fall of 1961. In 1963, ten persons died in circumstances directly related to racial protests, and at least 35 bombings occurred. SNCC activists who were involved in the mass protests became aware of a militant mood among urban Blacks that surpassed their own discontent and which compelled them to reassess their own views regarding nonviolent protest.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Ahmad, "On the Black Student Movement 1960-1970," n.d. Reel 17 no.242, The Black Power Movement; Part 3: Papers of the Revolutionary Action Movement 1962-1996, microfilm.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Claybourne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press), 91-94.

In the Northern cities like Philadelphia, RAM's maturation and work coincided with that of the NAACP for the organization of mass demonstrations against discriminatory practices in the building trades. These efforts saw participation numbering about 10,000 demonstrators. In the city of New York, "CORE began demonstrating at down-state northern cities with freedom marches and police brutality demonstrations."<sup>5</sup> During the summer of 1963, RAM was also furthering its operations around Black Nationalism, evident in the decision to join a collective of national groups based in the North called the Black Liberation Front of the U.S.A. (BLF).<sup>6</sup> With a national acceleration of protest activity amounting in more student activity and protest efforts, the organizations of RAM, CORE, SCLC, NAACP and SNCC all saw increased membership from Black youth as Civil Rights activists prepared for the historical March on Washington slated to take place in late August of 1963.<sup>7</sup>

As the vanguard of the student movement, SNCC's grassroots organizing was a critical factor in the mobilization efforts that made the historic day a success. However, the pre-march meetings that took place amongst the members of SCLC, CORE, Urban League, NAACP and SNCC (newly recognized Civil Rights Organizations by the Kennedy Administration) signified the beginnings of SNCC's shift toward more radical positions regarding the Civil Rights Movement. Juxtaposed with the more established 'old guard' Civil Rights organizations, SNCC's intentions around the 1963 march were not to necessarily coalesce with the accommodationist activity of the other organizations,

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<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Ahmad, "On the Black Student Movement 1960-1970," n.d. Reel 17 no.242, The Black Power Movement; Part 3: Papers of the Revolutionary Action Movement 1962-1996, microfilm.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

but to definitely problematize the activity of the Kennedy Administration on a national and international platform.<sup>8</sup>

The original idea for the march stemmed from the 1941 intentions of A. Phillip Randolph who planned to provoke President Franklin Roosevelt into providing federal assistance and employment opportunities to Black people. A little over twenty years later, in '62, Randolph once again suggested a march on Washington to pressure the Kennedy Administration on legislation around equal employment. The march, which was set for August 28, 1963, was met with opposition from President Kennedy and his administration who, prior to the demonstration, held meetings with thirty of the Civil Rights Movement leaders including the newly elected SNCC chair, John Lewis. Kennedy hoped to quell the momentum of the march and discourage the leadership from going through with the planned activity for August 28. Kennedy was unsuccessful in deterring the groups; however, the "liberal financial backers of the Civil Rights Movement took steps to unify Black Civil Rights leadership and to slow the turn toward militancy."<sup>9</sup> Spearheaded by the philanthropic influence and activity of Stephen Currier of the Taconic Foundation, a United Civil Rights Leadership Council was set up to organize activities for the march. Through the financial connections of Currier, \$800,000 was raised to be disseminated amongst all of the major Civil Rights organizations, including SNCC. Through this act of cooptation, the Kennedy Administration's hopes of preventing any potential acts of militancy were mostly achieved. However, the intentions of John Lewis and SNCC were not as easily extinguished.

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<sup>8</sup> Claybourne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press), 91-94.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.92.

Lewis, James Forman and other representatives of SNCC initially planned to demonstrate at the Justice Department and also deliver a speech that was highly critical of the Kennedy Administration and the federal government's general inactivity where the Black masses were concerned. This idea was vehemently opposed and rejected by the elder Civil Rights leadership, thus furthering the more conservative wishes of the Kennedy Administration. Slated to speak on the day of the demonstration, Lewis was eventually convinced to change the original text of his speech by a special committee that included, Forman, Courtland Cox, Bayard Rustin, Randolph, Martin Luther King Jr., Ralph Abernathy, and Eugene Carson Blake of the National Council of Churches. The committee contested the militant tone of Lewis' speech which called for revolutionary action to take place in the absence of a government that failed to provide equal treatment to Blacks in America. In the original text of John Lewis' speech he begged the question: "I want to know, which side is the federal government on?" Lewis maintained,

...the revolution is at hand and we must free ourselves of the chains of the chains of political and economic slavery. The nonviolent revolution is saying, 'we will not wait for the courts to act...We will not wait for the President, the Justice Department, not Congress, but we will take matters into our own hand and create a source of power, outside of any national structure, that could and would assure us victory.'<sup>10</sup>

The historic March on Washington did gain critical acclaim and marked a precedent in the Civil Rights struggle. However, only a few months later, the concepts and principles espoused by Dr. King and his constituents were further tested by White violence in the South. Many of the SNCC workers questioned the continued use of nonviolence as a tactic when four Black girls were murdered in a church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama in the fall of 1963. "The news of this both angered the Black community and

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 93.



sent waves of demoralization inside the Civil Rights movement. It was like a mortal blow after the March on Washington.”<sup>11</sup>

In addition to these acts of White violence, many Black college students were consciously analyzing the theoretical concepts of Black Nationalism. The NOI national spokesman of the NOI, Malcolm X, had increased his domestic appeal through his many college lectures and through his contact with Black youth during nationwide travel. Malcolm’s capacity to attract young Black people, especially of college age, was a credit to his rapport with the Black masses. Even more was Malcolm’s canny ability to nurture relationships with Black college-aged youth through ongoing conversations, as he did with Max Stanford in the fall of 1962. This ability is also evident and significant in the later constant contact between Malcolm and the members of the emerging RAM organization.

On November 10, 1963, two months after the historic March on Washington, the Northern Negro Grassroots Leadership Conference was held in Detroit, Michigan at which Malcolm delivered his historic “Message to the Grassroots” speech. The enthusiastic crowd included many college youth and representatives of RAM. In Malcolm’s speech, he called for the reinstatement of tactics that spoke to the spirit of the 1954 International Bandung Conference. Malcolm’s appeal for a Black United Front was practical yet impacting for the Detroit crowd as he rationalized dismissing the tenets of divisive action and unifying around one common theme of unity against oppression. Also sharing the stage with Malcolm was RAM representative, Don Freeman, who also called for an aggressive stance on revolutionary tactics in the context of Black

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<sup>11</sup> Muhammad Ahmad, “On the Black Student Movement 1960-1970,” n.d. Reel 17 no. 242, The Black Power Movement; Part 3: Papers of the Revolutionary Action Movement 1962-1996, microfilm.

Nationalism. The Grassroots Conference marked a juncture of RAM's maturation due to the increased influence of Malcolm's ever increasing political evolution.<sup>12</sup>

Toward the latter part of that same month in 1963, Malcolm was silenced for ninety days by Elijah Muhammad for his now famous comment on "chickens coming home to roost" following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. During the ninety-day silencing period, Malcolm's intuition and experience as a follower of Elijah Muhammad enabled him to identify the competing interests and internal organizational maneuvers that had become increasingly evident after Malcolm's removal from his national post. Because of these factors, he doubted he would receive reinstatement after the ninety-day period elapsed and therefore chose to declare his independence from the organization that he had formerly helped to build. This break for Malcolm marked a pivotal juncture in his potential political maturation and for the Black Liberation Movement as Black Nationalists nationwide waited in anticipation to see what Malcolm's next move would be. Now that Malcolm was liberated from the conservative constraints of the NOI, he would not only be able to broaden his activity but he would be able to take advantage of building the necessary coalitions that he referred to in his Grassroots speech in '63.<sup>13</sup>

At Malcolm's press conference in March of 1964, the nationalist community converged for the official announcement that he was finally making a declaration of independence from the organization that he had supported for twelve years. He informed the press and those in attendance that the NOI "had gone as far as it can because it was

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<sup>12</sup> Muhammad Ahmad, "Working With Malcolm X" n.d. Reel 17 No. 243-244, The Black Power Movement: Part 3; Papers of the Revolutionary Action Movement 1962-1996, microfilm.

<sup>13</sup> George Breitman, *The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary*. (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), 10-12.

too narrowly sectarian and too inhibited.” Even more significant and action oriented were Malcolm’s comments that informed Civil Rights organizations that he was an ally that was now available to provide the freedom struggle with his assistance in whatever way possible:

I am prepared, Malcolm said, to cooperate in local civil rights actions in the South and elsewhere and shall do so because every campaign for specific objectives can only heighten the political consciousness of the Negroes and intensify their identification against white society...

There is no deceiving ourselves, Malcolm said. Good Education, housing and jobs are imperative for Negroes, and I shall support them in their fight to win these objectives, but I shall tell the Negroes that while these are necessary, they cannot solve the main Negro problem.

It is going to be different now, Malcolm said. I’m going to join the fight wherever Negroes ask for my help, and I suspect my activities will be on a greater and more intensive scale than in the past.<sup>14</sup>

Through the ever-increasing nationalistic motivations underlying the movement, RAM sought to separate from the organization of SNCC on the principles of “armed self-defense and Black Nationalism on its own home grounds, the South.” After this decision, RAM and the BLF decided to assemble an all Black college student association in the South with a newly formed student wing called the Afro-American Student Movement (ASM). Through the work of RAM, BLF and the ASM, chapters were organized in Nashville, Tennessee, Detroit, Michigan and Los Angeles, California. Because of the mobilization efforts of the first conference, the ASM was able to organize its first student conference centered on the theme of Black Nationalism. Accordingly, the Stanford chapter of RAM “went South to the annual Spring SNCC conference to recruit SNCC

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 19-20.

field workers, especially from Mississippi, who were responsive to an all-Black student conference.”<sup>15</sup>

#### 1964 ASM Conference on Black Nationalism

From May 1 to May 4 of 1964, the ASM put on the organization’s first national conference at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. According to the work of Max Stanford in his 1986 M.A. thesis, “the conference was the ideological catalyst that eventually shifted the Civil Rights Movement into the Black Power Movement.” The proceedings of the ASM conference were covered by Don Freeman of RAM and later published in RAM’s news organ, *Black America*. In Freeman’s article, “Black Youth and Afro-American Liberation,” the proceedings of the ASM conference are given:<sup>16</sup>

The first conference session evaluated “bourgeois reformism”. The integrationist civil rights organizations CORE, SNCC, NAACP, etc., substantiate Dr. W. E. B. Dubois’ conviction that capitalism cannot reform itself; a system that enslaves you cannot free you”...

The participants supported Minister Malcolm (X) Shabazz’s contention that it is erroneous to define Afro America’s fight as “Civil Rights” and protest exclusively in congress; instead, we should utilize the UN Declaration on Human Rights, and petition in the United Nations for “Human Rights”.

The young nationalists insisted that prerequisite to a genuine Black Revolution is a fundamental “Cultural Revolution” – “Re-Africanization” repudiates decadent bourgeois, materialistic values and “Rat Race” or pathological egoism and individualism inherent in American society. It embraces a humanism derivative to the American heritage which exalts authentic, intellectual, and spiritual development and “Communalism” or cooperation rather than exploitation. “Re-Africanization” is preferable to American materialism as a source of cultural values. Afro-Americans must know their authentic history in Africa and America in order to demolish the “psychological rape” or inferiority instilled by American “indoctrination”. The Afro-American self image and the conception must be

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<sup>15</sup> Max Stanford, “Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM): A Case Study of an Urban Revolutionary Movement in Western Capitalist Society” Masters Thesis, Atlanta University 1986, 91.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.; Muhammad Ahmad, “On the Black Student Movement 1960-1970,” n.d. Reel 17 no.242, The Black Power Movement; Part 3: Papers of the Revolutionary Action Movement 1962-1996, microfilm.

revolutionized to foster a collective ethnic identity as a unique Black People before Black Nationalism can emerge triumphant.

The assembled nationalists asserted that the young nationalists are the vanguard of a Black Revolution in America, but they must create an organizational apparatus to “translate” Nationalist ideology into effective action; this requires Black financing to insure Black control; 2) dedicated, disciplined, and decisive youth cadres willing to make the supreme sacrifice to build and sustain a Nationalist Movement.<sup>17</sup>

The conference aimed to provoke those in attendance to critically engage the concepts of Black Nationalism. The conference not only forced many members of traditionally integrationist organizations to question their motives and tactics, but also those individuals who long considered themselves to be Black Nationalists as well. The objectives of the conference exceeded mere theorizing and conjecture to include a thirteen-point platform to be implemented by the attendees. Those thirteen points were as follows:

1. Development of a permanent underground secretariat to carry out plans.
2. To push the Bourgeois reformist as far “up tempo” as fast as possible, while at the same time laying a base for an underground movement.
3. The conference united with the African, Asian and Latin American Revolution (Attempt to get financial help from friendly forces).
4. Adopt Robert F. Williams as leader in exile.
5. The achievement of Afro-American solidarity (to push the restoration of the Revolutionary Spirit to Pan-Americanism).
6. Conference philosophy—Pan African Socialism.
7. The establishment of Internal Bulletin for Conference.

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<sup>17</sup> Max Stanford, “Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM): A Case Study of an Urban Revolutionary Movement in Western Capitalist Society,” Masters Thesis, Atlanta University 1986. 91-92.; Donald Freeman, “Black youth and Afro-American Liberation,” *Black America*, Fall 1964, 15-16. Black Power and Revolutionary Organizations File Box 1 Folder 3, Archives of the Martin Luther King Center for Nonviolent Social Change.

8. Construction of a Pan-African Student Conference.
9. Secretariat contact all student liberation organizations around the world to develop rapport and coordination.
10. National Public organ, name: *Black America*.
11. Charge genocide against U.S. Imperialism before the United States.
12. Secretariat develop program for Revolutionary Black Nationalists.
13. Develop two Revolutionary Centers.<sup>18</sup>

As equally important to the thirteen point platform of the ASM conference were the subsequent actions of Black students who departed the conference with the intentions of implementing many of the goals set forth by the conference's spirit. From the combined ASM, BLF, and RAM efforts and interaction, Black students left the conference at Fisk University motivated and traveled back to their respective home locations to formulate Black Nationalist units throughout the Northern cities as well as within chapters of SNCC. Many of RAM's members such as Stanford and Ronald Snellings left the conference in Nashville and "met with John Lewis and others of the SNCC staff in Atlanta and went into Greenwood, Mississippi to build a southern Black Nationalist self-defense base." However, members of RAM were met with opposition by the White members of SNCC who detested the use of self-defense as a tactic.<sup>19</sup>

While in Greenwood, Mississippi, a myriad of factors emerged which can be attributed to the influence of SNCC. Ideological debates stemming from the implementation of integrationist tactics versus the use of Black Nationalism permeated

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<sup>18</sup> Max Stanford, "Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM): A Case Study of an Urban Revolutionary Movement in Western Capitalist Society" (masters thesis, Atlanta University 1986), 92-93.

<sup>19</sup> Muhammad Ahmad, "On the Black Student Movement 1960-1970," n.d. Reel 17 no.242, The Black Power Movement; Part 3: Papers of the Revolutionary Action Movement 1962-1996, microfilm.

the Mississippi offices with SNCC members pitted against BLF-RAM organizers as to how Black folks in Mississippi should be engaged around the tactics of voter registration. “SNCC began to involve large numbers of white students in the movement in the summer of 1964. Their involvement led to their leftist radicalization which they later developed into the anti-war student movement.”<sup>20</sup> SNCC was later catapulted into an advanced stage of organizing through the 1964 “Freedom Summer” out of which the curriculum and infrastructure was developed for the Freedom Schools. Most importantly, in the summer of 1964, the political maturation and grassroots mobilization of SNCC organizers were in part spurred by an excess of White student participation from the North. Through the combined efforts of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) was instituted. The project found major success due to the presence of approximately one hundred Yale and Stanford University students who worked with SNCC on the election for two weeks that summer.<sup>21</sup> According to Carson’s work, *In Struggle*,

A large number of students from the North making the necessary sacrifices to go South would make abundantly clear to the government and the public that this is not a situation which can be ignored any longer, and would project an image of cooperation between Northern and white people and Southern Negro people to the nation which will reduce fears of an impending race war. The goal of the project would be to force either Mississippi officials to change their policies or the federal government to intervene on behalf of the constitutional rights of its citizens.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Max Stanford, “Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM): A Case Study of an Urban Revolutionary Movement in Western Capitalist Society” (masters thesis, Atlanta University 1986), 95.; Muhammad Ahmad, “On the Black Student Movement 1960-1970,” n.d. Reel 17 no.242, The Black Power Movement; Part 3: Papers of the Revolutionary Action Movement 1962-1996, microfilm.

<sup>22</sup> Clayborne Carson. *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*. (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press), 91-94.

The intended “goal of the project,” as Carson describes, eventually became a magnified issue between the members of SNCC and the BLF-RAM members. Those associated with the BLF-RAM identified the actions and involvement of many of the Northern students as counter-productive and counter-revolutionary in relation to the lives of Black people. BLF-RAM members perceived federal assistance as working with the enemy, and this perspective was not isolated from the increased involvement of White SNCC workers who descended upon the South with an air of pretention. The result was confrontations with Black students involved who were beginning to adopt more of the attitude of Black Nationalism, thus resisting “the project on the grounds that most of the volunteers would be white.”<sup>23</sup>

Withstanding the festering potential for inner organizational turmoil between SNCC workers and the BLF-RAM contingent, SNCC’s mobilizing and politicizing Mississippians reached fruition within the structure of the MFDP. The intentions of the MFDP were to send a sizable delegation North to Atlantic City, New Jersey, to challenge the stronghold of the Democratic Party by sending sixty-eight delegates to the convention. The MFDP did go to Atlantic City; however, the move proved to be unsuccessful as Northern Liberals and Southern delegates of the Democratic Party would only appease the MFDP members by granting them two seats, which MFDP leader Fannie Lou Hamer rejected as an outright form protest.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Muhammad Ahmad, “On the Black Student Movement 1960-1970,” n.d. Reel 17 no.242, The Black Power Movement; Part 3: Papers of the Revolutionary Action Movement 1962-1996, microfilm.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.



## SNCC & Malcolm X in Africa

Distraught over the unsuccessful attempt to seat MFDP delegates in Atlantic City, SNCC as an organization was in dire need of rejuvenated perspectives and morale. Many of its members had experienced turmoil and violence beyond their years in the attempts to liberate Black folks in the South. With the ever-present threat of White violence, many of the SNCC members' spirits and outlook on the freedom struggle bordered on pessimism, almost to the point of giving up. In the case of at least a few members, SNCC would be presented with an opportunity that had the potential to be rejuvenated and also to broaden the organization's transnational perspective.<sup>25</sup>

In the early fall of 1964, SNCC accepted the invitation of Harry Belafonte to tour the African continent. Belafonte, who had long established contacts in the country of Guinea, arranged for the trip. "The African tour which began on September 11, 1964, had a profound impact on the SNCC delegation, composed of Forman, John Lewis, Bob and Dona Moses, Prathia Hall, Julian Bond, Ruby Doris Robinson, Bill Hansen, Donald Harris, Matthew Jones, and Fannie Lou Hamer." Guinea, a former French colony, was at that time under the political administration of Guinean President Sékou Touré who was an advocate of African Socialism. President Touré capitalized on the opportunity to meet with the young SNCC group and provided encouragement for why the Black student group should broaden its perspective on the struggle in order to connect the SNCC's work in the U.S. with the liberation struggles taking place on the African continent. The time spent in Guinea, enabled the SNCC contingent the chance to obtain a wide range of

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<sup>25</sup> Fanon Che Wilkins, "SNCC and Africa Before the Launching of Black Power, 1960-1965," *The Journal of African American History* 92, no. 4, 483.

<sup>25</sup> Clayborne Carson. *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*. (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press), 134-135.

Socialist literature and information that they were not privy to in the U.S. Fannie Lou Hamer's courageous spirit of leadership in the SNCC organization likely predisposed her to like her time in Guinea. Originally from Mississippi, Hamer never got the opportunity to travel outside of the state, let alone to another country, so she was continually astonished by the treatment that their group received. Hamer was especially "struck by the number of times that President Sékou Touré personally greeted the SNCC group. Hamer found it fascinating that in Africa she was visited by President Sékou Touré, whereas in the United States she could not even go and see the president."<sup>26</sup>

On Malcolm's first tour of the African continent and the University of Ghana, he addressed a large crowd at the university. Engaging an audience of Ghanaian students, Black expatriates, and according to some reports, some fifty C.I.A. agents, Malcolm held the packed auditorium at bay. He praised the work of Nkrumah and reinvigorated the pride and importance of Pan-Africanism on the continent through his sheer presence. Malcolm informed the crowd of not only the conditions that Blacks were facing in America but also of the changing ideology and practice of many Black Americans toward the U.S. power structure, be it local or national.<sup>27</sup> Malcolm, whose presence and words

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<sup>26</sup> George Breitman, *The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), 79; This was not Malcolm X's first time on the African continent as he traveled to Africa in 1959 in the place of Elijah Muhammad at the invitation of the Egyptian government in Cairo. Unable to attend, Elijah Muhammad sent his most trusted disciple Malcolm X for a trip that was to include about twelve days in Egypt, five or six days in Saudi Arabia with stops in Mecca, Nigeria, Ghana, Dakar, Tangiers, Paris, and then back to the U.S. See "Malcolm X's Cordial Reception in Cairo, August 5, 1959" in the C. Eric Lincoln Collection, Box 278 Folder 30, Robert W. Woodruff Library Atlanta University Center Archives and Special Collections; Upon returning to the African continent in 1964, Malcolm was hosted by the Black expatriates of the U.S. living in Ghana. According to one of the then expatriates, Alice Windom, who had helped to plan the itinerary for Malcolm's trip: "One extremely important fact is that Malcolm is the first Afro-American leader of national standing to make an independent trip to Africa since Dr. Dubois came to Ghana. This may be the beginning of a new phase in our struggle." See "A letter May 29, 1964" in the John Henrik Clarke Collection, Box 24 Folder 33, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>27</sup> Leslie Alexander Lucy, *The Rise and Fall of a Proper Negro: The Awakening of a Black Bourgeois and*

were so riveting to the Ghanaian students, was asked a question after his talk by a Black American who claimed to be of non-U.S. government affiliation. Incensed by the man's question--“(who turned out to be a teacher from the African-American Institute placed in a local secondary school)”--the Ghanaian students began to yell, “Are you a victim of Rockefeller?” and chased the man out of the auditorium with shouts of, “Stooge!C.I.A. and American Agent!”<sup>28</sup>

According to U.S. expatriate Leslie Alexander Lucy, who documented Malcolm's time in Ghana the majority of which he spent with a community of Black expatriates,

The students loved him. They cheered and they chanted. They shouted at the top of their voices songs of praise in different Ghanaian languages...I felt good that night, because in a way I was responsible for those young voices shouting for Malcolm—voices the government called “reactionary”. One student ran up and kissed his hand. A female student stood in front of him and cried, but said nothing.

Malcolm X had also inspired the students to political action. To the surprise of everyone, ten students at Legon had formed a Malcolm X Society. And of course, the question which no one, especially party activists, could answer was, why had “reactionary” students cheered and applauded a revolutionary?<sup>29</sup>

In addition to traveling the African continent and meeting with Malcolm X, SNCC worked closely with PASOA. PASOA, established in Chicago in 1961, was an organization of African born students living in the United States whose organizational aims and objectives included promotion of African solidarity, working for the total liberation and complete independence of Africa against all forms of colonialism and imperialism, and striving for the establishment of a world federation of African

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*his Search for new Identity and Black Manhood* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1970), 217, 226.

<sup>28</sup> “A letter May 29, 1964” in the John Henrik Clarke Collection, Box 24 Folder 33, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>29</sup> Leslie Alexander Lucy, *The Rise and Fall of a Proper Negro: The Awakening of a Black Bourgeois and his Search for new Identity and Black Manhood* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1970), 217, 226.

students.<sup>30</sup> PASOA aggressively promoted political education and the ideas of the Guinean President, Sékou Touré, as well.<sup>31</sup> Facilitated by SNCC's Executive Secretary, James Forman, PASOA collaborated with the SNCC organization to fuse their domestic and internationalist agendas the outreach of which would include the United States, Canada and Latin America.<sup>32</sup>

The broadening of SNCC's international perspective through their influences of President Touré and the encounters of John Lewis and Donald Harris while in Nairobi aided greatly in the organization's furtherance of a more radical expression in the movement. SNCC prepared to heighten their political activity and awareness through a continued relationship with Malcolm X as he readied himself to fully engage the Civil Rights Movement. Malcolm's emerging role in the movement as a Black Nationalist aligned with Black youth and those exasperated with the unfulfilled promises of prominent Black leadership.

This gradual shift of consciousness and acceptance of alternatives outside of nonviolent direct action began to become more overt with Black students as 1964 came to a close. SNCC as an organization continued to find resolutions to the festering ideological turmoil that was threatening to factionalize the vanguard of the Black student movement. Further, it was becoming more apparent that other Black student groups were developing programmatic alternatives that broke from the conventional conservatism of

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<sup>30</sup> Abdul Alkalimat, "Black Student Movement" unpublished paper n.d.; "The Second General Conference of Pan African Students Organization of the Americas, Inc: Resume of Conference Resolutions," n.d., reel 8, no.293, SNCC Papers, microfilm.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Fanon Che Wilkins, "SNCC and Africa Before the Launching of Black Power, 1960-1965," *The Journal of African American History* 92, no. 4, 483.

the movement. These substitutions for integrationist policy touted critiques of capital from a Black Nationalist/Marxist perspective as early as 1964.

The ASM, which held its former conference on Black Nationalism at the beginning of summer in 1964, organized a follow-up conference later that fall from October 30-November 1 on the theme of “Afro Youth”. “The conference was entitled, ‘The Black Revolution’s Relationship to the Bandung World.’ The gathering produced the *Black Youth Manifesto*, a speech that was delivered at conference over that weekend and later revised in September of 1965.<sup>33</sup> The speech called for critical analysis of capitalism as the extension of imperialism in an oppressive westernized society. Identifying Black youth as the vanguard of the movement, the document suggested transformation towards a socialist society for the purposes of fulfilling the tenets of revolution. According to the document,

Control of the youth is the major concern of this racist system for it knows youth are the potential warriors of Black America. The struggle in the world is a battle for the mind. Whoever gains control of Bandung youths’ minds will control the world. Afro-youth living within the confines of the world’s number-one counter revolutionary power, holds the key to the destiny of the world.

The first objective of an anti-imperialist Afro-American student movement should be to challenge the bourgeois values and aspirations of the Afro-American student. The Afro-American student movement must provide Afro-students with an alternative, which would be world Black revolution, liberation of Black America, the end of exploitation of man by man and the reestablishment of the human society with universal order. On the Negro college campuses the Afro-American student movement should attempt to develop power and influence among students.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Muhammad Ahmad (Maxwell Stanford, Jr.), *We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations 1960-1975* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 2007), 133; Max Stanford, “Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM): A Case Study of an Urban Revolutionary Movement in Western Capitalist Society” (masters thesis, Atlanta University, 1986), 219.

<sup>34</sup> Black Youth Manifesto, “Black Youth: Vanguard of the New World—Speech at Second National Afro-American Student Conference, October 30-November 1, 1964; revised September 1965.

As early as 1964, an aggressive call for 'power' amongst Black youth and students became the impetus for the explicit actions of SNCC to lead the call for Black Nationalism. With the advancement of the Black student and youth movement, the emergence of Malcolm X as a national and international figurehead became more apparent as he began to fortify his allegiance with the SNCC.

### The Black Student Movement and the Death of a Prophet

Following Malcolm's meeting in Kenya with SNCC members Lewis and Harris, Malcolm became very proactive in attempting to forge his relationship with the Black student group. "Malcolm's Pan-African perspective and his awareness of the need for Black self-defense and racial pride converged with ideas gaining acceptance in SNCC."<sup>35</sup> Malcolm later shared a platform with Hamer at an MFDP rally held in Harlem after which he invited her and the SNCC Freedom Singers to an OAAU meeting. At the meeting, Malcolm was not only successful in solidifying his relationship with Hamer and members of SNCC, but he also provided the audience with an overt disclosure of his post-NOI position on gender politics as it related to Hamer's work with the MFDP. According to the work of Mamie Locke in "Malcolm X and the Role of Women,"

He condemned Black men for allowing the brutality that Hamer and other women and children had experienced in Mississippi. He spoke of her strength as a Black woman for taking a leading role in the movement.

At a meeting of the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) held later that same evening, he called Hamer a brave freedom fighter, an individual at the forefront of the struggle in Mississippi. At this same meeting he spoke of the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya and how Blacks in the United States needed to be proud of them, not because of the brothers (men) but the many brave sisters (women) who were also apart of the struggle to liberate Kenya. As an indication of his changing views of women, Malcolm stated that one need not be a man to

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<sup>35</sup> Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press), 135.

fight for freedom; one need only be an intelligent human being. Fannie Lou Hamer and women of the Mau Mau were those kind of beings.<sup>36</sup>

In February of 1965, Malcolm was invited by SNCC to come South to Selma, Alabama, to speak during the voting rights campaign. During this time Dr. King was imprisoned in Selma for leading the demonstrations in Selma. While in Selma, Malcolm addressed the demonstrators at the invitation of SNCC and provided the audience with the nationalistic perspective that had steadily become fused with the mainstream Civil Rights Movement. Only a few weeks later on February 21, 1965, Malcolm X would meet his fate through a gruesome assassination at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem as he addressed a crowd of OAAU followers. The untimely death of Malcolm X signified the end of a physical life. However, his death also transcended the mere sentiment of longing for an important soul; it became a symbol for subsequent generations of Malcolm who were merely on the cusp of comprehending the directions of liberation that Malcolm foresaw for the masses of Black people. John Lewis, chairman of SNCC, who had had the chance to encounter Malcolm and learn more of the man outside of the propaganda of the press, was able to attend Malcolm's funeral with Cleveland Sellers. Lewis, like other members in SNCC who were beginning to reconsider their tactics and role in the movement, commented on the differences that he had with some of the philosophies of Malcolm X. However, Lewis--and he had been at the beginning of the movement from the sit-ins to marching with the elder statesmen and women of the SCLC--found Malcolm's place in the overall movement to be situated in a different light. Lewis stated that Malcolm "had come to articulate better than anyone else on the scene--including Dr.

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<sup>36</sup> Mamie Locke, "Malcolm X and the Role of Women," *Encyclopedia of Malcolm X*, Robert L. Jenkins and Mfanya Donald Tryman, ed. (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2002), 23-25.

King—the bitterness and frustration of Black Americans.” Lewis and many other members of SNCC came to appreciate the broadening of Malcolm’s scope as he displayed not only his ability to be reflexive in his thinking but also his increased understanding of transnational struggle as it related to the ills of Black people in the western hemisphere. The human rights direction that Malcolm hoped to steer the momentum of the movement in attracted the energies of many Black youth who gravitated to the fire and unapologetic assertiveness that Malcolm came to embody over his tumultuous career as a leader amongst the Black masses.<sup>37</sup> For Black youth, students and the entire movement, Malcolm became “the most profound external force for the radicalization of students within the crucible of the struggle for human rights.”<sup>38</sup> Many students who had not been as familiar with Malcolm X became acquainted with the slain leader through his autobiography, books about him, articles, magazines, and other literature. Edwards attests, “Record albums and tapes by and about Malcolm X became treasured items, particularly the record albums “Message to the Grassroots” and “Ballots or Bullets.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> John Lewis, *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (New York & London: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1998), 328.

<sup>38</sup> Winston A. Grady-Willis, *Challenging U.S. Apartheid: Atlanta Struggles For Human Rights, 1960-1977* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 67.

<sup>39</sup> Harry Edwards, *Black Students*, 45; Also see the introductory section “A Black Power Paradigm” in William L. Van Deburg’s *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture 1965-1975*, 1-10; Immediate testaments to the legacy of Malcolm X were the development of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense in Oakland, California began by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale. The two BPP leaders saw the formation of the BPP as an act of continuing the legacy of Malcolm X. According to the work of Phillip S. Foner in *The Black Panthers Speak*, Newton and Seale attended the local mosques in Oakland and San Francisco in the early 1960s, and it was Newton who “found a particular affinity with Malcolm’s past as a street hustler, but was more inspired by the minister’s ability to transcend pathos and develop into a disciplined and militant leader. The same held true for BPP leader Eldridge Cleaver, author of acclaimed *Soul On Ice*, who worked on reviving the O.A.A.U. in San Francisco but was unsuccessful before joining the BPP. For further investigation, see Charles E. Jones, ed. *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered*. Also the inception of the U.S. Organization by Maulana Karenga shortly after the assassination of Malcolm X signified the burgeoning cultural representation of the movement exemplified in the work of Karenga. Karenga, who was briefly recruited to join the NOI by Malcolm, patterned the U.S.



Malcolm's influence had its obvious effects on Black youth for his and the subsequent generation. Yet, the influence he had on his contemporaries was just as effective as in the case of Congressman and Reverend of Harlem's Abyssinia Baptist Church, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Powell, who befriended Malcolm early in his career while still minister for the NOI's temple number seven in Harlem, was able to nurture and assist Malcolm in his religious and political development as Malcolm ascended to international prominence amongst liberation struggles worldwide.<sup>40</sup> The reciprocal relationship that the two men shared enabled the two to benefit from the cross-fertilization of ideas regarding the direction of liberation for Black people. Powell displayed an example of Malcolm's influence only a month after the assassination of the former NOI minister.

On March 28, 1965, the democratic representative from New York delivered a critical speech to the Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church in Chicago's McCormick Place. The speech, which was centered on Powell's "Black Position Paper", articulated the sentiment of the Black masses in a time that the aspirations of the Civil Rights Movement had begun. Powell, who was known to have a very didactic oratorical style, displayed an aggressive style in his explication of termed, "Audacious Power." Powell informed the congregation of Ebenezer Baptist Church that "the time had had come to change the 'Negro revolt' into a 'Black revolution.'" Powell was calling for an end to the former methods of social protest and an assertion of self-reliance and self-determination

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Organization after Malcolm's O.A.A.U. For further information on the history of the U.S. Organization, see Scott Brown's *Fighting for Us: Maulana Karenga, the US Organization, and Black Cultural Nationalism*.

<sup>40</sup> Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., *Adam by Adam: The Autobiography of Adam Clayton Powell Jr.* (New York: Citadel Press Book, 1994), 243-244.

that rejected racial tokenism and toleration of accommodation for only a small segment of the Black community when everyone else still suffered from racial and class exploitation. Powell emphasized the need for Black people to “become a race of producers, not consumers.”<sup>41</sup>

Powell gave the contents of his “Black Position Paper” over the next year to many audiences, including a stirring rendition before the graduating class of Howard University in Washington, D.C. on May 29, 1966. Titled, “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Powell explicated the points of the thesis of his Black Position Paper in a rhetorical style of militancy and intolerance for passivity that resonated with soon to be Howard graduates. Taking a page out of Malcolm X’s book, Powell critiqued the errors of struggling for civil rights versus that of human rights. Powell then outlined for those gathered, a five part rationale for a human rights struggle with the basis being what he referred to as, “God-given.” Powell then interjected his argument with an injunction for Black people to use their power. According to segments of Powell’s Howard University address,

To demand these God-given human rights is to seek Black power, what I call audacious power – the power to build Black institutions of splendid achievement...Ask yourselves that higher question: Can any good thing come of Black people?

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<sup>41</sup> “Powell Proposes 15 Steps For Negroes,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, May 31, 1965; Art Pollock, “My Life’s Philosophy”: Adam Clayton Powell’s ‘Black Position Paper,’” *Journal of Black Studies* 4, no. 4, 457-462; The account of Adam Clayton Powell and the address of his “Black Position Paper” illustrates its significance in not only the content of the manuscript but also in the variation of points that Powell references in the evolution of the document from his initial address in Chicago. At the McCormick Place in Chicago, Powell’s speech highlighted fifteen points and as the speech became a staple of his public appearances more points were added. By the time of his Howard address, he was up to nineteen points with an emphasis on Black Power. Powell considered the work of his “Black Position Paper” to be a “summation of his life’s work.” Also twice in the less than three months from the initial delivery of the paper Powell had its content submitted to the *Congressional Record* (1966: 7175; 12438-12439).

Indeed, we must “drop out buckets” where we are. We must stop blaming “Whitey” for all our sins and oppressions and deal from situations with strength. Why sit down at the bargaining table with the white man when you have nothing with which to bargain? Why permit social workers and various Leagues and Associations to represent us when they are representing the decadent white power structure which pays their salaries, their rent and tells them what to say? Such men cannot possess the noble arrogance of power that inspires men, moves nations and decides the fate of mankind.<sup>42</sup>

Powell’s call for Audacious Power that later evolved into a call for Black Power in his address at Howard would come to symbolize many things to many people in search of the next phase of the Black struggle. With the Black student movement at a crossroads in terms of White involvement and nationalism versus the philosophies of Dr. King, the impatience of many Black members of SNCC was beginning to wear on the overall aspiration of the entire organization. Such an address as the one Powell had delivered was yet another example of a furthering ideological shift from the consensus belief that nonviolent direct action was the end all be all for the liberation of Black people in America. That sentiment was soon to be tested even more by the ever-evolving ideological perspectives of SNCC members who sought more from the so-called leadership of the Civil Rights movement.

#### Solidifying a Change of Direction: The Black Student Movement, SNCC and Black Power

As the Black Student Movement furthered its practice and investigations of Black Nationalism, aspects of the Black Student Movement that may have appeared to have a base of unison were actually finding a more comfortable base that was steeped in a more

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<sup>42</sup> “Can There Any Good Thing Come Out of Nazareth?” Press Release, May 27, 1966. The Baccalaureate by Representative Adam Clayton Powell, Chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, before the graduating Class of Howard University, Washington, D.C., Sunday, May 29, 1966. Moorland-Spingarn Research Center of Howard University in Washington, D.C.; Arthur L. Smith, *Rhetoric of Black Revolution* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon Inc., 1969), 107-108.

radical outlook of the socio-political landscape. The ASM furthered its activity, and after two national conferences, nationalist cells increased and students became increasingly active in the formation of study groups in and around their campuses.

In May of 1965, the ASM held the organization's second national conference in the tradition of their previous year's conference on Black Nationalism. Just as with their conference themed on Black youth, the ASM increased their internationalist scope to further investigate the future of the Black Student/Youth Movement. The goal of the ASM's 1965 conference aimed mostly at "the consolidation of existing revolutionary Afro-American Youth potentialities and the development of a revolutionary Black Youth Movement." A sub-theme of the conference focused its conversation on how Black youth could address the oppression of "Yanqui" (U.S. and N.A.T.O) imperialism versus the popular belief that acculturation and acceptance of westernized values would solve social ills for oppressed people. The ASM promoted a call for "Bandung Humanism" as a response to the ills created by the "Yanqui" and to advance a new socialist world order on principles that promoted humanity.<sup>43</sup>

Furthering the changing complexities of the latter part of 1965 was the increased activity of SNCC around the issues of the Black Student Movement and how Black students in the North at predominantly White institutions could aid the organization while SNCC continued to address issues in the South. In response to this issue, the Northern Student Movement (NSM) addressed the needs related to Black student mobilization on northern campuses and SNCC was able to continue its campaigns in the South in addition

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<sup>43</sup> "The Relationship of Revolutionary Afro-American Movement to the Bandung Revolution," *Black America*, Fall 1965, 11. Black Power and Revolutionary Organizations, File Box 1 Folder 4 Archives of the Martin Luther King Center for Nonviolent Social Change.

to educating the general Black public on political issues around voting. Its national office was located in New York City; however, the NSM also held project offices in Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Harford, New York, Philadelphia and Washington, DC, that worked in conjunction with SNCC and partnering organizations in funding drives the proceeds of which were divided amongst NSM and SNCC. In addition, NSM continued to concentrate efforts on campuses like Yale, Cornell and the University of Michigan with programs that addressed issues of discrimination and increased recruitment efforts for Black students seeking admittance into many of the predominately White universities along the eastern seaboard.<sup>44</sup>

As internal conflict in SNCC continued to fester around the issues of race and ideology, SNCC's Atlanta offices surfaced as a major catalyst in pushing SNCC towards a more radical and Black Nationalist approach. In conjunction with this conflict, the Atlanta office of SNCC became most famous for the organization's Atlanta Project out of which the SNCC protest of the Vietnam War was generated. "SNCC contended that the federal government had deceived the public regarding the situation in Vietnam while it refused to guarantee freedom for oppressed people in this country."<sup>45</sup> One of SNCC's most controversial moments came on January 6, 1966 when the student group held press

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<sup>44</sup> Muhammad Ahmad, "On the Black Student Movement 1960-1970," n.d. Reel 17 no.242, The Black Power Movement; Part 3: Papers of the Revolutionary Action Movement 1962-1996, microfilm. ; "Campus Supplement-News Notes of the Ivy Ghetto," *Northern Student Movement News* 1, no. 1.; Critical to the advancement of the Black Student Movement was the activity of the NSM. The NSM, which was largely responsible for one of the first civil rights demonstrations in Hartford, Connecticut, was able to aid in the formation of an organizational offshoot called the North End Community Action Project (NECAP). The aims of NECAP were to address issues of poverty and lack of political representation in the ghetto. NECAP's major aim was to "take command of the attack on the conditions in Hartford's" Black and Puerto Rican slums. Other actions of NECAP and NSM coalitions included protest activity against a Hartford cab company, restaurants and auto merchants. For additional information on these and more NSM/NECAP activity, see NSM's first issue containing the article, "NECAP Has 1<sup>st</sup> Protest in Hartford."

<sup>45</sup> Winston A. Grady-Willis, *Challenging U.S. Apartheid: Atlanta and Black Struggles For Human Rights 1960-1977* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 80.

conference and read the SNCC antiwar statement to the press. This act of critiquing the Vietnam War reverberated throughout the Civil Rights movement and did not receive favorable responses from the more prominent officials in the SCLC.

Paramount to the ideological shift of consciousness in SNCC, the Atlanta Project activists of SNCC waged an aggressive campaign for on a reconsideration of the tenets of the overall movement. The Atlanta staff pushed for the thrust of movement activity to be re-centered on the principles of grassroots organizing with an especially critical amount of attention given to urban Blacks in the South on issues dealing with voter registration and political education. These activities sparked rent strikes and an overall tenants' movement in the city to address slum conditions in Atlanta.<sup>46</sup>

For SNCC, the Atlanta Project also provided more evidence of the competing interests in SNCC that supported the White privilege of SNCC staff members who held executive positions. It had become apparent in SNCC that many of the White staff members were in definite need of "sensitivity training" if they truly intended to assist local Black folks. Gwendolyn Robinson of the Atlanta Project commented on how certain White organizers "saw themselves as a brain trust within the national office." Robinson also recalled "being personally being pushed around by Whites who were in leadership positions." Most critical for Black members of SNCC was the issue of continuing to place White workers on projects in all Black communities when these same workers were not being sent into White communities to address the White violence and discriminatory behavior that was associated with these spaces. As the gulf began to widen in SNCC because of these aforementioned issues, an increase in Black

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., pp. 88-90.

consciousness became the centralized concern for many Black SNCC members. To service this critical need, Black SNCC members in conjunction with Ronald Snellings of RAM constructed a set of position papers addressing Black self-determination and the need for Whites to work in White communities where the majority of problems existed. The works which came to be known as the “Black consciousness papers”, are not only critical in comprehending SNCC’s gradual shift, but they also provide a contextual scope for the events that changed the movement in unimaginable ways.<sup>47</sup>

By 1966, the work of the SNCC students was becoming even more life threatening and as the SNCC members began to become older and mature, the discontent over the passive action of SCLC members became intolerable. In addition, SNCC would have an emerging young “star” of sorts whose brash intellect and vitality eventually gained him recognition in the national spotlight as the new Malcolm X for the subsequent generation. That star was one Stokely Carmichael.<sup>48</sup> SNCC's changing attitudes would eventually become applicable during a very historic march through Mississippi led by a young man named James Meredith. Meredith had gained national attention as a young man attempting to desegregate the University of Mississippi.<sup>49</sup>

“In 1966, a determined Meredith challenged this system with his feet. While his supporters scratched their heads, Meredith vowed to walk alone from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi, to combat “the pervasive fear” of exercising constitutional rights that plagued the state's black residents.”<sup>50</sup> Meredith's “March on

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Peniel E. Joseph, *Waiting 'Til The Midnight Hour: A Narrative of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006), 132.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 133.

Fear” ended abruptly, however, as on the second day of the march, he was ambushed and suffered several shots. But his march gained considerable public interest and become the baton for the civil rights groups of the SCLC and SNCC to assume in the spirit of Meredith.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, the march would be the beginning of a new ideological outlet for the suppressed need of self-reliance that the Civil Rights Movement had avoided for the purposes of white liberal accommodation. SNCC members sought to make theoretical adjustments in the Civil Rights Movement as a departure away from the leadership of the SCLC, which they considered to be far removed from the actual needed projects for everyday Black people.

The influence of the militant style and rhetoric of SNCC worker Willie Ricks who was a professed “Black Nationalist” played an integral part in the changing ideology of SNCC members as well. Ricks had been involved in the struggle as a high school student in Chattanooga, Tennessee during the early part of the 1960s and demonstrated a very aggressive advocacy for not only self-defense but also empowerment for Black people. In fact, Ricks is the one who would actually introduce the phrase, “Black Power,” to Stokely Carmichael and SNCC.<sup>52</sup>

The opportunity for Carmichael to use the new agreed upon “Black Power” slogan occurred at the same time the adopted “Meredith March Against Fear” came to an apex on June 16, 1966. Carmichael was arrested for trespassing during the march, and upon the advice of Ricks Carmichael, was taken into custody. Ricks also told Carmichael to make a speech after he was released from jail. As the crowd of participants from the march waited for him to ascend the platform, Willie Ricks was prepping of the crowd

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 209.



with what to say. Carmichael began by informing the crowd of the number of times he had been arrested.<sup>53</sup> And as he continued his speech, he “[peppered] the members of the crowd with the question “What do we want?” to which they enthusiastically responded, “Black Power!”<sup>54</sup>

The Meredith march had escalated into more than just a “march against fear.” The march became the symbol of the restless behavior of a generation of young activists who began as advocates for nonviolent participation against the vestiges of Jim Crow. The march marked the beginning for an era that characterized the sentiment of Black Nationalism revitalized for a generation who felt that the “leadership of the Civil Rights Movement” were no more than glorified spokesmen who had been appropriated by the White American media. This new generation of young activists from SNCC represented a new aggressive activist style that was not attached to a religious dogma as its predecessor, the Nation of Islam. In the tradition of Malcolm X, SNCC sought to provide a level of consciousness coupled with rhetoric for the masses of Black people who were tired of marching and sitting in. “We shall overcome,” was replaced by “Black Power” and the Black American climate would never be the same.

As a result of the efforts of SNCC, the Black Student Movement advanced to another level of political awareness, sophistication and relevance. The format that SNCC laid out for the organization and functioning of Black political groups was to become the blueprint for the Black students unions, which in 1966, were already beginning to appear on the nation's college campuses and in its high schools.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Peniel E. Joseph, 142.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Harry Edwards, *Black Students*, 40-41.

## The Decline of SNCC: Effects of Black Power, White Student Expulsion & Conflicts of the Six-Day War

The enigmatic concept of Black Power not only left the landscape of the Civil Rights landscape stunned, but it also forced an ideological split between SNCC and the elder leadership of the SCLC. By 1967, SNCC had emerged as an organization that consisted of battle tested organizers whose entrance into the movement as youth enabled action that threw caution to the wind. SNCC's evolution into a professional organization by the latter part of the 1960s signaled the tenuous route that many student-activists had taken in their quests to become change agents and seek out the meaning of social justice as well as their own identity. The call for Black Power also spoke to the aspect of youthful zeal that was not bound by inhibitions but rather welcomed the challenges that lie ahead. For the Black membership of SNCC, the struggle, their struggle, would need to represent not only themselves and what they stood for as grassroots activists, but it also needed to be an extension of their legacy as Black people. From their time in the movement, many of the Black members of SNCC felt that their work had been made possible because of many a poor and underprivileged Black person who marveled at their ability to organize and address sharecroppers and those Blacks who were still the victims of debt peonage as late as the mid-1960s. These realizations resonated with SNCC members' passion to assist and formulate initiatives to further the struggle on a national basis. The manifestation of having consistently acknowledged the people that they represented was culminated in their call for Black Power. Not new, the overt call for Black self-determination was as salient with the Black masses as their quest to participate in the political process and still maintain their cultural identity, which correlated with their ongoing struggle in America. The call for Black Power signified the suppressed

disposition of the Black masses that needed a mantra to represent their already existing nationalist perspective.

1966 marked a turning point for the movement in general. Urban rebellions swept the country like wildfire with approximately two hundred and ten uprisings taking place in concentrated areas of Black presence. As a slogan, “Black Power” embodied the spirit of manumission from psychological and cultural chains still evident in the expressions of many Black people. The introduction of Afros, African garb and the critical need to find Black representation in all that existed signaled a mass based conversion of the movement that began with SNCC’s overt declaration as a nationalist organization. This innovative declaration of SNCC was in need of meaning for many people who were coming to terms with just being called “Black.” Those who openly refused to accept SNCC’s declaration of Black Nationalism would of course attack the conceptualization of Black Power, and it seemed that SNCC’s main oppositionists were the older and more established Civil Rights organizations.

By late 1966, several prominent leaders of Civil Rights organizations issued a proclamation referred to as the “Crisis and Commitment” document which was a signed statement to the press denouncing and attacking the slogan and actions derived from Black Power. The signers of the document were in vehement opposition to “any strategies of violence, reprisal, or vigilantism and condemned both rioting and the demagoguery that feeds it.” Signers of the statement that repudiated Black Power included “Roy Wilkins, NAACP executive director; Whitney M. Young, Jr., National Urban League; A Philip Randolph, president, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters...Mrs. Dorothy Height, president, National Council of Negro Women; Bayard Rustin, director,

A. Philip Randolph Institute; Amos T. Hall, executive secretary, Conference of Grand Masters, Prince Hall Masons of America; and Hobson Reynolds grand exalted ruler, Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World.” The signature of Dr. King was absent from the list of signers as he commented that he concurred with certain aspects of the general statement but not all of it. One of King’s central reasons for not signing the statement was because he “did not wish to excommunicate organizations from the civil rights movement.”<sup>56</sup>

Rustin, who was considered the chief architect of the Civil Rights Movement most successful display of action, the 1963 March on Washington, provided choice words in opposition to the concept of Black Power. Rustin referred to Black Power as a “negative way of trying to achieve racial equality.” He commented that, “To say that Negroes have to use Black Power because society will not do anything for them is preposterous...we need the help of every sensible man, regardless of his race or creed.” James Farmer who had formerly directed CORE was in full agreement with the statements of Rustin. Farmer charged that much of the “white backlash” was the result of the cry for Black Power and that the “defeat of the 1966 Civil Rights Bill and the nomination of the segregationists over moderate political candidates” were due largely to the phenomenon of Black Power.<sup>57</sup>

Aiding in the defense of SNCC was the newly elected national director of CORE, Floyd B. McKissick. McKissick, who defended not only the aims of SNCC, also provided coverage for himself from those Civil Rights leaders who chided the more

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<sup>56</sup> “McKissick Raps Critics of Black Power,” *The Chicago Defender*, October 29, 1966, 5.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

prominent supporters of Black Power. McKissick, whose disposition about the movement shifted as the federal government showed its inability and unwillingness to aid Black people, was in full favor of the younger SNCC activists. McKissick, who felt that the notions of Black Power had been on the minds of Black people for generations, was a full supporter of this expression of Black Nationalism. McKissick informed the press that, "the struggle for integration is over and now we must have Black Power."

McKissick also informed the press that, "The Civil Rights Movement died during the March on Washington in 1963 because it was united around a single common cause – integration." Furthering his critique of the movement's aim of integration, McKissick commented on how the masses of Black people were not able to benefit from the mere tokens of restaurants and 'whites only' physical and social amenities due to the majority of Black people not having the economic or educational resources.

The sentiments of McKissick coupled with the notions of an absent element of Black directed initiatives for community improvement along economic, social and political lines was a major reason for the now overt display of Black Nationalism by SNCC. This call for Black Power from the organization was also the final nail in the coffin for the increased inter-organizational tension that had created an atmosphere of sectarianism in the student organization. Thus, SNCC began the process of expelling White members from the organization after the call for Black Power by late 1966.

Much of the inner organizational turmoil surrounding many of the White members of SNCC stemmed back from the foundations of the organization. At the upstart of SNCC, new members encountered an overwhelmingly White majority executive membership at their first attempts to join SNCC. Faye Bellamy, for example,

when she went into a SNCC office in Manhattan in 1964, she received an application for membership to SNCC from a very courteous White worker. Bellamy had no personal problem with the White woman. However, as Bellamy put it, “I was very upset because she was White and she was giving me an application to a Black movement.”<sup>58</sup> As in many of the other SNCC offices throughout the landscape, members found the offices mainly run by Whites.

This general impression that was gathered by many of the Black community people transcended the general look of SNCC from a cosmetic perspective to be the general perspective of the overall movement in many cases. A major point of contention raised by the Black Consciousness Papers out of SNCC’s Atlanta offices addressed this obvious conundrum of Whites in SNCC being perceived as “the brains behind the Movement.”<sup>59</sup> The papers also argued that Whites should leave the organization because a “climate has to be created whereby Blacks can express themselves.”<sup>60</sup> Though the paper acknowledged the contributions of the White SNCC membership (especially in Mississippi), the general thesis of the paper conveyed the notion that “efforts one is trying to achieve cannot succeed because Whites have an intimidating effect.”<sup>61</sup>

In many cases, this general intimidation effect came even from White membership who approached the activities of the organization with the best intentions. But most times, White SNCC members would force themselves into positions of leadership due to perceptions of privilege stemming from their college institutions and

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<sup>58</sup> Winston A. Grady-Willis, *Challenging U.S. Apartheid: Atlanta and Black Struggles For Human Rights 1960-1977* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 87.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 89

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 89

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

formal education as well as the result of them being “the sons and daughters of the executives of some of the nation’s largest corporations.”<sup>62</sup> This realization of entitlement leveraged with the fact that many of these young White men and women who were on self-discovery quests had the social privilege and capital to support their endeavors and that of SNCC in the process.<sup>63</sup>

For many of the Black students in SNCC who had given their time, lives, and, in many cases, sacrificed their educational goals at a variety of post-secondary institutions throughout the nation, the question of whose struggle it was<sup>64</sup> loomed heavily in their hearts and minds. A major example of this surfaced when over eighty White students were brought in from the North to assist in the efforts of SNCC by Bob Moses. In the biographical account of John Lewis, he recounts,

Dozens of magazine and newspaper stories featured Suzy Jones from Stanford or Jimmy Smith from Yale, working alongside poor, nameless, faceless Blacks, as if those Black people *had* no names or faces. That caused a lot of resentment. There was a strong current of feeling running through the SNCC membership that “Hey, we’ve been down here all these months, all these *years*, working our butts off day in and day out and these White kids come down and stay a week or two and they get all the headlines, they get all the credit.”<sup>65</sup>

Even White members of SNCC that weren’t as actively engaged in organizational activities of SNCC, however, were still able to “control the balance of power and authority in such organizations by manipulating the amount and distribution of the funds which they have contributed.”<sup>66</sup> Such manipulation in the executive ranks of SNCC had not always been generated from the *financial* (emphasis mine) influence of Whites. In

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<sup>62</sup> John Lewis, *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (New York & London: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1998), 251.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 252.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 248.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 249.

<sup>66</sup> Harry Edwards, *Black Students* (Toronto and Ontario: The Free Press, 1970), 35.

many cases, the control of the early and less reported militancy of SNCC was in often times subverted by other measures of persuasion.

RAM member, Ronald Snellings, who had been affiliated with SNCC activities in the South since the earlier stages of the organization, published an article in RAM's news organ, *Black America*, entitled "The Long Hot Summer." The article examined the activity of SNCC in the spring of 1963 and provided more of an expose into White involvement with SNCC as it related to activity by which Whites maintained the control of the organization. Snellings posited that the SNCC "conferences" were in many cases referred to as "orgies" by some of the Black SNCC members who identified the gatherings as a time to thwart the complaints of young militant Black men in the organization. According to Snellings, this was accomplished by assigning "Beastina" (White Females of SNCC) to "'persuade' him that militancy is not the way (MILITANCE meaning possible violence – meaning wounded White folks!) and 'love' will conquer all."<sup>67</sup> Snellings also writes that much of the early influences on decision and policy making was due to these sexual and alcohol influenced "brainstorm sessions" that led to overwhelming changes in policy which were thought to have been set in stone just the day before.<sup>68</sup>

The issue of White involvement on an array of fronts that had plagued SNCC since the early stages of the organization were if not evident by the 1966 call for Black

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<sup>67</sup> "The Long Hot Summer: A Study in Conflict: Birmingham, Spring 1963," by Ronald Snellings, *Black America*, 13-14. Black Power and Revolutionary Organizations, File Box 1 Folder 3, Archives of the Martin Luther King Center for Nonviolent Social Change.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. Winston A. Grady-Willis. *Challenging U.S. Apartheid: Atlanta and Black Struggles For Human Rights, 1960-1977* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 65. Though critical, the article and observations of Snellings fail to hold Black male members accountable for their actions in the context of the supposed manipulation. In the work of Winston A. Grady-Willis, *Challenging U.S. Apartheid*, page 65, Willis also finds contention with this gross omission of accountability with the Black male membership of the organization as well.



Power, explicitly pronounced by the fall of 1966. Under the new chairmanship of Stokely Carmichael, SNCC's direction was clear and White membership in the organization had no place in the objectives of Black Power and the organization's open stance as nationalists. However, the internal crisis that SNCC fought to overcome, which stemmed from ideological differences in understanding race and grassroots activism as well as media-hyped rhetoric and grand standing, was miniscule in comparison to the more effective "White backlash" that the organization faced as a result of expelling its White members.

Post-1966 tension was only exacerbated due to the "drop in external funding that resulted from the radicalization of SNCC." As in the case of Atlanta, monies that arrived from external sources were being used at times as a way to control the decision making of the group.<sup>69</sup> Other cases included the northern-based SNCC affiliate, Friends of SNCC, which had been assembled by many of the northern Whites to assist in financing SNCC. By late 1966, organizations such as "Friends" that had aided in more than a substantial amount of the SNCC's funding had all but disappeared in light of SNCC's acceptance of Black Power.<sup>70</sup> As supporters of SNCC ceased to exist after the announcement of Black Power, so too did SNCC's funding drastically diminish going into the latter part of the 1960s. Though the announcement of Black Power may have debilitated SNCC's funding, the organization's most crippling blows came as a result of their aggressive critiques and commentary on the Vietnam War and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict of 1967.

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<sup>69</sup> Winston A. Grady-Willis, *Challenging U.S. Apartheid: Atlanta and Black Struggles For Human Rights 1960-1977* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 97.

<sup>70</sup> Harry Edwards, *Black Students* (Toronto and Ontario: The Free Press, 1970), 33-34.; Herbert Haines "Black Radicalization and Funding of Civil Rights: 1957-1970," *Social Problems* 32, no. 1, *Thematic Issue on Minorities and Social Movements* (October 1984), 31-43.

In the May 1967 issue of the *SNCC Newsletter*, the organization published a speech delivered by Stokely Carmichael on April 15, 1967 in New York City at one of the largest anti-Vietnam war rallies in the history of the Vietnam War. With aggressive criticisms lodged against the acts of the United States in Vietnam, Carmichael made poignant connections between the imperialist actions of the United States in Vietnam and the ineffectiveness of the federal government and the plight of Black people in the U.S. Following in the wake of SNCC's initial anti-Vietnam declaration in 1965, Carmichael stated that, "We took our stand because we oppose the drafting of young Afro-Americans to defend a so-called democracy which they do not find at home." Carmichael, who in his speech fully supported the anti-war sentiments of Dr. King and also those of CORE, was extremely forthright in disclosing the funding fate of SNCC as it related to the organization's anti-war activities. Carmichael stated to the anti-war protesters, "...there are those who would remind us that it is tactically unwise to speak against the war. It will alienate support. It will damage our fundraising. We have a question for those advocates of expediency: in the words of the Bible. What would it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"<sup>71</sup>

The very next month, the *SNCC Newsletter* published a very controversial issue entitled "The Palestine Problem," which posted thirty-two critical items on the state of Israel and their actions against the Palestinian people that dated back to the organizing conferences on Zionism in 1897. Addressing violations of human rights in Israel, SNCC

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<sup>71</sup> "End the War!!" *SNCC Newsletter*, 1967 May; "Ain't Gonna Study War No More," *SNCC Newsletter*, May 1967. Black Power and Revolutionary Organizations, File Box 1 Folder 17, Archives of the Martin Luther King Center for Nonviolent Social Change.

maintained that the critique was not anti-Semitic but was definitely anti-Zionist and anti-oppression. To support their claim, the newsletter's thirtieth point stated that:

...several American and European Jews, who are not Zionists and cannot support the horrors committed by Zionists in the name of Judaism, have spoken out and condemned the Zionist distortions of the Jewish religion; but their opinions are never printed in the Zionist controlled press or other communications media.<sup>72</sup>

Incensed by the SNCC publication, the Jewish community quickly labeled the Black student organization as anti-Semitic. The combined force of media and the onslaught of incendiary commentary from the eldership of the civil rights organizations cemented the financial fate of SNCC and its financial support plummeted. Almost all of the Jewish support that was responsible for financing SNCC through the height of the movement was quickly withdrawn.<sup>73</sup> Much of that support was in direct alignment with the legacy of Jewish supporters such as the Arnold Aronson of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, Isaiah Minkoff of the National Jewish Community Relations Council, Rabbi Joachim Prinz of the American Jewish Congress, Kivie Kaplan of the NAACP, and Joseph Rauh of Americans for Democratic Action, all of whom played significant roles in organizing the 1963 March on Washington and the passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965.<sup>74</sup>

Adding to the woes of SNCC was the public commentary on its actions and the *SNCC Newsletter* by civil rights leadership such as Whitney Young of the Urban League;

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<sup>72</sup> "The Palestine Problem," *SNCC Newsletter*, June-July 1967. 1-4. Black Power and Revolutionary Organizations, File Box 1 Folder 17 Archives of the Martin Luther King Center for Nonviolent Social Change; For further historical context on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, please see the work of David Frankel and Will Reissner, *Israel's War Against the Palestinian People*. Also see *Palestine an the Arabs' Fight for Liberation* by Fred Feldman and Georges Sayad.

<sup>73</sup> Robert Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America* (New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1992), 254, 256.

<sup>74</sup> Seth Forman, *Blacks in the Jewish Mind* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1998), 59.

Dr. King of the SCLC; Roy Wilkins of the NAACP; and Bayard Rustin, the Executive Director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute. Rustin, who was primarily responsible for the pacifist direction of the movement with a significant influence on the forming ideology of young Dr. King, seemed to allow for an alternative standard when it came to military assistance for the state of Israel. Rustin and other civil rights leadership that were lambasting SNCC, CORE and other supporters of Black Power for its association with violence and vigilantism, were now on record in support of Israel's position in a war effort. Rustin went so far as to call for jet fighter planes to be sent to the State of Israel for the Six-Day War effort. Wilkins even proclaimed that SNCC was following a pro-soviet line and also "compared the alleged anti-Semitism of young Black militants to that of George Lincoln Rockwell, the leader of the American Nazi Party."<sup>75</sup>

Though SNCC membership declined due to a fracture created by lack of support and ideological shifts in the programmatic thrust of the organization, a widespread movement was burgeoning due to the phenomenon of Black Power on college campuses. The conceptualization of Black Power for many Black students meant the opportunity to address the issues of non-representation whether they dealt with racial demographics or educational curriculums. Black students were on the verge of creating spaces on campuses that transcended their private study groups to be included into the fabric of post-secondary institutions. That call for autonomy created campus protests as Black students demanded Black Studies.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Lewis Young, "American Blacks and the Arab-Israeli Conflict," *The Journal of Palestine Studies*, 2, no. 1, 70-85.

<sup>76</sup> Peniel E. Joseph, "Dashikis and Democracy: Black Studies, Student Activism, and the Black Power Movement," *The Journal of African American History*, 88, no. 2, 182-203.

## Black Student Protest and a Call for Black Studies

Malcolm X, prior to his death, made prophetic statements regarding the state of race relations in America. He commented that 1964 would be an explosive year in America because of the mounting racial tensions.<sup>77</sup> Malcolm also believed that the students of the world would be the ones who were going to make the changes needed as part of a international youth movement taking place due to the restlessness of youth and the worsening of global conditions.<sup>78</sup> Malcolm X could not have been more correct about his projected assessments of global engagement regarding Black urban rebellions and the role of the youth and students in the global movement to demand change. The assassination of Dr. King in April of 1968 marked a decisive turning point in the call for more autonomous representation by Black students nation wide first starting with urban rebellions in response to the horrific killing. The nationwide outbreaks of rioting nearly every major city coupled with the presence of Black students with raised levels of consciousness on predominantly white campuses created a new set of dynamics for college administrators. From this socio-political agitation Black Studies was formed.<sup>79</sup>

Between 1967 and the early 1970s militant black students demanded Black Studies at both predominately white institutions, such as Yale and Columbia Universities, and historically black schools, including Howard University in Washington, DC, and Southern University in Baton Rouge and New Orleans, Louisiana. During the spring 1968 semester black students at Howard took over the administration building. What was remarkable about the takeover was the fact that African American students demanded that a historically black college be more responsive to the needs of the local black community and the increased radical consciousness and nationalism within the student body. That same year African American students at Northwestern University issued a proclamation that

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<sup>77</sup> Malcolm X with George Breitman, ed. *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements*, 20.

<sup>78</sup> Malcolm X, *By Any Means Necessary*, (New York, London, Montreal, Sydney: Pathfinder Press, 1970), 164.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.; Fabio Rojas, *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 93, 211.

demanding, among other things, increased Black faculty and financial aid for black students. Perhaps the most well publicized moment of student unrest took place when black students took over an administration building at Cornell University in 1969.<sup>80</sup>

Students who were catalysts in creating the Black Studies program at UCLA defined the interactive relationship between the academic community and the Black community in the critical need for Black Studies. The UCLA students expressed that the concept of education needed to be re-examined and made relevant to a demographic of the general student population that had been historically marginalized.<sup>81</sup> In addition to the need for an interactive curriculum that included the Black community in the context of Black Studies was the critical element of the Black Studies curriculum not being created just for the benefit of Black Students. A major argument around the creation and implementation of Black Studies is for “an exposition of the facts of life in their totality, not just those statistics that reinforce white supremacy and racism.”<sup>82</sup> Most importantly, the integration of information about Black life and culture into post-secondary curriculum nationwide would be critical for the creation of a paradigm shift to reverse the effects of racist education founded on myth and not fact.<sup>83</sup>

University recruitment programs began to actively seek out and recruit Black students to provide educational opportunities those socio-economically disadvantaged. However, the new students that were being recruited were coming from neighborhoods in which the heightened levels of racial tension and urban rebellion were still prevalent.

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<sup>80</sup> Peniel E. Joseph, *Dashikis and Democracy: Black Studies, Student Activism, and the Black Power Movement*, 191.

<sup>81</sup> Boniface I. Obichere, “The Significance and Challenge of Afro-American Studies,” *Journal of Black Studies* 1, no. 2. (December 1970), 170.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

These same students brought their activist energy and experiences to these campuses nationwide.<sup>84</sup>

Scholar William E. Nelson points out “Blacks who in previous years would never have surmounted the racially biased entrance requirements of major universities were admitted under special programs that took into account the social barriers placed in their way by the academic programs of inner-city high schools.”<sup>85</sup> Because of this, there were modifications made for the entrance procedures to provide a new educational opportunity to Black students who had been denied access for generations. In addition, these newly admitted students arrived with a much more 'seasoned' political disposition and elevated level of race pride and consciousness than their predecessors.<sup>86</sup>

Within the context of the Black Power Movement emerged Black Studies as a discipline and it began at San Francisco State College (SFSC) now called San Francisco State University.<sup>87</sup> At the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign a peaceful sit-in demonstration by Black students escalated into unnecessary arrests of almost 250 Black students. The demonstration received nation-wide coverage that would be misconstrued and negatively propagated by headlines in major newspapers such as this one from the *Chicago Tribune* that read “Negroes Riot at U of I; Negroes Go on Rampage after Row,” and another from *The Los Angeles Times* that read, “College Plan for Negroes Passes Test; But 'Project 500' at Illinois U. Meets Obstacle.” These articles and others provided

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> William E. Nelson, Jr., *Black Studies, Student Activism, and the Academy*, 80.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Maulana Karenga, *Introduction to Black Studies* (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press, 2002), 13.

false impressions of the student sit-ins; however, the climate of Black student discontent aligned with the national Black student protest movement.<sup>88</sup>

On campuses worldwide, the rumblings of student discontent escalated into full-scale forms of protest. Students in the thousands were not willing to acquiesce to the promises of pseudo-privilege in the ranks of the upper echelons of their respective societies. Countries that experienced the massive resistance of protest included South Korea, Nigeria, Laos, Greece, Spain, Dahomey, Kenya, Burma, Canada and South Africa.<sup>89</sup> Many of the protests by students centered on the demands for academic reform and student participation in the development of university policy. Much of the student unrest was in response to the deteriorating economic conditions that played a critical role in oppressing the working people of the world by unsympathetic governments. Other student protests were held in African countries where the student populations demonstrated their opposition to the inadequate funding of schools.<sup>90</sup>

An extraordinary example of the raised level of international consciousness stemmed from the ousting of former president Kwame Nkrumah in 1966 by military coup. The National Union of Ghanaian students called for the return of Nkrumah to contribute as an intellectual resource through his leadership for the rebuilding of Ghana. “The students much to the anger of the present regime said that amnesty should be granted to Nkrumah so his genius could once again be put to direct work in the cause of the African revolution.”<sup>91</sup> In Ghana, student unrest manifested in protests and

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<sup>88</sup> Joy Ann Williamson, *Black Power on Campus: The University of Illinois, 1965-1975* (University of Illinois Press, 2003), 86-87.

<sup>89</sup> “Student Struggles Around the Globe,” *The African World/SOBU Newsletter*, September 1975, Cleveland Sellers Collection, 9.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> “Students in Ghana Call for Return of Nkrumah,” *SOBU Newsletter*, June 12, 1971, 1.



demonstrations at universities throughout the country. Stanch Nkrumahist organizations were so outspoken in their attitudes and actions that some went as far to “sing theme songs of Nkrumah's banned Convention People's Party and to call for a socialist system in Ghana.”<sup>92</sup>

### The Black Student Movement and Duke University

Black Student activism at Duke University began with coalition building between Black students at Duke and the Duke Service workers. The resulting outcomes of the Black student and service worker united front yielded a more militant activism that wedded the struggles of Black workers and Black students on the. This escalation of Black Student Movement activity that aligned itself with the surrounding Black community of Durham led to the eventual call for an independent Black university as early as 1967.<sup>93</sup>

As the national sentiment for Black Studies programs escalated on college campuses, tensions arose in the form of rallies and campus protests. When the year of 1969 emerged, Black Students, led by Chuck Hopkins, president of Duke's AFro-American Society, held a forum on Duke's campus to discuss reformation at the university as it concerned Black student interests. The gathering unified over 150 people, including students who represented the school's Third World student population and non-academic employees. The gathering was held as a show of solidarity and support for the students and faculty of the San Francisco State University who were striking for change. Duke University faculty, particularly Dr. Thomas Rainey of Duke's history department,

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Karen Brodtkin Sacks, *Caring by the Hour: Women, Work, and Organizing at Duke Medical Center* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 42-43; “Black College Sought,” *Greensboro Record*, June 6, 1967.

called for a coalition between faculty and non-academic employees. At the rally, Hopkins emphasized the need for Black demands to be met.<sup>94</sup> He later reiterated his feelings the subsequent month in an article for *Harambee Afro American Publication* of Durham, NC. According to Hopkins,

It is the thing today, among Black students on college campuses, to talk about returning to the Black community to work for the liberation of Black people. Even the demands for relevant curricula, i.e., Black studies programs have been geared toward obtaining knowledge and skills which would be useful in working with Black people. The movement among Black students to gain relevant educational tools points out that fact that they realize that the present system of education in America is not set up to enhance the freedom of Black people...The Black student is faced with the problem of, how to use what he has learned in college to help bring about the revolutionary struggle for an oppressed people.<sup>95</sup>

The tireless Black student activism on Duke's campus eventually led to a meeting with Douglas M. Knight, then the president of Duke University. Knight, as many other White college administrators' nationwide, was facing the pressures of the ever-mounting student movement that opposed the Vietnam War and sought reformation on college campuses nationwide. The fear of campus take-over spurred the Duke President finally to respond to the "four-month-old set of demands of Duke's AFro-American Society by offering them a Black advisor and a summer remedial program."<sup>96</sup> Knight further responded to the demands of the AFro-American Society by adding that some of the decisions were made with immediacy while other demands had not been agreed upon. The AFro-American Society's most pressing demands were for the inclusion of courses that were relevant to the lived cultural and social experiences of Black Students. However, this particular stipulation had yet to be agreed upon according to Knight.

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<sup>94</sup> "Rally discusses reforms at Duke," *The Duke Chronicle*, January 10, 1969, 1.

<sup>95</sup> Chuck Hopkins, "Black Rap," *Harambee Afro-American Publication*, February 5, 1969.

<sup>96</sup> "Knight approves a few Black demands" *The Duke Chronicle*, February 4, 1969.

Later, President Knight assured a full assessment of the remaining demands upon an administrative evaluation.<sup>97</sup>

During mid-February of 1969, the AFro-American Society of Duke University hosted 'Black Week'. This week of festivities for Black students on campus brought unification amongst Black students. The week's events brought about more camaraderie among the Black students through the initial purpose of the programming, which was to educate. A sore spot of the week's program was the lack of White student participation for activities that were more educational than entertaining. However, representatives commented on future initiatives to emphasize White student support for future Black Student events.<sup>98</sup>

'Black Week's' events included the participation and speeches of poet Lynette Lewis, SNCC activist Fannie Lou Hamer and comedian/Civil Rights Activist Dick Gregory. Members of the AFro-American Society later made bitter remarks regarding the lack of White student participation as it related to the activities of the week that were more educational. Toward the close of the week's activities, Chuck Hopkins would make a prophetic comment regarding the negligence on the part of Duke University's administration as it related to the demands of Black students at the university:

Revolutionary change at Duke University is the primary goal. 'Black Week' made the administration uptight...they should try to meet our demands. We've been talking since last October. It's going to come down to a confrontation.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> "Black Week' spurs greater Afro unity" *The Duke Chronicle*, February 13, 1969, 1-2.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 2.

## Duke University and Black Student Protest: The Allen Building Takeover

Black Students at Duke University grew aggressively impatient and the ensuing outcome was what Duke University President, Douglas Knight, feared most: a building takeover. On Thursday, February 13, 1969, approximately seventy-five Black students seized the Allen Building of Duke University. The students barricaded themselves in at both ends of the building and warned that they would set fire to files that contained nearly all student records of the university if the police were sent in. The students renamed Allen Building, the “Malcolm X Liberation School.”<sup>100</sup> The morning of the Allen Building takeover, students issued the statement:

We seized the building because we have been negotiating with the Duke Administration and faculty concerning different issues that effect Black students for two and half years. We have no meaningful results. We have exhausted all the so-called proper channels<sup>101</sup>

The Black Students constructed a list of thirteen demands that included a Black Studies Program under Black control, a Black dormitory, the reinstatement of Black students who flunked out of Duke the previous semester, an end to police harassment and brutality, more Black professors, an end to “racist” policies and amnesty for all students involved in the Allen Building takeover. Hopkins, president of the AFro-American Society, issued a statement from inside the building during the takeover to assure that none of the university's property had been destroyed and that if attacked, the Black students would defend the Black women in the building.<sup>102</sup> Outside of Allen Building, approximately four hundred White students of Duke University decided that they would

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 1.; Chuck Hopkins, “Malcolm X Liberation University,” *Negro Digest/Black World* . 19, no. 1-12. March 1970, 39.; “Black Students Challenge Duke,” *Durham Morning Herald*, February 14, 1969.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>102</sup> “Blacks Occupy Allen, Ask Demands Action,” *The Duke Chronicle*, 1. n.d.

surround the building to protect the Black students inside. In addition, many of the White students assisted by supplying information on the outside activity to the Black students occupying the Allen Building.

The Allen Building takeover resulted in the support of over one thousand students and faculty members, who voted in support of a three day boycott of classes as a show of solidarity for the Black students who occupied the Allen Building. The overall vote and strike called for complete amnesty for the students involved plus reinstatement of the Black students who were forced out of Duke University for academic reasons. Chuck Hopkins, who continued to act as spokesperson for the AFro-American Society outlined the disposition of Black students on Duke's campus towards administration's negligence and unwillingness to negotiate for the demands of the Black students.<sup>103</sup> Duke's administration eventually agreed to meet for one hour and talk over the concerns of the Black Students. Hopkins disapprovingly commented that, "...the Blacks spent two and half years just smiling over the Trustee's table...Why did they give us only a one hour ultimatum after we had given them two and a half years?"<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> "University in turmoil: students confront administration, police," *The Duke Chronicle*, 1. n.d.; Post-1966 support activity amongst Black and White students on college campuses was not uncommon. Not often investigated or acknowledged are the support networks amongst Black and White student organizations that existed as a result of the establishment of BSU's and Black Houses on many predominantly White college campuses. Though SNCC as a vanguard organization expelled White members after 1968, groups such as SDS, which had national membership on many college campuses, still provided support even when the concepts of Black Power were deemed to be "reverse racism." Groups such as SDS, which were instrumental in the leftist activity of many student organizations, both Black and White made a proactive organizational memorandum in response to the call for Black Power and the shifting direction of the Black Student Movement. According to the seminal work of Kirkpatrick Sales, *SDS*: "We feel that we have to respond to the black struggle for survival because it is a struggle against imperialism and against a racist culture which we are also fighting...We must give visibility to the black struggle for liberation...We must make the State pay as high a price for genocide...We must institute programs of internal education on racism, the history of the black liberation movement...We should give physical and financial aid to those black people now the subject of State repression. For further information on post-1966 Black-White student coalition building, please see Kirkpatrick Sales, *SDS* (New York: Random House, 1973), 410-421.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

The Allen Building takeover ended after nearly ten hours of occupation. Shortly afterwards the police began to teargas a crowd of nearly one thousand students and faculty that were protesting to support the Black Students that were exiting the Allen Building after the negotiations failed with the Duke administration. Black students leaving the building formed a parade line and proceeded to march down the campus drive. The leaders of the parade carried a banner that read “Malcolm X Liberation School” while repeatedly chanting, “It’s not over.”<sup>105</sup>

The actions of the Black students caused divisions amongst faculty and White students on campus with White student groups such as the Young Americans for Freedom, a right-wing student faction, announcing at one point during the building occupation that “direct action” against Black students was being strongly considered as well as an invasion of the Allen Building, by their organization. In addition, Duke University faculty would remain divided after a resolution was passed in favor of Duke President Knight's use of the police to both invade the Allen Building and restore calm to the campus by force if necessary.<sup>106</sup>

#### Leadership Dynamism: Introduction of Howard Fuller

During the subsequent days after the takeover, President Knight met with the Black students of the AFro-American Society of Duke. The meetings took place with a young Black man by the name of Howard Fuller. Born in Louisiana and the product of Milwaukee’s Hillside Housing Projects, and later one of Milwaukee’s poor inner city

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<sup>105</sup> “25 Injured in Clash of Students And Police After Black Seizure of Duke Campus Building,” *Durham Morning Herald* February 14, 1969, 1.; “University in Turmoil: students confront administration, police,” *The Duke Chronicle* February 14, 1969, 1.

<sup>106</sup> “Blacks occupy Allen, ask demands action,” *The Duke Chronicle* February 13, 1969, 1; “Faculty divided, most support Knight,” *The Duke Chronicle* February 14, 1969, 6.

Black neighborhoods, Fuller was primed for leadership at a very early age. Fuller's entry into political activism started through his formative years as student body president and standout basketball star for Milwaukee's North Division High School (1958). Earning an academic and athletic scholarship to Carroll College in Waukesha, Wisconsin, Fuller not only went on to become the school's most valuable player but also held a student senate seat at Carroll as well as the concurrent position of student body president. Fuller, who had long been a product of integrated schools, went on to become the first Black male to graduate from Carroll College in 1962 with a BS in Sociology. After Carroll College, Fuller went to Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland Ohio, to pursue his master's degree in social work with a specialization in community organization. During Fuller's time in Cleveland, he would garner his first arrest as a result of protest activity against school segregation. "Fuller remembers the experience as a distinct turning point and foreshadowing of what was to come. After completing graduate school in 1964, Fuller took a job with the Urban League in Chicago as a job development specialist for which he was responsible for placing Black applicants in jobs throughout the Chicago area. Fuller, who had also worked in CORE, spent only eleven months in Chicago for the Urban League until a more attractive offer with more responsibilities became available. "Youthful impatience and a desire to do what he was trained to do prompted Fuller to take a job as the director of community development with Operation Breakthrough (a local office of the Poverty Program) in Durham, North Carolina."<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Tom Bamberger, "Who is Howard Fuller and What Does He Want," *Milwaukee Magazine* July 1988, 39-40, 57-62, Box 12 Folder 10.; "Howard Fuller Resume," n.d., 1-4, Box 12 Folder 10, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.; Cedric Johnson, "From Popular Anti-Imperialism to Sectarianism: The African Liberation Support Committee and Black Power Radicals," *New Political Science* 25, no. 4 December 2003, 483-484.

While in Durham, North Carolina working for Operation Breakthrough, a subsidiary program of the North Carolina Fund (NCF), Fuller attracted the attention of the state's Black poor and wealthy as well as the patronage of George Esser, a White gentleman who was the head of the NCF. Esser, who developed a close relationship with Fuller, was quite taken with the leadership potential of the young Black man from Milwaukee. Although in the mid-1960s Fuller was far from the exception of black men holding undergraduate and graduate degrees, he made quite an impression on Esser when he first started working for the NCF. Esser quickly realized that Fuller's approach made him see the greater benefits of pushing for social change, which was in alignment with Esser's ideals of a democratic society. According to Esser, "The approach that Howard Fuller adopted was the Fund's most successful...Howard believed that community organizations did not speak for the community, they facilitated the *community* speaking." Esser, who marveled at the persuasive demeanor of Fuller, fully supported Fuller in his endeavor of facilitating community mobilization as Esser fully believed that Howard Fuller "exemplified the more successful attempts at true involvement of the poor."<sup>108</sup>

Under Operation Breakthrough, Fuller was responsible for the development and training of community programs and later the NCF created a spin-off program called the Foundation for Community Development (FCD) of which Fuller also became the director. Esser, who felt that it would be essential to develop a spin-off entity to address the needs of the Black poor, knew that with the influence Fuller attracted he would be able to fulfill the needs of the community and bring in results...and Fuller did. As

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<sup>108</sup> Tom Bamberger, "Who is Howard Fuller and What Does He Want," *Milwaukee Magazine* July 1988, 39-40, 57-62, Box 12 Folder 10.; "Howard Fuller Resume," n.d., 1-4, Box 12 Folder 10, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.; George Esser with Rah Bickley, *My Years at the North Carolina Fund 1963-1970: An Oral History*, (Triangle Community Foundation and Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation: 2007), 171-172.



Fuller's role in North Carolina activism increased, his name became synonymous throughout the state for bringing results to poor Black people. "It was reported in the newspapers that the state's poor people would say, 'Howard is our Jesus.'" This amount of attention inspired fear in the governor's office down through the North Carolina White political establishment.<sup>109</sup> In 1967, Fuller explained how he perceived working and his development as a community organizer in North Carolina. According to Fuller,

The idea is to begin to talk to people who have never gotten anything at all out of society, really. To try to convince them that there is a chance to better themselves by becoming involved in making decisions that affect their lives.<sup>110</sup>

It was really in North Carolina that I learned everything that I know today about politics and so forth. And I learned most of it from the people that I was working with because I started out doing grass roots organizing at the neighborhood level trying to get streets paved, have houses fixed and get rid of rats. So that really shaped my opinion about the need for power.<sup>111</sup>

In the Durham and Greensboro area that was heavily steeped a post-secondary institutional history of student activism, Fuller's presence was ideal to motivate Black college youth in their struggles as the enigma of Black Power swept the American college landscape. In addition, through Fuller's consistent contact with former activists Cleveland Sellers and also the nationally and internationally emerging Black Power activist, Stokely Carmichael, Fuller was increasing in his informal education of grassroots organizing through the experiential knowledge of the two former SNCC standouts. These relationships also began Fuller's introduction into the ideology of Pan-

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Cedric Johnson. "From Popular Anti-Imperialism to Sectarianism: The African Liberation Support Committee and Black Power Radicals," *New Political Science* 25, no. 4 (December 2003), 484.

Africanism, which Carmichael espoused as the natural progression for Black Power as the 1960s came to a close.<sup>112</sup>

Because of his increased mobilization efforts, Fuller helped recruit Black college students and also organized a mothers' club in a poor Black housing project in the area. Fuller quickly gained a reputation as a central figure in the Black Student Movement in North Carolina. Also, his coordinating activities were directly aligned with the needs of the service workers at Duke University, many of whom had ties with Operation Breakthrough. Fuller also "prevented Duke University from blocking the acquisition of apartment buildings next to their student housing by the Durham Housing Authority" for which Duke officials later claimed that the purchase of the property would have only brought down the value the university.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid.; Komozi Woodard, *A Nation Within A Nation: Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones) and Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 173).; This relationship is critical to understanding the shift of Black Power to the call for Pan-Africanism by 1969. This also includes the national recognition of a shift of an epicenter of Black consciousness in the Southeast and the Washington, D.C. metro area of the eastern seaboard. In a roundtable with former SNCC activist, Charles Cobb, who was largely responsible for the SNCC Freedom Schools and later the Center for Black Education in D.C., inquired as to why so many of the former SNCC members gravitated to D.C. and also to North and South Carolina. He found that once SNCC folded people just went back to where they came from. Since many of the SNCC members were from Howard and the D.C. area as products of the Nonviolent Action Group (NAG), they just went back to continue the work under new organizations mostly consisting of younger Black student groups such as the emerging Student Organization for Black Unity (SOBU) and also Malcolm X Liberation University (MXLU). Personal Communication with Charles Cobb, University of Illinois, October 2008.; Also critical to the development of Fuller's education in Pan-Africanism was his relationships that were nurtured with Sellers and Carmichael. Carmichael, who maintained a frenetic pace with speaking engagements after his departure with SNCC, spoke in the Durham area attracting students from a variety of colleges and universities in the area including Duke and North Carolina Central during the years of 1967-1968. Carmichael's 1968 speech to packed North Carolina A&T auditorium of 4000 students led to furthering the radicalization of students and an early espousal of Pan-African rhetoric. For further information on this, please see Signe Waller's *Love and Revolution: A Political Memoir: People's History of the Greensboro Massacre, Its Setting and Aftermath*, 47-52. Also see "Stokely Carmichael Speech, 3 1967," reel 2 only, Duke University Archives. For further explication of Carmichael's evolving political philosophy of Black Power conceptualization to Pan-Africanist/Socialism please see *Stokely Speaks: From Black Power to Pan-Africanism* by Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture).

<sup>113</sup> Karen Brodtkin Sacks, *Caring by the Hour*; Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 12 Folder 10, "Knight, Blacks Meet: Some Agreement Indicated," *The Duke Chronicle*, n.d, 1.

### Gearing Up for Change: MXLU & SOBU Prefatory Work

Fuller's ability to organize groups of people in short spans of time gained him recognition. Because of this, he was well equipped to assist the Black students of Duke achieve their demands that were brought to the administration. Fuller's experience converged with the projected demands of the AFro-American Society that represented the larger Black student population of Duke University. Black students waited patiently for the administrative ruling on the student's demands and also for the decided fate of those students who participated in the Allen Building takeover. Fuller, working in conjunction with Chuck Hopkins and other students of Duke's AFro-American Society, was able to conduct a three-hour meeting with Duke president Knight and other administrators. The eventual results of the meeting were not satisfying to the general Black student body of Duke. The students who participated in the building takeover were placed on probation and a month later, Duke University officials would prove ineffectual and uncompromising on the demands made by the Black Students.<sup>114</sup>

For many of the Black students of Duke University, the next logical phase was to begin the process of establishing an independent institution that met the needs of Black students. That institution would be Malcolm X Liberation University (MXLU) and the objective would be to provide an educational experience that satisfied educational and practical needs of Black youth who sought autonomy and cultural reinforcement on an unapologetic basis.

In Greensboro, the ideological shift to a more Black Nationalistic approach for liberation was represented by and credited largely to North Carolina A&T student,

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<sup>114</sup> "Students Put on Probation For Seizing Duke Building," *Durham Morning Herald*, March 20, 1969. 1A-2A.

Nelson Johnson and an organization called the Greensboro Association of Poor People (GAPP). The Black students of North Carolina A&T played a crucial role in the elevation of consciousness as well.<sup>115</sup>

The Greensboro Association of Poor People, or GAPP, was a community ombudsman that took up cases of the poorest and most oppressed. Organizers sat down with small groups of people to discuss their problems with them and help them to take action. The problems might relate to poor housing conditions, city redevelopment plans, securing welfare payments, or fighting racism and intimidation by downtown officials or on the job. In a short time, GAPP put down roots in Greensboro's Black community and developed solidarity between community and social justice activists on the city's Black campuses.<sup>116</sup>

Johnson had started with the organization of Youth Educational Services (YES), which organized tutoring services throughout the state. He developed GAPP in the summer of 1968, as a more activist oriented organization that targeted the concerns of Black Greensboro residents. Through GAPP, Johnson was able to further connect with that Black college youth of the Raleigh-Durham and Greensboro areas that included North Carolina A&T, North Carolina Central University and Duke students.<sup>117</sup> His coalition building later converted sporadic Black student activism into an organized Black student united front. As forces began to converge, the community activist group of GAPP led by Johnson and the Black student group Youth for the Unity of Black Society (YUBS), a youth affiliate of GAPP, united under the banner of the Student Organization of Black Unity in the spring of 1969.<sup>118</sup>

Howard Fuller and Nelson Johnson had already formed a close working relationship dating back to 1967, when the two were founding members of a Black

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<sup>115</sup> Chuck Hopkins, "Malcolm X Liberation University," *Negro Digest/Black World* 19, March 1970, 1-12, 39.

<sup>116</sup> Signe Waller, *Love and Revolution: A Political Memoir: People's History of the Greensboro Massacre, Its Setting and Aftermath* (New York & Oxford, 2002), 42.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 42-46.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 49.

student organization called the Grassroots Students Association. The two future Black student leaders worked during the summers of '67 and 68 in the Cape Fear Housing Projects in Fayetteville, North Carolina where they were organizing tenants. During this time, Fuller became a mentor of sorts to Johnson, who considered Fuller a “powerful thinker.”<sup>119</sup> The combined leadership of Fuller and Johnson for the emerging SOBU and upstart MXLU signified the initiation of Black student activism in Raleigh-Durham and Greensboro.

It also signified the beginnings of a working relationship that aided greatly in the infancy of MXLU in the spring of 1969 while Fuller was still on staff with the North Carolina Fund working as director of the FCD. In conjunction with the student activists of the burgeoning SOBU, the AFro-American Society of Duke and other Black collegiates in the Durham/Greensboro area, MXLU's first base of activity was located on the floor above the offices of the FCD. MXLU's temporary headquarters also became an initial organizing space for SOBU as well. Fuller, who ended up taking a leave of absence from the FCD to begin planning for MXLU, foresaw that the promise of MXLU extended much further beyond the occupancy of an office building. Immediate action was called for and thus the early stages were set to build an independent Black educational institution.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 43.; Fanon Che Wilkens, “In the Belly of the Beast: Black Power, Anti-Imperialism and the African Liberation Solidarity Movement, 1968-1975,” (doctoral dissertation, New York University), 130.

<sup>120</sup> “Fuller Granted FCD Leave to Push Malcolm X Liberation University: James Lee Replacing Him,” *Durham Morning Herald*, July 23, 1969.

## CHAPTER 4

### MALCOLM X LIBERATION UNIVERSITY: PLANNING, CURRICULUM/PROJECTS & INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIVES

*...History shows that it does not matter who is in power or what revolutionary forces take over the government, those who have not learned to do for themselves and have to depend solely on others never obtain any more rights or privileges in the end than they had in the beginning.<sup>1</sup>*

--Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*

*...Education for Black people in the U.S (and throughout the world) is a question of life and death. It is a political question, a question of power. The power to name, to define and to control minds. He who controls images controls minds. He who controls minds has little or nothing to fear from bodies.<sup>2</sup>*

--Lerone Bennett, *The Negro Mood*

#### Background: Historical Antecedents of Malcolm X Liberation University

The historical antecedents of Malcolm X Liberation University can be traced through the historical legacies of Black Liberation Struggle and Black Nationalist undertakings spanning from the antebellum to the 1960s. The involvement of Black folks with educational endeavors that were extensions of self-reliant activity is as salient in U.S history as the peculiar institution of chattel slavery. These expressions of education manifested in qualitative gains and institutions of learning to further Black emancipation and could only be achieved through self-determination. Tangentially, the guiding force of motivation that persistently agitated ex-slaves was the critical need for citizenship and for the establishment of identity through education.

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<sup>1</sup> Carter Godwin Woodson, *Mis-Education of the Negro* (New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1990), 90.

<sup>2</sup> "Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University" Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

Black folks who emerged from the treacherous creation of slavery embarked on the tireless journey to improve their conditions by educating themselves. For many ex-slaves, to fulfill the dream of being able to spell and write their own name was a benchmark achievement that meant the beginnings of improved self-esteem and a psychological freedom different from the removal of physical shackles associated with bondage. Ex-slaves rushed to become a part of a literate society and escape the nostalgia of slavery that prevented reading and writing. In most cases amongst ex-slaves, a passionate anger was expressed toward the human transgression of denying them a chance to learn. One former slave said, “There is one sin that slavery committed against me which I will never forgive. It robbed me of my education.”<sup>3</sup> And for many ex-slaves, the chance to advance a future for themselves and for their children and grandchildren could only be secured through schools that they would establish themselves apart from the control of their former masters. Anderson notes, “The values of self-help and self-determination underlay the ex-slaves’ educational movement.”<sup>4</sup>

With this decisive understanding that the path for liberation through education would only be constructed through their own efforts, Black folks provided their own money, labor and time to ensure their place under the sun. Post-slavery educational activity throughout the South consisted of Black folks funding and operating their own educational institutions without white funding, i.e., control. According to the work of James D. Anderson,

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<sup>3</sup> James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 5.

...northern teachers in Georgia were taken aback to discover that some blacks preferred to teach in and operate their own schools with the benefit of northern largesse...ex-slaves, in general, initiated and supported education for themselves and their children and also resisted external control of their educational institutions. In 1867, for instance, the *Freedmen's Record* complained about the tendency of ex-slaves to prefer sending their children to black controlled private schools rather than supporting the less expensive northern white dominated "free" schools. A white observer noted that "in all respects apart from his or her competency to teach—they will keep their children out of school, and go to work, organize and [*sic*] independent school and send their children to it." ...The ex-slaves' educational movement became a test of their capacity to restructure their lives, to establish their freedom. Although they appreciated northern support, they resisted infringements that threatened to undermine their own initiative and self-reliance.<sup>5</sup>

This movement to create educational sites for manumitted Black people produced schools that addressed the needs of these newly freed Blacks. In conjunction with the need to obtain education was also the desire to worship openly, removing the shroud of secrecy that had plagued Black folks when they were property. This need to learn and worship in the South generated schools known as "Sabbath schools," which further help fulfill these needs. From the years of 1863-1870, Sabbath schools worked in conjunction with the following other institutions: 1) day schools that educated mostly freed children; 2) the night school that educated freed adults; 3) the regimental schools that addressed the educational needs of Black men enlisted in the Union Army; and 4) the hundreds of independent schools throughout the South whose combined efforts aided in educating over 900,000 freed Blacks during the era. In addition, Sabbath schools enabled instructors to meet the educational needs of large masses of Black folks at one time and

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 12.; See also *Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South* by Vanessa Siddle Walker and *The Education of Black Philadelphia: The Social and Educational History of a Minority Community, 1900-1950* by V.P. Franklin.



as historian Randy Sparks identifies, “religious instruction was supplemented with singing, reading exercises and patriotic lessons.”<sup>6</sup>

The gains yielded through these self-determinative efforts produced higher literacy rates amongst Blacks between the years of 1880 and 1910. As the population of Black folks increased in the United States, the rates of illiteracy decreased at an exponential rate. Historian V.P. Franklin posits that, “the Black population 10 years of age and over increased during the decade 1900-1910 by 902,341 (out of a total population of 10,215, 482). The number of illiterates in the Black population decreased between 1900 and 1910 by 625, 463. The U.S. Bureau of the Census reported that “classified by age, the Negro population in each age group increased and the number of illiterates decreased during the decade ending in 1910. This had also occurred in the two previous decades.”<sup>7</sup>

At the turn of the century, Blacks in the United States would become involved with the Nationalist philosophies of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Under “Garveyism,” the emphasis of self-reliance and self-determinative action was the pervasive theme of operational effectiveness to bring about his projected vision of “Africa for the Africans...at home and abroad.” Garvey’s Black Nationalist undertakings also included educational institutions for the social progression of Blacks. According to him,

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.; Randy Sparks, “Schools for Freedom,” in C. Thomas Holt and Elsa Barkley Brown, eds. *Major Problems in African America History*, 388-401.; Christopher M. Span and Richard D Benson II. “Sabbath Schools.” *Encyclopedia of African American Education*. (Ed.) Kofi Lomotey, 557-558. Thousand Oaks, California and London: Sage, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> V.P. Franklin, *Black Self-Determination: A Cultural History of African American Resistance*. (New York: Lawrence Hill Books, 1984), 175.

The Universal Negro Improvement Association teaches to our race self-help and self-reliance, not only in one essential, but in all those things that contribute to human happiness and well being. The disposition of the many to depend upon other races for a kindly and sympathetic consideration of their needs, without making the effort to do for themselves, has been the race's standing disgrace by which we have been judged and through which we have created the strongest prejudice against ourselves...The race needs workers at this time, not plagiarists, copyists and mere imitators; but men and women who are able to create, to originate and improve, and thus an independent racial contribution to the world and civilization.<sup>8</sup>

Garvey, whose major influences came from the work and philosophies of Booker T.

Washington, desired to establish educational institutions for Blacks in Jamaica as well as in the United states for the purposes of an agriculturally-based pedagogy. In 1920, the UNIA's Declaration of Rights called for the "unlimited and unprejudiced education for black people, and the UNIA locals in Port Limon (Costa Rica), Colon (Panama), British Guiana and elsewhere ran elementary and sometimes grammar schools."<sup>9</sup> In 1926, The UNIA's New York City branch founded and owned "Booker T. Washington University," and as the UNIA expanded in membership and organizational growth, a second post-secondary institution was acquired in Virginia and named "Liberty University." As with many Black colleges of the period, the curricular standards of the school were of high school level and as with most Black educational institutions, the school suffered financially to remain open. After three years of operation, the educational institution closed because of the lack of funding. However, Garvey's organization was still able to network and train civil servants of the UNIA. Even though Garvey was deported and spent the remaining years of his life in London, he founded another educational venture.

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<sup>8</sup> Tony Martin, *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Westport, CN and London, England: Greenwood Press, 1976), 37.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

The “School of African Philosophy” which, by means of correspondence courses as well as intensive courses administered by Garvey himself in Canada, prepared UNIA workers for their roles in the organization.”<sup>10</sup>

Reflections of Garveyism morphed into what historians consider as the “re-emergence” of Black Nationalism during the mid-1960s brought about independent Black education centers and sites of Black consciousness, the self-reliant approach and their expressions of Black Power matured. These manifestations took the form of nationwide Black Studies programs that in many cases suffered initially from an intentionally detached departmental structure. This inevitably meant that the proper funding and academic personnel could not be matriculated and developed through the proper channels that would have built a sustainable Black Studies program or department. Because of this, many Nationalists moved for the development of Black independent institutions to further avoid white control over direction, curriculum and ideological foundations so obviously in contention at predominately white universities.<sup>11</sup>

The idea for separate and independent Black Universities and sites of learning for Black youth and continuing adult learners became more operational when “Black Power” as a concept evolved as more complex planning sessions that produced four conferences from 1966-1969 to include: 1966 Washington D.C.; 1967 Newark, New Jersey; 1968 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; 1969, Bermuda (international meeting). The work from these conferences aided in the construction of infrastructures that transitioned into educational institution building. Associations such as the National Association of African American Education (NAAAE) and the Council of Independent Black

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 36-37.

<sup>11</sup> William L. Van Deburg, *The New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 76-78.

Institutions (CIBI) were founded as umbrella organizations to provide national support and consultation services to many Black centers of learning in the U.S.<sup>12</sup>

The most significant result of the conferences was what the creation of the actual centers of learning meant for Black people. In many cases, the community colleges or junior colleges were internally transformed by students and personnel to fit the desires of both community folks and students who desired a more Black-centered curriculum that could represent their lived historical, social and political experiences in the classroom. Other discourse that resulted from the conferences and development of Black Power was the question of whether or not the projected Black University should be located in the southern or northern region of the U.S. According to the work of historian William L. Van Deburg,

While some proponents hoped that a comprehensive Black University would be located in one of the southern states, others merely affirmed that it should be situated in a supportive Afro American community, North or South. A southern locale might be appropriate if the immediate goal was to transform a historically Negro college such as Spelman, Fisk, or Howard into a modern instrument of social change, but if a totally new institution was desired, factors other than utilization of existing facilities would have to be given greater weight. For those who believed that a Black University rightfully belonged to the people, there was no more salient notion than that it should involve the total black community in its educational program. It should be a “communiversity”, where the campus itself would be the very sidewalks of the black community.<sup>13</sup>

Examples of these “communiversities” or educational institutions and centers of learning included The Institute of the Black World (IBW) of Atlanta, Georgia, headed by Dr. Vincent Harding and involving scholars Gerald McWorter, Stephen Henderson, Lerone

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<sup>12</sup> Kwasi Konadu, *Truth Crushed to the Earth Will Rise Again: The East Organization and the Principles and Practice of Black Nationalist Development* (Trenton, NJ and Asmara, ERITREA, 2005), 53-55.

<sup>13</sup> William L. Van Deburg, *The New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 79-80.

Bennett, Sterling Stuckey, Robert Brown, and Joyce Ladner; The “Communiversity” of Chicago, involving scholars Dr. Anderson Thompson, Dr. Conrad Worrill, Dr. Bobby Wright, Dr. Jacob Carruthers, Dr. Harold Pates and Professor Robert Starks; Malcolm X College of Chicago, headed by Charles G. Hurst; The Center for Black Education of Washington, D.C, headed by Charlie Cobb; Nairobi College of East Palo Alto, California; The African Free School of Newark, New Jersey founded by Imamu Amiri Baraka of the Congress of African Peoples (CAP); and Uhuru Sasa Shule (Freedom Now School) of Brooklyn, headed by Jitu Weusi of The East Organization, among others.<sup>14</sup> From this body and legacy of Black institutions, Malcolm X Liberation University (MXLU) began its process of forging a community/student based organization and learning center for the benefit of Black folks both domestically and internationally.

#### The Structure of Malcolm X Liberation University<sup>15</sup>

The administrative development and planning of Malcolm X Liberation University took place from May 2, 1969 at the Franklinton Center in Bricks, North Carolina. The work retreat participants came from throughout the United States to commence in what would be the development of Malcolm X Liberation University's

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 80.; Kwasi Konadu, *Truth Crushed to the Earth Will Rise Again: The East Organization and the Principles and Practice of Black Nationalist Development* (Trenton, NJ and Asmara, ERITREA, 2005); *Negro Digest/Black World*, 19 (March 1970), 19-47.; Stephen Ward, “Scholarship in the Context of Struggle’: Activist Intellectuals, the Institute of the Black Word (IBW) and the Contours of Black Radicalism, 1967-1970,” *The Black Scholar* 31 (Fall 2001), 42-53.; “The Institute of the Black World (IBW) funding proposal to IFCO April 12, 1972,” Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 29 Folder 34, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; “African Free School Pamphlet,” n.d. , Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 22 Folder 6, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>15</sup> The MXLU organization chart provided in this section of the document was taken as “Malcolm X Liberation Administrative Structure,” Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 12 Folder 4, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

infrastructure. The foundational meetings established the ideological and academic projection for the University.<sup>16</sup>

As an independent Black institution, the ideological thrust of MXLU became to understand the relationship between Black people in the United States and the Pan-African liberation struggle as a whole. MXLU's operational approach to engaging Black folks was based on the understanding that oppression was not limited to geographical location and so the concept of "community" could not be relegated to any geographic space either. Thus, the organizational goal of the University was to move away from the educational influences of Western European individualism and the "me first" concept and to adopt the conceptual framework of communalism as a model for education.<sup>17</sup> The primary and initial objective of MXLU was to provide an institution that would aid in the holistic development of Black folks in the United States. This would be accomplished by providing an alternative for those "seeking liberation from the misconception of an institutionalized racist education."<sup>18</sup> MXLU foresaw itself as a conduit organization between Pan-Africanism and the struggles that were taking place on the continent of Africa. In order to nurture that relationship, it would require that the institution engage theoretical perspectives that were in alignment with traditional social, political and cultural mores most salient to the indigenous population of the African continent. The following indicates the objectives and perspectives of MXLU:

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<sup>16</sup> "Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University Spring 1970," Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 12 Folder 3, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

<sup>17</sup> "Malcolm X Liberation University Pamphlet 1971-1972," Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>18</sup> "Malcolm X Liberation University Fact Sheet date 5/10/1969," Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 12 Folder 3, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

We cannot realize our potential for our development as a people until we are in a position to govern ourselves...We must have a land base, because land provides the basis for food, shelter and clothing which are the basic needs for human existence. Institutions such as those which are educational and medical are created to further develop people once the basic needs are met...The point of Africa for the Africans is more than just a slogan, it is a reality for our people. We can settle for nothing less than complete independence and unity of all Africa. By independence we mean total rejection of white colonialism and its subsidiary, neo-colonialism...This unified Africa must develop among other things an economic system based on traditional African Communalism.<sup>19</sup>

The retreat at the Franklinton Center led to a number of position papers that established the ideological principles of the institution. These documents emphasized the perspective that the future of Black education rested on a paradigm that focused on “Nation Building,” and MXLU's motivations grew to espouse self-reliance as the rightful “end-product of Black education and the beginning of a lasting and meaningful Black people hood.”<sup>20</sup>

In addition to the establishing of the ideological objectives of the University, the planning committee of the three-day retreat elected an interim committee to serve as “ the temporary decision making body until such time as the total University community was prepared to institute a permanent Board of Trustees.”<sup>21</sup> The interim committee functioned as a screening committee for prospective instructors or 'resource people,' as they would be referred to, for disseminating the curriculum of the independent Black institution. The committee also decided on the curriculum design, which was projected

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<sup>19</sup> IFCO Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>20</sup> “Position Paper for Malcolm X Liberation University”, John Henrik Clark Collection, Box 24 Folder 27, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>21</sup> “Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University, Spring 1970,” Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 12, Folder 3; “Malcolm X University Fact Sheet,” John Henrik Clark Collection, Box 24 Folder 27, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

to evolve to meet the needs of students as well as the ideological evolution of the University.<sup>22</sup>

The sixteen-member interim committee consisted of “Bertie Howard, a student of Duke University; James Vaughan of North Carolina Central in Durham; Faye Edwards, a program consultant at Cornell University; Q.T. Jackson, a student of Howard University in Washington, D.C.; T.D. Pawley, a lecturer at MIT; Jim Garrett, director of Black Studies Program at Federal City College; Jim (Kwame) McDonald of Rutgers University; Frank Williams coordinator for Black Students United for Liberation; Cleveland Sellers, instructor at Cornell University; Nelson Johnson of North Carolina A&T State University and National Chairman for SOBU; and Howard Fuller of Malcolm X Liberation University.”<sup>23</sup> From this committee, only about half of the members helped in actively making critical administrative decisions for the future of MXLU. Fuller, who was responsible for handling the initial administrative functions for MXLU, appointed a special 'Task Force' that consisted of Bertie Howard, Faye Edwards and Charles Hopkins of Duke University who was former president of Duke University's AFro-American Society. The 'Task Force,' only temporary, was accountable to the decision-making body of the MXLU interim committee.<sup>24</sup>

A major vantage point for the interim committee in the planning stages was that as early as June of that 1969 summer MXLU became chartered by the state of North Carolina. This achievement allowed the University to operate with exemption from federal income tax and the right to obtain and sell property as a not-for profit

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> “Malcolm X University Fact Sheet,” John Henrik Clark Collection, Box 24 Folder 27, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture. “Malcolm X University Fact Sheet dated 5/10/1969,” Box 12 Folder 3, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.



organization. The accomplishment of a gaining the legitimization through the state of North Carolina provided the institution with increased national appeal and also aided as a recruiting tool. This established aspect of the yet to be formulated University provided the interim committee and MXLU Task Force more leverage in the planning stages of MXLU throughout that summer of staff, faculty and advisory procurement.<sup>25</sup>

Consequently, the MXLU interim staff mailed position papers, fact sheets and newspaper articles nationwide to solidify the membership of MXLU's administrative body and structure. Throughout the summer of '69, Fuller and the MXLU staff worked in conjunction with SOBU student members and the interim committee by corresponding with prominent Black historians and writers such as John Henrik Clarke, Julian Mayfield and Ewart Guiner for the purposes of constructing an 'Advisory Committee'. This committee of prominent Black administrators and scholars later converged on October 2, 1969 at the home of ex-SNCC activist James Garrett in Washington, D.C. to discuss the status of MXLU and to address six major areas for improvement and development. In addition to the six critical areas there was significant discussion about a merger with the Center for Black Education in Washington, D.C., the brother institution of MXLU.<sup>26</sup>

The MXLU interim committee served until December of 1969 but was dismantled to establish a permanent governing body that was later known as 'The Council of Elders.'

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<sup>25</sup> "Malcolm X University Chartered," *The News and Observer*, June 7, 1969.; "Malcolm X University Chartered," *Durham Morning Herald*, Saturday, June 7, 1969.

<sup>26</sup> "Malcolm X University Fact Sheet," John Henrik Clarke Collection, Box 24 Folder 27, ; Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; "Malcolm X University Fact Sheet dated 5/10/1969," Box 12 Folder 3, *Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston*.; "Letter to Julian Mayfield from Howard Fuller 6/26/1969 re: Advisory committee"; "Letter to Julian Mayfield from Howard Fuller 9/29/1969 re: Advisory committee meeting"; The Center for Black Education (CBE) developed in Washington, D.C. as a result of Black community residents being dissatisfied with Federal City College (FCC). "The more sincere and analytical students and teachers that FCC and all institutions like it, deliberately skirted the main issue facing Black people in terms of education. One of CBE's institutional objectives was to fuse theory and ideology with practice."

The Council of Elders consisted of “three student representatives elected from the student body, the HNIC, two resource people of MLXU and nine representatives from various parts of the Black community.”<sup>27</sup> In addition to the Council, the administrative functions and responsibilities of MXLU were carried out by the staff that included the Director of Operations, a Public Information Officer, a Coordinator of Curriculum of Development, a Technical Assistant and Coordinator of Special Programs and an Office Manager.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to the governing body of MXLU, the University maintained a judicial structure called the 'Indaba Council' for the purposes of enforcing MXLU policy for staff and students. The Indaba Council was composed of seven members who were selected at random from the MXLU community. All MXLU community members were eligible to serve on the Indaba Council. In fact, each member of the MXLU community was required to serve at least one term on the council.<sup>29</sup>

The MXLU administration established guidelines and regulations that governed the staff and student body of the University. This system of governance emphasized the importance of conduct that was becoming to individuals that represented the MXLU family. The responsibility of enforcing University guidelines was given to the judicial structure of the institution and that of the Indaba Council. MXLU members had the right to bring charges against community members they identified as transgressing the rules of the community. If evidence substantiated the accusations, then the Indaba Council would decide the outcome with a majority vote of five out of seven members.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> “Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University, Spring 1970,” Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 12, Folder 3. Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> “Guidelines for the Indaba Council,” IFCO Records, Box 30 Folder 38, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

MXLU, therefore, provided not only pedagogical awareness of the Black Nationalist perspective of Pan-Africanism, but it indoctrinated students with the fervor of a military academy to in order to instill self-discipline in MXLU representatives. MXLU community members could be brought before the Indaba Council for infractions that included the possession of drugs and uncontrolled substances, theft, drunkenness or drinking on University or affiliated property, and for perjury before the Indaba Council. MXLU hoped to project a sense of community that would be reinforced through the University's regulations. Male and female students were expected to abide by personal codes of conduct that precluded displays of behavior that might project a negative image of MXLU as well as relationships with individuals that might prove harmful to the MXLU community. The non-fulfillment of responsibilities of the MXLU family could also be sanctioned.<sup>31</sup> These University regulations were instilled to ensure that the conduct of MXLU community members was becoming of young Black students who desired an alternative from the educational systems from which they had been liberated. University guidelines were applicable to staff and students alike.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid

<sup>32</sup> "IFCO summary of MXLU & Correspondence," n.d IFCO Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

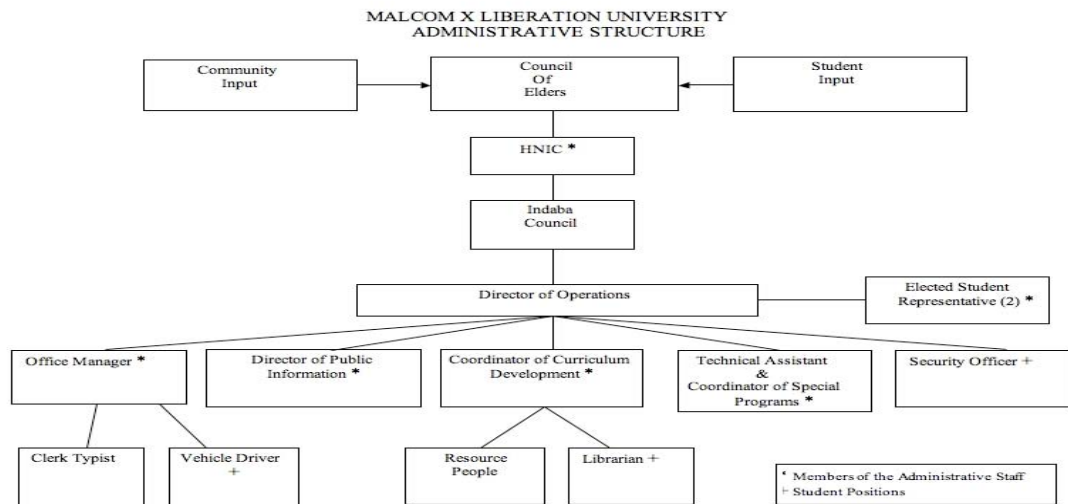


Figure 1. Original organizational structure of Malcolm X Liberation University

The organizational structure of Malcolm X Liberation University included more than just the base operations of the institution. The institutional components of MXLU were largely driven by the University's community involvement and expressed considerably through local community channels. For example, “On February 9, 1970 Malcolm X Liberation University in conjunction with two (2) other Durham Black Community organizations opened the Betty Shabazz Early Education Center.”<sup>1</sup> The Shabazz Center accommodated children of pre-school age (3-5 years of age) and serviced children from all over Greensboro with an emphasis on providing service to Greensboro's Public Housing Projects. The University constructed The Children of Africa Program, which operated in the Hampton Homes Housing Project, again servicing children of all ages. MXLU also established the Willie Grimes Educational Center targeted at students of high school academic standing. The high school center was set up for students in the Durham and Greensboro areas who were in danger of giving up on education all altogether. The Willie Grimes Educational Center worked in conjunction with the

<sup>1</sup> “Proposal For Malcolm X Liberation University Spring 1970,” Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 12 Folder 3, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

Teacher Corps training program of MXLU. The Teacher Corps' main purpose was to train and equip persons to provide instruction in the areas of political education by using an historical and cultural analysis to interpret issues related to the African world for the community. The formation of the Young African Warriors, a club for young Black males between the ages of ten and fourteen, also strengthened MXLU's community involvement. Patterned after the "Boy Scouts," the program was modified to align with the institution's concepts of Black Nation Building. Based on a request from the community, MXLU set up Political Education Seminars for adult learners in the Durham and Greensboro communities.<sup>2</sup>

The policymaking body of Malcolm X Liberation University included the combined functions of the HNIC/Mwalimu Mkuu or Master Teacher, the Council of Elders, Community Input, and Student Input. The administrative actions of the Mwalimu were held accountable to the structure of checks and balances established by the general governing body of the University. Most importantly, the construction of the Council of Elders aligned with the principles of African communalism espoused by the community of MXLU. The specific tasks done by MXLU personnel were seen as "functional roles." MXLU family and affiliates operated with the understanding that the roles of individuals were not privileged positions of authority for the potential misuse of power but rather positions delegated for the intention of the progression of African communities both domestic and transnational in representation.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.; "African Teachers Trained at MXLU," *The African Warrior*, February 5, 1971.; "Information on Malcolm X Liberation University March 18, 1971," IFCO Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>3</sup> "Malcolm X Liberation University: African Peoples' Ideological and Technical Institute"; "Malcolm X Liberation University Administrative Structure—Chart," Cleveland Sellers Collection Box, 12 Folder 4, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

The duties and responsibilities of the HNIC/Mwalimu Mkuu required periodic reports to the Council of Elders on the state of the University and recommendations on policy changes regarding administrative issues. The Mwalimu also served as the major fundraiser for MXLU, which was a projected duty for a grant writing position that would become available as the finances of the University became more abundant. Just as important as the Mwalimu was the role of the Director of Operations. This position, which was directly accountable to the Mwalimu, required the experiential and formal knowledge of grant writing and the navigation of staff issues of MXLU. The position of Director was also responsible for the evaluation of staff and faculty—the 'resource people'-of the University.<sup>4</sup>

The interim committee and the appointed Task Force's review and selection process for resource staff began during the summer of 1969. At this time the instructors for the 1969-1970 MXLU academic year were chosen for their respective fields and developed expertise. From the inception of the University, MXLU's resource staff provided a wide range of intellectual competencies as instructors. The expectation of resource personnel was to develop and teach pertinent information as it related to specific course areas. In addition, the resource staff was responsible for developing curriculum in conjunction with the academic coordinator. Examples of pedagogical duties and materials included annotated bibliographies of reading materials, a detailed course outline/syllabus, and an operating budget itemizing the costs of course resources.<sup>5</sup>

The majority of the resource staff comprised college graduates with extensive practical experience in their fields as researchers or instructors at other universities. An

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<sup>4</sup>“Malcolm X Liberation University Employee Handbook,” n.d. Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 12 Folder 7, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

example of these well-qualified staff was the French instructor of MXLU who was educated at a Historically Black College in North Carolina. The young woman majored in French and minored in Spanish. In addition, she gained the opportunity to study at the University of Lyon in France. She also acquired teaching experience at Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina. MXLU's resource staff also included instructors with educational backgrounds in technical engineering, anthropology and the agricultural sciences. Prior teaching experience of the resource staff included institutions such as the New Jersey State Teachers College and the University of Mexico. The initial MXLU resource staff also consisted of a Vietnam Veteran who was in charge of the curricular area of physical development as well as a graduate of Harvard's Law School who was put in charge of conducting political economy and ideological seminars. The major element for evaluation of prospective resource staff the level of competency the candidates displayed through evidence of their past teaching experience, the interview process and lesson plan demonstrations.<sup>6</sup>

The student selection process for MXLU was maintained on a similar basis in terms of evaluating applicants for the University. Admissions applicants introduced themselves by writing to the University, and the potential students underwent a personal interview with the admissions committee. Any individuals over the age of 18 years of age willing to accept the aims and objectives of MXLU was eligible for admission to the University. The student body of MXLU represented a wide range of geographical regions and educational backgrounds. Throughout the tenure of the University, MXLU

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<sup>6</sup> "Malcolm X Liberation University Spring 1970 proposal," Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 12 Folder 3; "Malcolm X Liberation University Employee Handbook," Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 12 Folder 7, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.; "Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University," Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

“received applications from the Congo (Kinshasa), Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guyana and Gambia.”<sup>7</sup> A situation that exemplifies this is Godfrey Mwakikagile of the East African country of Tanzania who came into contact with Fuller in 1972 while Fuller was in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. According to his book, *Relations Between Africans and African Americans: Misconceptions, Myths and Realities*, Mwakiagile met with Fuller at the Pan-African Skills Center that was established by African Americans living in Tanzania. Mwakikagile already aware of MXLU through reading SOBU's publication, *The African World*, expressed a deep interest in attending MXLU, and Fuller promised the eager young African student a scholarship to attend.<sup>8</sup> Many of the University's students also came to MXLU with the political experience of having formerly organized youth groups and worked/volunteered in co-ops and other segments of the Black community. MXLU's student body also included students who were drop-outs or who had been expelled from their former colleges and universities for political reasons.<sup>9</sup>

A prototype of this type of student is Yusufu Mosely, a former student of Chicago's Communiversity who expressed in his interview with the author his willingness to attend MXLU to advance his cultural awareness in the early 1970s. Mosely, a native of Chicago and product of the Chicago Public School System before entering the Communiversity on the city's South Side, recalled that Fuller came to the Communiversity to debate theoretical and ideological lines of Black Nationalism versus

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<sup>7</sup> “Malcolm X Liberation University Pamphlet 1971-1972,” Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>8</sup> “Malcolm X Liberation University Pamphlet 1971-1972,” Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; Godfrey Mwakikagile, *Relations Between Africans and African Americans: Misconceptions, Myths and Realities* (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: New Africa Press, 2007), 244-247.; Mwakikagile arrived in Greensboro in early November of 1972 and only stayed a few days at MXLU. But according to Mwakikagile, he changed his plans once he arrived in North Carolina and ended up in Michigan instead.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., Box 30 Folder 40.



Marxism and Socialism at the time. According to Mosely, MXLU appealed to many of Chicago's Communiversity students because of the reality of an all Black educational institution being developed in the South. Mosely recalled that he and many of the students wanted to become apart of MXLU. Mosely had not spent an extensive amount of time outside of Chicago during the latter part of his teenage years but reflected that he was willing to attend MXLU to gain the experience of the new University.<sup>10</sup>

Another account of a student whose social and political awareness led him to choose an educational institution more akin to his level of maturation as a Black student was a young Peter Scott. Scott, having come from the inner-city environment of Philadelphia, eagerly awaited his chance to attend a University for the opportunity to effect change by studying law, to one day represent those affected by marginalization and discrimination. Possessing a keen understanding of his social surroundings, Scott's entrance into post-secondary education came largely as a result of predominately white educational institutions' urgency to enroll as many Black students as possible in one of many suppression tactics of Black student campus revolt. Thus, Peter Scott at eighteen years of age was admitted to Brown University on full scholarship; however, the one-year that he spent at Brown University was an unfulfilling experience for Scott. The young collegiate desired an educational experience that spoke to his cultural, political and social existence. Scott had given up the possibility of attending such an institution until he had the opportunity to hear Fuller speak at Brown in the spring of 1970. Scott, (who was

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<sup>10</sup>Bro. Yusufu Mosely, interview with author, Chicago, Illinois. February 11, 2008.; During the summer months of 1970, Fuller traveled to Chicago for a conference sponsored and held by the Communiversity. Fuller, who was known to attract attendees through his charismatic oratory and moving rhetorical style, felt the backlash of conference attendees when according to the newsletter published by the Communiversity, "Viewpoint: Conference Time." *Communiviews.* , November 1970, pp 3,5.; The "brother" (Sadaukai), Head of Malcolm X Liberation University, aroused immense hostility when he attempted to talk about the mechanics of Pan-Africanism and attacked the lifestyle of the conference goers, calling them "daytime revolutionaries, night-time party-goers, African fashion models."

twenty years age at the time of interview) recounted his experiences and rationale for choosing MXLU after one year at Brown in the *Greensboro Record* as the third installment of a four-part article series that highlighted MXLU. Interviewed by the *Greensboro Record's* Peter Leo, a snippet of Scott's interview presented itself as such:

Leo: Do you consider your decision to come to Malcolm X a radical or militant action?

Scott: I consider it a necessary action. It's obvious to me that Black folks need control of their institutions particularly educational institutions. Malcolm X (Liberation University) stopped talking. When I was at Brown that's all folks were doing – but Malcolm X had a program: theory and practice...Fuller had hit home. I had the standard excuse for a Black person wanting to become a lawyer that is being able to use the, even though not being in the system.<sup>11</sup>

Scott's decision to leave Brown was largely effected by a series of events from 1969 to the spring of 1970 that increased his jaded perspective and personal rejection of the American system. One very unfortunate event that struck Scott most was the unprovoked raid on the Chicago West-Side apartment of Fred Hampton, the Illinois Chairman of the Black Panther Party. The raid resulted in Hampton's death and sent reverberations throughout the national Black community; hence widening the gap of Black folk's faith in the American system. Scott, who was a part of that greater majority, also felt some of the strongest resentment toward the country and wanted to be a part of the change process. In the interview for the *Greensboro Record*, he commented that,

..he's getting from Malcolm X 'what I expected and a whole lot more.' The school he says, is a satisfying mix of theory and practical work which has sharpened his perceptions and given him technical skills. Most Black people in America have an isolated point of view. They believe there's a struggle to be waged, but most fail to see the connection with the worldwide struggle.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> "At MXLU: 'Meeting Needs': Third of Four Parts", *Greensboro Record*. 26 November 1971.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

The annual tuition for Malcolm X Liberation University was \$300.00, and this fee was flexible according to the student's financial need. The annual cost for room and board was \$20.00 per month or \$200.00 per year. Students were encouraged to pay more if capable and, in many instances, the students were not even able to provide the base amount of tuition. MXLU was able to provide a limited amount of financial assistance to students, and over the duration of the University, the majority of costs for a good majority of the students at MXLU was assumed by MXLU.<sup>13</sup> In addition to the tuition of MXLU, other financial needs of the University were offset through speaking engagements of the MXLU administration and staff.<sup>14</sup> More of MXLU's financial aspects will be fully explicated in the "Historical Developments" section of the University.

The location(s) of Malcolm X Liberation University was initially in the Southern City of Durham, North Carolina, which during the years of 1969-1970 had a population by some estimates of between 75,000-90,000 residents. Of the total population, approximately one-third of the population was made up of Black residents and many of them of middle-class standing and very well organized politically and socially.<sup>15</sup> Durham, a city that prided itself on its large tobacco industry, also gained a reputation as a center for the Black Bourgeoisie. Much of this recognition in Durham's Black community was due to "the remarkable success of the North Carolina Mutual Life

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<sup>13</sup> "Malcolm X University to Open In Durham as Militants' School" *New York Times*, October 27, 1969; "Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University 1970," Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 12 Folder 3, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston..

<sup>14</sup> "Malcolm X Liberation University Quarterly Report for IFCO Nov 1, 1970-Jan 31, 1971," Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 37. Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>15</sup> "Malcolm X University to Open In Durham as Militants' School," *New York Times*, October 27, 1969; "Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University 1970," Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 12 Folder 3, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

Insurance Company, the largest Black financial institution in the world, and the host of African American businesses that grew up around the Mutual.”<sup>16</sup>

Within this socio-political context of the Jim Crow South, the main classroom for MXLU would be located at 426-28 Pettigrew Street in Durham, and this site became the initial center for all of the institution’s academic and community activities. The building of the Durham location was an abandoned warehouse, which was scheduled to be torn down because of urban renewal, and the surrounding neighborhood was of low socio-economic conditions and primed for the cities urban development program. In August of 1970, MXLU relocated its central operations to 708 Asheboro Street in Greensboro due to the expansive progress of the University's curriculum and political activism of the institution. Greensboro, also with a third of its 150,000 total population being black, had historically been more militant than the area of Durham. It was the birthplace of the student sit-in movement of the 60s , which made MXLU’s move highly anticipated.<sup>17</sup>

The new location of MXLU, actually two buildings, was the former education building of a church and was obtained by the Black Masonic Lodge of Greensboro from which MXLU rented the property. The decision to move from Durham to Greensboro, North Carolina, therefore, was based not only on the demands of the institution’s improved curriculum but also the support gained from being in the same city as North Carolina A&T University, which was a technical institution. There was a strong belief that individual faculty members of A&T University would be able to assist in the

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<sup>16</sup> Christina Greene, *Women and the Black Freedom Movement in Durham, North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 9.

<sup>17</sup> “Malcolm X Liberation University Pamphlet 1971-1972,” Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 40, “Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University,” Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization Records Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture; “Malcolm X Moving or Expanding?” *Durham Sun*, A-4, August 22, 1970.

continued progression of MXLU. In addition to A&T staff, MXLU benefited greatly from the support of SOBU once MXLU relocated to Greensboro. MXLU rented ten houses located around Greensboro's Black community for the purpose of living accommodations for students, resource people and staff. MXLU's developments and political coalitions will be expanded upon more in the subsequent section dedicated to the 'Historical Development of MXLU 1969-1973'.<sup>18</sup>

The issue of accreditation for MXLU as for many of the other independent Black educational institutions of the 1960s and 70s was one of an unconventional and non-state/federal regulated approach to student matriculation through the MXLU program. According to MXLU's administrative aims for the University, accreditation could only come from the Black Community. The primary measure of evaluation for MXLU would be its ability to produce students who could make a substantial contribution to the global liberation of Black folks. This contribution would be made through the "Nation Building" skills acquired through institutions like MXLU.<sup>19</sup> Surprisingly, the practice of dismissing state and federal measures and jurisdiction over educational validation was not an anomalous undertaking for MXLU. An example of this can be found in the establishment of the Uhuru Sasa Shule (Freedom Now School) of the larger "The East Organization" began by Jitu Weusi. The Shule (Kiswahili for school) shared a very similar outlook on accreditation as it relates to independent Black institutions. Uhuru Sasa Shule, which was located in Brooklyn, New York, was established in 1970 under

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> "Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University Spring 1970", Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 12 Folder 3, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

the objectives of Black Nationalism and serviced students from primary levels to adult ages.<sup>20</sup> According to the founder, Jitu Weusi,

The accreditation of any institution has got to come from the people and that the people accredit it by their involvement; by taking active steps to put their children in the school and [becoming] a part of the school; and by their sanction of what the school is doing...Following this line of thought, in 1973, a community of independent Black schools in Brooklyn were organized to form the “Brooklyn Family Schools” in the spirit of collectivity and accountability (to each other).<sup>21</sup>

Institutional validation from the larger community’s reinforcement of its goals and principles became a significant force in the operational effectiveness of MXLU. The evaluation process for MXLU was considered an “ongoing” process that would involve the collective efforts of the entire MXLU family. A critical aspect of the institution’s continuing improvement was hinged on community input. As aforementioned, the preliminary stages of establishing MXLU involved the recruitment of the University's Council of Elders for evaluating the Task Force's guidelines, consultation and establishment of MXLU's aims and objectives. This evaluation process also consisted of correspondence with the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO). IFCO, which played an integral role in the establishment of MXLU, assisted greatly in the evaluative process for the University. This is exemplified in the quarterly progress reports generated by MXLU for the IFCO headquarters in New York City that date back to early 1970. MXLU's internal evaluation process also consisted of both resource people and students alike taking part in an intensive five days of University testing at the end of MXLU's academic year. The examinations aided as curricular and administrative determinants for how the University administration would proceed the upcoming

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<sup>20</sup> Kwasi Konadu, *Truth Crushed to Earth Will Rise Again: The East Organization and the Principles and Practice of Black Nationalist Development* (Trenton, New Jersey & Asmara Eritrea: Africa World Press 2005).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 70.

academic year. MXLU also granted a certificate as authorization of completion of the school's program. The combination of quarterly reports generated for overall feedback and MXLU's internal evaluation aided greatly in the institution's progress.<sup>22</sup> The theoretical approach of MXLU became just as important for the establishment of curricular parameters and conceptual guidelines by which the institution would gain its renowned approach to "Nation Building."

#### The Theoretical and Ideological Basis of Malcolm X Liberation University

The theoretical and ideological approach of Malcolm X Liberation University was Pan-Africanism with a utilitarian conceptualization of "Nation Building" as a means of achieving the projected goals of liberation for Africans throughout the Diaspora. MXLU viewed "Nation Building" as a construct of duality that was wedded through revolutionary thought and action. This reciprocal relationship would be most effective when theory and practice converged to yield tangible results. From this interaction, skills, self-determination and work would emerge to produce the tangible results of "Nation Building" for Black folks on a global scale.<sup>23</sup>

As a Pan-Africanist educational institution, MXLU linked the commonalities of oppression that Africans faced throughout the Diaspora to provide what the University considered to be a broad-based objective interpretation of domestic and transnational occurrences that related to Black people as a whole. In 1971, MXLU produced a theoretical and ideological manifesto entitled, *Understanding The African Struggle: A*

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<sup>22</sup> "Malcolm X Liberation University Quarterly Report for IFCO, Nov. 1, 1970 – Jan 31, 1971," IFCO Records Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; "Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University," Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>23</sup>"Understanding the African Struggle: A series of essays by the Ideological Research Staff of Malcolm X Liberation University," (Greensboro, NC: "X" Press, 1971).

*Series of Essays by the Ideological Research Staff of Malcolm X Liberation University.*

As an institution that espoused the ideation of Pan-Africanism, MXLU's articulated four major tenets on which the University would base its operational goals and objectives.

Those tenets included,

1. All people of African descent are considered Africans-not Afro-Americans, Afro Cubans, Afro-Europeans or any other kind of hyphenated species.
2. Common heritage and oppression are inseparable links of all Africans globally.
3. The acquisition of land is critical for self-determination and “Nation Building”.
4. A critique of Capitalism and the eventual adoption of and development of an economic system based on the principles of Scientific African Socialism.<sup>24</sup>

MXLU was significantly influenced by and drew largely from the work of Julius K. Nyerere. Nyerere, the then president of the United Republic of Tanzania, had constructed a social and political outline for the African country of Tanzania based on a socialist political economy referred to as “Ujamma” which means “extended family” or “family hood.” Nyerere stated that socialism is an ideology that can only be implemented by people who have a sincere interest in putting the principles into practice for the benefit of the people. Nyerere strongly believed that leadership should never live on another's labor; neither should the leader have capitalist or feudal tendencies. Within the 'UJAMMA' governmental framework of Tanzania, an education geared on the principles of self-reliance would meet the needs and aspirations of an agricultural society proud of its Africaness.<sup>25</sup> In Nyerere's book, *Education for Self-Reliance*, he maintained the position that,

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>25</sup> Julius K. Nyerere, *UJAMMA: Essays on Socialism* (Dar es Salaam & London: Oxford University



The educational systems in different kind of society in the world have been, and are, very different in organization and content. They are different because the societies providing the education are different, and because education, whether it be formal or informal has a purpose. That purpose is to transmit from one generation to the next the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of the society, and to prepare the young people for their future membership of the society and their active participation in its maintenance or development.<sup>26</sup>

As an independent Black educational institution, MXLU sought to recondition the minds of Black youth, which were sorely effected by the psychological conditions of imperialism; these had produced internalized oppression amongst Black youth. MXLU sought to train Black folks to engage the realities of their domestic environments for the purpose of survival. The basis of this survival training addressed the relevance and need for Black education. From the outset, MXLU's approach to the educational process was based on the conceptualization that education was and is an expression of cultural values, skills and ethics for the perpetuation of a particular lifestyle. However, the critical contradiction was that the application of the educational values set put forth by the American educational system spoke contrary to the historical, political and economic experiences of Black people in America.<sup>27</sup> A quote taken from the October 25, 1969 inaugural issue of Malcolm X Liberation University's publication, *The African Warrior*, provides a poignant perspective on the matter:

If the American educational system is an expression of American culture and American culture is simply the result of the interaction of certain forces, namely capitalism, slavery, racism, and imperialism, which combined to form the American life-style, then values which issue from American education can only serve to support and perpetuate the above named dehumanizing processes...Can

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Press, 1968), 44-45; "An Internal Affair: Tanzanian Education System," *The African World*, September 16, 1972.; "The Arusha Declaration presented courtesy of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Black Unitarian Universalist Caucus, Inc.," IFCO Records, Box 47 Folder 6, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>26</sup> Julius K. Nyerere, *UJAMMA: Essays on Socialism* (Dar es Salaam & London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 44-45.

<sup>27</sup> "Malcolm X U: then, now and future" and "Why Malcolm X," *The African Warrior: A Malcolm X Liberation University Publication--Dedication Day Issue*, October 25, 1969.

Black people then realistically seek their liberation through participating in the process which emanate from the very sources of their oppression?<sup>28</sup>

MXLU's institutional emergence as an answer to the aforementioned question was based on a revolutionary ideology that projected consciousness-raising through skill acquisition for Nation Building. MXLU obtained this objective through the concept of “communalism.” James “Jim” Lee, an instructor of MXLU, provided insight into the concept of communalism during an interview for the *African Warrior* publication. In his critique of the “American System,” Lee spoke of the deficiency of the human element as it related to the entire governmental structure of which the educational system is a byproduct. Lee stated that, “We need to begin to rely on African value systems which place more emphasis on human life and communalism than on the concepts of making profit and owning property.”<sup>29</sup>

This perspective reinforced the MXLU disposition of an educational experience that mirrored a way of life for those who saw themselves as citizens of the Pan-African Diaspora. The training for this citizenship would begin with Black students beginning to adopt a value system and not just an academic system. The indoctrination for this way of life would begin with student's divorcement of individualism to a selfless approach of a University community that would share textbooks, food and other material goods and services for the improvement of the institutional structure.<sup>30</sup> “In addition to the sharing of material goods, the students will actually experience living in a communal manner and

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> “An interview with Jim Lee,” *The African Warrior: A Malcolm X Liberation University Publication-- Dedication Day Issue*. October 25, 1969. At the time of the interview, Jim Lee was the Training Director for the Foundation for Community Development (FCD).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

this will involve the sharing of work responsibilities and other responsibilities necessary for the functioning of the community as a community.”<sup>31</sup>

#### MXLU's Community Education & Teacher Training Programs

Many of the educational institutions that evolved out of the tradition of Marcus Garvey's conceptual framework of self-determination and institution building for Africans at home and abroad were developed by and for students of high school and college age. But Malcolm X Liberation University's identification of the needs of the Black communities of Durham and Greensboro extended beyond the parameters of post-secondary education for Black students. This identification for community assistance led to the development of auxiliary programs of MXLU for the communities that aided in the development of MXLU's operational framework of “Nation Building” and school-community reciprocity. Therefore, to compliment the liberation university concept, MXLU provided the early Betty Shabazz Early Education Center and the Willie Grimes Educational Center to fill the void of Pre-K-12, African-centered education in the Durham and Greensboro area. With the development of the centers came the “Teacher Corps Training Program” which reinforced an African- centered pedagogy and reproduction of instructors that espoused the ideation of MXLU. In addition to the aforementioned centers, MXLU also provided the Adult/Community education seminars for Black residents of the community who desired an experience of post-secondary education without officially enrolling into MXLU.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> “IFCO Summary of Malcolm X Liberation University,” n.d. IFCO Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; “Information on Malcolm X Liberation University March 13, 1971,” IFCO Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture; “Malcolm X Liberation University: African Peoples' Ideological and Technical Institute

Malcolm X Liberation University formed the Betty Shabazz Early Education Center on February 9, 1970. MXLU's work with the surrounding community organizations of Durham produced the pre-school for the purpose of meeting the demands of providing pre-school aged Black children (two and a half to seven years) with positive socio-cultural images. MXLU promoted the philosophy that a meaningful education should start at the ages of the pre-school level for the early development of consciousness. The initial exposure of an African-centered curriculum would aid greatly in combating the vulnerability of psychological colonization. The center existed as an extension of MXLU to serve the purpose of preparing young brothers and sisters of African descent for commitment to the liberation struggle.<sup>33</sup> According to a 1971 pamphlet on MXLU's Early Education Center,

Young brothers and sisters attending African Children's Education Centers will be exposed to a Pan-African ideology. This ideology outlines the fact that Black People are Africans that Africa is the motherland and our allegiance is to our people: that African people all over the world are brothers and sisters: and that we are inseparably linked by our common heritage and our common oppression. The African Children's Center will endeavor to instill the attitudes that we as Black people need for nation building and self-reliance.<sup>34</sup>

In keeping with its advocacy of self-reliance, MXLU established the Early Education Center as an independent school with no connection to the larger state guidelines of North Carolina. The control and accreditation of the center mirrored MXLU in that the program's validation and assistance came from the Black community in which it was located.

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Pamphlet, "n.d. in author's possession.

<sup>33</sup> "Malcolm X Liberation University Pamphlet 1971-1972," Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization, (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

The curriculum of the Early Education Center was formulated to address the needs of self-awareness and the development of critical learning skills. The center's main objective was to prepare children of African descent to be eager for future engagement in academic settings that would reinforce the center's indoctrination of Black consciousness-raising. Children who came through the program would "receive a body of knowledge about African life and what it is to be African, that is unobtainable in most public and private schools."<sup>35</sup> A significant component of this conditioning process centered on positive social values which included a sense of family hood, love for African people, a sense of communalism and an emphasis on functionalism that was foreseen as concrete versus being an abstract phenomenon.<sup>36</sup>

The curriculum and learning experiences of the African Children Education Center for students ages two and a half through seven included perception of sizes, shapes and colors, visual and oral discriminative skills, vocabulary building and speaking proficiency, mastery of numbers and numerical operations, basic reading skills, science, language skills, Swahili, writing, dance & drama, agriculture, physical development, art, African and American world history and culture.<sup>37</sup> The instruction of the adolescents involved original stories and songs created by the center's instructors to illustrate events in African history, a pedagogical concept, or commentary on African culture. The stories and songs were in the traditional African languages of Swahili, Yoruba, Hausa and Ibo.<sup>38</sup>

The mathematical and science concepts of the African Children's Education Center involved the use of numerical operations, basic elements of set theory, simple

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and some fractions. The center's usage of the science curriculum was designed to "expose students to the creative and practical elements of learning that satisfy a child's natural curiosity."<sup>39</sup> The usage of science in the curriculum of the African Children's Education Center was intended to motivate young Black children through the usage of scientific methods and to direct the student's inquisitive energy into a systematic and analytical engagement of problem-solving.<sup>40</sup>

MXLU's additional satellite institution, the Willie Grimes Community School, materialized as an afterschool project to accommodate Black youth of high school standing in the Durham and Greensboro areas of North Carolina. The Grimes School addressed the needs of Black students who were either on the verge or had dropped out of school all together. Importantly, "The Grimes School, in one of its programs, had given students the opportunity for work-study with community organizations such as Greensboro Association of Poor People and the NAACP."<sup>41</sup> The operation of both the Willie Grimes Community School and the Betty Shabazz/Africa Children's Education Center were run in conjunction and largely constructed by MXLU's teacher training program, the 'Teacher Corps.'

MXLU's Teacher Corps program was designed to train and "equip persons to give basic instruction in the areas of (1) Political education using historical and social analysis to interpret the African World (2) Basic math and (3) Basic physical sciences and all related areas."<sup>42</sup> The Teacher Corps training program was divided into the areas of early

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> "Information on Malcolm X Liberation University March 13, 1971," IFCO Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture; "Malcolm X Liberation University Proposal for CHD-In House Use," n.d. IFCO Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>42</sup> "African Teachers Trained at MXLU," *African Warrior*, February 5, 1971.

learning and adult learning from which the student teachers of MXLU would instruct and fulfill their teaching requirements at either the Betty Shabazz/Africa Children's Education Center as primary instructors, or at the Willie Grimes Community School for those who desired to engage in adult instruction. Another outlet for 'Teacher Corps' members to improve and exercise their pedagogical skills was the Community/Political Education Seminars for adult learners.<sup>43</sup>

The structure of the 'Teacher Corps' program required all student teachers to undergo an in-depth study and research of African World Civilization and the ideological underpinnings of Pan-Africanism or Pan-African Nationalism. In addition, Teacher Corp members were also provided training in the instruction of mathematical and physical sciences. Those students who advanced beyond the initial phases of the Teacher Corps training program would later undertake the second phase of the program schedule which included "(1) Coordinating instruction and political education at Willie Grimes Community School (2) Presenting lecture, papers, monitoring quest seminars and discussion sessions. These students also present papers and lead discussion topics within the Teacher Corps and the seminars at the University. (3) Collect and edit materials for the development of educational techniques and (4) the continued ideological development of students and the University are the responsibilities of second year students."<sup>44</sup>

Teacher Corp students involved in the early learning component of the program had the responsibilities of (1) assisting in the development of the Betty Shabazz/African Children's Education Early Education Center (2) developing the educational materials that would be utilized by the staff of the Center and for public distribution outside of the

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.; "Information on Malcolm X Liberation University March 13, 1971," IFCO Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

Center (3) development of pedagogical strategies and (4) continuing the ideological improvement and development of students at the Early Education Center. The Teacher Corps students and staff of the center also sponsored canned food drives for the community of Greensboro as well.<sup>45</sup>

Upon a request from the people in the community, MXLU established the adult education/community seminars on topics and educational areas that were almost identical to the curriculum of MLXU. The institutional objectives and classes of MXLU were outlined and offered weekly to maximize the academic involvement of adults in “the Black community who work during the day and otherwise could not participate in the University curriculum.”<sup>46</sup> Significantly, the level of instruction and curricular activity geared toward adult learners for the community seminars was in no way deficient in the energies and resources expended for MXLU's regular university schedule. The community seminar's intent and impact was best displayed in the programmatic outline for the weekly adult learners.

The MXLU adult seminars aimed at addressing four major areas of political education for the adult learners. These areas included: (1) *Education*, which provided information to the African community concerning the historical and cultural roots of Black people from earliest times to the present. This also included a Diasporic lens for the enhancement of understanding the Pan-Africanist experience. (2) *Politicization* – this segment provided the opportunity to increase the political awareness of community residents through critical analysis of socio-historical texts and also the contemporary

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<sup>45</sup> “African Teachers Trained at MXLU,” *African Warrior*, February 5, 1971.

<sup>46</sup> “Information on Malcolm X Liberation University March 13, 1971,” IFCO Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; “Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University Spring 1970,” Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 12 Folder 3, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.



experiences of Black folks. This methodology was also infused with the conceptual framework of Pan-Africanism/Black Nationalism. (3) *Mobilization* – by using the necessary ideological and theoretical input of domestic and global struggle, this segment provided an articulation of how to engage community participation from a conscious perspective. This facet of the seminar aimed at maintaining the global interrelatedness between Black folks in Greensboro and the brothers and sisters on the African continent. (4) Services – this component stressed the immediate urgency to provide support to the Black community that existed outside MXLU. This would be achieved through maintaining contact with Black folks in the community and by continuing to nurture the relationships that developed between them and MXLU. This further reinforced the meaning behind the concept of “peoplehood” amongst Africans worldwide.<sup>47</sup>

MXLU provided a diversified course approach that included films, panels, lectures, discussions sessions, and the general readings from the course curriculum. One of the films used as a teaching tool by the resource staff of MLXU was the “Opening Day Ceremonies” film of MXLU. This provided the adult learner with insight on not only the operations of the University, but the film showing also gave a glimpse of the combined efforts needed to inaugurate MXLU. The seminars also featured historical, ideological and analytical materials constructed around the thematics of “Independent African Civilization, European Penetration of Africa, Slavery, Colonialism, Neo-Colonialism, and Nation building.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> “Malcolm X Liberation University Community Seminars Information Packet” n.d. IFCO Records Box 30 Folder 37. *Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture*

<sup>48</sup> “Malcolm X Liberation University Community Seminars Information Packet,” n.d., IFCO Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

The course content/curriculum of MLXU's adult seminars was broken into four parts: (1) the *Historical Background* of African people which had two sub-components that examined pre-colonial Africa's civilizations and the colonial period of the African continent that covered the European invasion. The pre-colonial section entailed the importance of African geography and land to the cultural development of African people. This section also provided a political survey of African states that include countries such as Ethiopia and Egypt. The seminar curriculum referred to the colonial period as the “European Rape and Penetration of Africa.” This section analyzed African colonization and the effects of imperialism on Africa and the by-product of slavery as a global enterprise. This section also examined neo-colonialism in the context of contemporary African independence and the reciprocal historical relationship of colonialism to neo-colonialism. (2) *Nature and Character of African Oppression* assisted adult learners through identification analysis of institutional controls which produced both social and psychological mechanisms of oppression. This section also discussed Euro-American identity and the meaning/meanings of “African community.” Also examined was the importance of land as a determinant factor for independence versus dependence. Within this discussion of land was the subject of cultural autonomy as it related to the land. (3) *Ideological Development* of the adult seminar analyzed and discussed the possible solutions to oppressive conditions. Discussed were alternatives such as integration, separation and Black capitalism. This component explicated the terminology of “revolution” and “Nation Building” and also provided insight into the processes of institutional development in America and on the contemporary African continent. (4) The section of *Special Seminars*, which was offered periodically, covered topic areas that

included but were not limited to technological needs of African people, medical and nutritional needs of African people, and the theme of Communication and Nation Building.<sup>49</sup>

The materials and resources for MXLU's adult seminars were broken into three categories: the Historical Background of African World Civilization, Nature and Character of African Oppression, and readings on Ideological development.

The section on (1) *Historical Background* made use of readings such as *Malcolm X on Afro-American History* by Malcolm X, *Before the Mayflower* by Lerone Bennett, *Black Men of the Nile* by Yusef Ben Jochanan, and an essay compiled by the research staff of MXLU entitled, "Rape and Penetration of Africa." The section (2) *Nature and Character of African Oppression* examined readings and scholarly works including *Black Awakening in Capitalist America* by Robert Allen, Kwame Nkrumah's *Neo-Colonialism, Introduction to Neo-Colonialism* by Jack Woddis, and position papers and selected works provided by scholarly journals such as the *Black Scholar* and *Black World*. The adult seminar's final curricular component of (3) *Ideological Development* engaged the texts of *Malcolm X Speaks* by Malcolm X, *Black Power* by Charles V, Hamilton and Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture), *Black Messiah* by Albert Cleage, *A Black Theology of Liberation* by James Cone, Julius Nyerere's *Education for Self Reliance*, excerpts from the Nation of Islam's weekly newspaper, *Muhammad Speaks* and also position papers that were developed by the staff of the Center for Black Education (CBE) of Washington, D.C.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

In addition to the attempts at addressing the needs of the Black community through the aforementioned programs, MXLU also provided an intellectual space for the engagement of ideas through panels and workshops by working in conjunction with college students from North Carolina A&T as well as Bennett College.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid. ; “Youth Learns About Africa,” *The African Warrior*, July 1971.

<b>Time</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Sat</b>	<b>Sun</b>
7:30	P.D	P.D.	P.D.	P.D.	P.D.	Selected Tech	Free
8:30	Skill Area	Skill Area	Skill Area	Skill Area	Pol. Econ	Sel. Tech	-----
10:30	Skill Area	Skill Area	Skill Area	Skill Area	Pol. Econ	Sel. Tech	-----
11:30	Skill Area	Skill Area	Skill Area	Skill Area	Pol. Econ	Work	----- -
12:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	----- -
1:30	Skill Area	Physical Science	Community Organizing	Speech	Sel. Tech	Work	----- -
2:30	Skill Area	Physical Science	Community Organizing	Speech	Sel. Tech	Work	----- -
3:30	Seminar	Seminar	Seminar	Seminar	Seminar	Work	----- -
4:30	Seminar	Seminar	Seminar	Seminar	Seminar	Work	----- -
5:30	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	----- -
6:30	Free-----	----- -	-----	----- -	----- -	----- -	-----
7:30	T. C Community School	Math	T.C. Community School	Physical Science	Math	----- -	-----
8:30	-----	Math	----- -	Physical Science	Math	----- -	----- -

Table Key:

P.D. - Physical Development

T.C. - Teacher Corps

Selected Tech. - Selected Technical Area (e.g. Communications, Engineering, Bio Medics)

Figure 2. MXLU Weekly Schedule<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "MXLU Schedule," n.d., IFCO Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

The schedule reflects a full day's activity and MXLU's emphasis on students acquiring a skill or technical area. Students were either engaged in the required areas of the first year curriculum or the technical areas of the student's nation building program.

#### The Curriculum & Related Projects of Malcolm X Liberation University

MXLU aimed at producing Food Scientists, Tailors, Architects, Engineers, Medics, Communications Technicians, Teachers, Administrators and Linguists. The achievement of these individuals meant that, MXLU would fuse theory with practice for the production of a pragmatic framework within which Black folks could see the results of a relevant education that addressed immediate needs. An additional aspect of the curriculum was the fostering and reinforcement of a positive disposition towards the necessary physical work needed to produce tangible results. MXLU's emphasis on critically analyzing political, social and economic systems and all global institutions of colonizing societies became paramount as a standardized provision for MXLU students who sought a framework to develop Black consciousness. The curriculum also aimed at fusing projects with the surrounding community to encourage the engagement of the extended university concept.<sup>2</sup>

The entire course of study for MXLU was three years. Every student was required to spend at least two of those years studying the MXLU curriculum and one year teaching at the University. The MXLU scheduled curriculum was separated into two parts, part A and part B.

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<sup>2</sup> "Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University Spring 1970," Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 12 Folder 3, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.; "Malcolm X Liberation University Pamphlet 1971-1972," Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

Part A: The first year student at MXLU engaged in what the University considered to be the re-ordering of priorities, development of a Pan-Africanist perspective and “de-colonization” of the mind. The first year curriculum was composed of seven required areas that included 1) History 2) Development of Black Political Thought 3) Language 4) Cultural Expression 5) Speech 6) Seminars, which consisted of three topic areas of a) development of the colonized mind b) community organization and c) political systems, and lastly, 7) physical development.

Students were responsible for the intensive study of the first five areas for two-month increments totaling ten months for Part A of the curriculum. The component of physical development was held every Friday throughout the academic calendar and languages were taught for one hour per day from Monday through Thursday with an emphasis on three essential languages combining for a total of three months spent per language for a total of nine months for the language component. The languages included French, Spanish and Swahili. (An extensive section on the 'Floating Swahili” program will be provided later on in the MXLU curriculum section.)

Part B: The second and third years of the curriculum were constructed around the theme of Nation Building, which involved intensive study and training in a technical skill area. The technical training for the development of Nation Building training began after the student's initial ten months and included fieldwork placement in which the MXLU student provided their skill to the Black community. MXLU's curriculum development department's initial intention was to have twelve concentration areas for students to enter into for their development in Part B. But the University later decreased the areas to four primary areas of concentration for students to enter into. The four areas included 1) Bio-

Medics 2) Communication 3) Agriculture and 4) Engineering which consisted of three sub-areas of study-- a) electrical b) mechanical and c) construction.

## Part A

### *History*

The development of MXLU's history course was separated into four components: Independent African Civilization, Slavery, Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism. The course on Independent African Civilization examined various social aspects on the pre-colonial African continent. The first section analyzed African geography, topography, climate and the natural resources of the continent. Also discussed was the significance and importance of distinguishing the characteristics of written and oral history from the African continent; a section on African religious practices and metaphysics was also developed for the course. The section of Independent African Civilization also integrated a comparative study of African religions and the anthropological origins of 'race' as a social construction. The empires of the Songhai and Ghana were also discussed.<sup>3</sup>

The history course on slavery placed emphasis on the institution of slavery and the defining characteristics that define the experiences relating to slavery on the African continent and throughout the Diaspora. The course highlighted how African culture had developed and been distributed globally due to global displacement, and the course also covered the efforts towards resisting various processes of oppression.

The sections of both Colonialism and Neo-colonialism were formulated to equip students with the necessary tools to critically assess the various forces and tactics of colonial oppression throughout the world. The course entailed discussions of

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.; Chuck Hopkins, "Interim Report: Malcolm X Liberation University," *Negro Digest/Black World* 19, no. 1-12(March 1970), 41-42.



imperialism, antebellum United States and Latin American governments in this context as well. As the section on Colonialism matured, Walter Rodney's seminal work, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, was integrated into the course readings. This scholarly intervention was undertaken primarily due to the relationship that was developed between Rodney and the Mwalimu of Malcolm X Liberation University, Owusu Sadaukai (Howard Fuller).<sup>4</sup> It proved to be a valuable one as the course on 'colonialism' became a significant tool for interrogating the "Euro-American, military-industrial complex and its strangle hold on the African continent as well as its dehumanizing effect on every aspect of the African culture from the very beginning of the European penetration on the African soil."<sup>5</sup> In addition, MXLU's historical sub-component on 'neo-colonialism' was developed to:

...study the political and economic determinatives and manifestations of neo-colonialism (post-colonial imperialism) in order to understand and present suppression of African economic development and world leadership. Emphasis was placed on: 1) the relationship between neo-colonialism and capitalism 2) the economic dependency of the Western world on Africa 3) methods of neo-colonial control in Africa and 4) methods of resistance used against neo-colonialism in Africa.<sup>6</sup>

### The Development of Black Political Thought

The Part A course component was established by the curriculum board of MXLU to be taught throughout the second half of the student's first academic year. The course provided an analytical interpretation of the scholarly works of Black writers and theoreticians in the United States and abroad. The course aimed at grounding the

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<sup>4</sup> "Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University Spring 1970," Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 12 Folder 3, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.; Howard Fuller, interview with author, June 30, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> "Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University Spring 1970," 7, Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 12 Folder 3, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

students in a political framework. The course examined “the progressive and regressive forces in each of the following writers: David Walker, Martin Delaney, Booker T. Washington, W.E. B. Dubois, Marcus Garvey, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Toure'), James Blyden, C.L.R. James, George Padmore, Kwame Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral, and Julius K. Nyerere.”<sup>7</sup> Extending beyond the parameters of history, the objective of the course was to provide the students of MXLU with the instrumentation of political analysis for the future construction of strategies to assist in guiding the political direction of Black folks based on those collective experiences.<sup>8</sup>

#### African Languages & MXLU's 'Floating Swahili' Program

MXLU's approach to language was “that only African languages can provide the kind of cultural impetus for African independence consistent with the ideology of this kind of institution.”<sup>9</sup> Of the languages of Swahili, Hausa and Yoruba, a student was required to study at least one of the languages and was allowed the opportunity to study another language as an alternative. The Swahili Department of Malcolm X Liberation University was established by the language division of the University to revitalize the learning of Swahili. The department developed five of the following programs: (1) MXLU Swahili Course, which was intended for MXLU students and staff and was optional (2) Community Swahili Program, which was designed for residents of the Greensboro community (3) Summer Swahili program which was the equivalent to the university's primary Swahili course and was offered during the summer months (4) the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>9</sup> “Malcolm X Liberation University Prospectus: The “Floating” Swahili Program,” Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

Special Swahili Program, which was a “crash program” for people who wished to visit the African continent for several weeks or months and hadn't had the opportunity to fully participate in any of the aforementioned programs. This program aimed at only equipping someone with basic conversational proficiency. Lastly established was (5) the “Floating” Swahili program which gained notoriety because of the innovative and creative nature of the program.

On November 1, 1972, MXLU incorporated one its most important programs to meet the needs of individuals who were not officially enrolled into the institution on a full time basis. That program would come to be known as the 'Floating Swahili' program.<sup>10</sup> The intention of the “Floating Swahili” program was to provide and propagate the service of language instruction by mail correspondence. The program was considered “floating” because in comparison to the other community outreach programs of MXLU, the language program was aimed at reaching out to anyone eager to learn the language.

Foreseen as a long range project of Malcolm X Liberation University, the construction of the program was geared at fulfilling the needs of potential Pan-Africanists by 1) teaching the language of Kiswahili 2) popularizing the language to instill the cultural and political benefits of the language as a rapidly growing cultural expression of the continent of Africa and 3) using the 'Floating Swahili' program as a way to centralize MXLU as learning center in the Americas. The curriculum board in charge of the language courses of MXLU disseminated a transnational approach to the language of

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.; “Malcolm X Liberation University Prospectus: The “Floating” Swahili Program,” “Malcolm X Liberation University Flier: Swahili Courses by Correspondence,” Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

Kiswahili. According to the 1972 pamphlet/mailling information on the 'Floating Swahili' program of MXLU:

Born out of the natural combination of various Afrikan languages back in the tenth century, Swahili has a long tradition and a rich heritage carrying with it, the majestic contrast of cultural patterns of various Afrikan Peoples, mainly in the Eastern, Central and Southern portions of Afrika...Today however, with most of Afrika independent, Swahili has emerged as the most dynamic, fast spreading language of Afrika. At present time, Swahili is being spoken and understood by more than fifty million Afrikan people, covering a vast and infinitely promising area of our Motherland...while Africa has many important indigenous languages, Swahili stands with beside, and above them as the fastest developing multi-national language, cutting across tribal, religious, and ideological lines and indeed maintaining a much bigger capability...It is in recognition of this most important duty that MALCOLM X LIBERATION UNIVERSITY has instituted, among other programs, the “FLOATING” SWAHILI PROGRAM to teach and propagate the Swahili language by mail to our people, everywhere in the western hemisphere.<sup>11</sup>

MXLU's promotion for the 'Floating Swahili' program was that “All Afrikans are eligible for admission” that were of 16 years and older. Information/enrollment materials could be obtained by simply writing to MXLU, located in Greensboro at the time. The curriculum of the course was broken into three parts that included Primary, Intermediate and Advanced Swahili courses, and the enrollment fee for the program was a requested ten dollars. A significant aspect of the course stated in the program literature and later advertised in the *SOBU Newsletter / The African World Newspaper* was that the course was free of charge to all “Afrikans” incarcerated in United States prisons.<sup>12</sup>

The Primary Swahili Course in the 'Floating' program was constructed as an introductory course for beginners with an expected completion time of one year from the date of enrollment. The aim of the preliminary course was to improve the conversational

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<sup>11</sup> “MXLU Initiates Project: 'Floating Swahili,’” *The African World*, September 30, 1972, 17.; “Malcolm X Liberation University Prospectus: The “Floating” Swahili Program,” Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

ability of the language learners. The emphasis of the introductory course was placed on pronunciations, personalized readings, conversational games and learning the fundamentals of Swahili speaking. The primary Swahili course was a required course for all beginners. The course packet contained thirty-six lessons, exercises and practice drills and the student was expected to receive and complete three lessons per month of the stated curriculum. Reference textbooks for the primary course included *Swahili Conversation and Grammar* by John Indakwa, *Simplified Swahili* by P.M. Wilson, and *Conversational Swahili* by Kyulli Kianga.

The second year Intermediate Swahili Course focused on the “grammatical breakdown of the Swahili words, the Swahili sentences, parts of speech and other aspects of Swahili grammar.”<sup>13</sup> The intermediate course also emphasized topical discussions (when and where they could be arranged) as well as critical and analytical writing. Upon completion of the intermediate course, the student's proficiency was evaluated and if found satisfactory, the student would receive the MXLU Swahili Diploma.

The final section of the course, the Advanced Swahili Course, was a “masters course for those students who wish to consummate their Swahili studies for the purposes of teaching, becoming interpreters or authorities in the Swahili language.”<sup>14</sup> This course component entailed the study of Swahili literature, etymology, research, translations and reporting. Upon completion of MXLU's final course it was projected that the relationships between MXLU and East African Universities would afford students the opportunity to study in a yet to be formulated study abroad program.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

In addition to the lesson schedules that the students received, study aids were furnished to address the obvious concerns of instructing a course through mail correspondence. MXLU's Swahili department attempted to address the deficiency by providing audio records and tapes to assist in the instruction. Students also received master pronunciation guidelines that were applicable to the specific lessons and exercises. A part of the course recommendation for the Swahili learners was for students to record their voice for word pronunciations and acquire a learning partner for the exercises.

The advent of the MXLU's Swahili programs and instruction enabled the University to take advantage of the language instruction regarding the translations and correspondence with brothers and sisters on the continent. Additionally, one of the University's primary instructors narrated the 1972 African Liberation Day film produced by MXLU entirely in Swahili. This instruction also assisted in the teaching of songs in Swahili to the youth of MXLU's various children's programs.<sup>16</sup>

#### Cultural Expression

This section of MXLU's curriculum provided for cultural expressions that represented the areas of literature, music and art. This course was “designed to illustrate the African concept of Communalism and to put into perspective a cultural basis for liberation as well as a technological one.”<sup>17</sup> According to MXLU information on the area and course's conceptual framework,

Exposure to both African literature, music and the general trends and development in each, is provided in the area. Art is handled in an art history

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.; “Progress Report for the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization by Malcolm X Liberation University July 1, 1972 - September 30, 1972,” Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 38, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>17</sup> “Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University Spring 1970,” 7, Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 12 Folder 3, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

manner, using slides, some texts and some evaluation of techniques and trends. Music is studied in terms indigenous and displaced African folk music, the expansion of this folk music and in depth analysis of jazz.<sup>18</sup>

### Speech

This course provided by MXLU enabled the student to improve upon speech techniques through public simulations that included “panel discussions, debates, impromptu and extemporaneous inductive and deductive logic.”<sup>19</sup> A critical aspect of importance that this course stressed was one being able to use the tools and talents of public speaking to explicate theoretical positions related to the liberation of Black folks. The speaking topics used for this course were on subject matter assigned by the school’s resource persons.

### Analysis of the Colonized Mind

This MXLU course was a topic area of instruction for not only the University classes, but it was also incorporated for use with the school’s community seminars. Analysis of the Colonized Mind was also an integral part of the political education seminars offered by MXLU for the general public. The significance of the course was that it was aimed at a comprehension and deconstruction of the colonial mentality in the larger context of examining the forces of imperialism and colonization. According to course literature,

...it provides a mechanism to pull together threads from our past and present experiences, both historical, cultural, political and linguistic, and drawing on them, begin to establish for the future and a new system that encompasses such basic elements of African life as communalism, undying love, male/female relationships, and the concept of family.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

## Physical Development

MXLU's department of physical development consisted of physical exercises and various forms of martial arts such as karate and judo. Other exercises such as swimming and a running program were also incorporated into the curriculum. The objective of the physical development department was for the incorporation of physical and psychological exercises for holistic development. The physical education department met three times a week.

## Part B

The second and third years for a MXLU student entailed developing their proficiency in one of the University's fields that was geared towards Nation Building. The University's core “Nation Building” technical areas of concentration included (1) Bio-Medics, (2) Communications, (3) Engineering and (4) Agriculture. The major emphasis of the curriculum was to give graduates a developed Pan-Africanist ideological and pragmatist outlook in spaces where Black folks were in need of assistance. MXLU stressed the concept of Nation Building versus that of nation sustenance as a motivating force to invigorate Black folks through the means of self-determination. The planning of the Nation Building projects was emphasized to aid Black communities with practical assistance while students completed their second and third years. “As with the courses offered the first year, each one of these skill areas is designed to be functional to African people in general and useful in the development of an independent African Nation in particular.”<sup>21</sup> The areas of study would either be chosen for the student or the student

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.



would choose depending on the student's prior interest level in the proposed field of study.

### Bio-Medics

As a part of the community outreach initiatives of MXLU, the University aimed at opening up a community health clinic in the city of Greensboro. This medical facility would provide a foundation for the University students who would be sent globally to assist in geographical locations that were lacking medical assistance. With the objectives of producing nurses, midwives, lab technicians and physicians, MXLU's bio-medical curriculum was broken into four major parts: "Fundamentals of Bio-medicine; Human Biology I, II, III: Clinical Medical Techniques; and Community Medicine and Health, and Health Survey of the African Continent." The expectation for the Bio-Medics program was three years enrollment that would include intense study on the scientific fundamentals of bio-medicine to include "an introduction to cell biology; biochemistry, microbiology and genetics, general pharmacology and pathology, and introduction to human biology."<sup>22</sup> Beyond the first year of the program MXLU students should begin to engage community medicine and health projects/seminars. Third year students would "become a part of the bio-medics teaching staff and participate in the establishment, operation and expansion of the community health center or at this point be sent to share their medical skills with other African peoples."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> "Malcolm X Liberation University Pamphlet 1971-1972," Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; "Malcolm X Liberation University 1971 Brochure," (Malcolm X Liberation University "X" Press, 1971).; "Progress Report for the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization by Malcolm X Liberation University December 1, 1971 - June 30, 1972," Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.;

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

A critical aspect of the success of MXLU's bio-medical program was contingent upon the coalitions that could be fostered amongst the Black physicians in the larger Greensboro and Raleigh-Durham areas of North Carolina. These physicians would act in the advisory capacity and also provide internships in hospitals and other sectors of the medical profession for the advancement of the students' practicum experiences. This is exemplified later through commitments made by physicians in Greensboro, Harlem and Newark.

The Bio-Medics Department of MXLU operated pharmacology classes through the assistance of a local pharmacist, and beginning in June of 1972, MXLU students interned to gain practical experience in the medical field. One student worked in the Harlem Hospital in New York City and the other student worked at a community health center in Newark. The progress of the Bio-Medics Department was also advanced through the acquisition of lab equipment for blood, urine and tissue testing.<sup>24</sup>

#### Communications Technology

The Communications Department of MXLU was crafted to prepare Black students on two fronts, the technical and ideological. The curriculum of the Communications Department engaged in reporting information regarding Black people from a critical perspective that was not subjectivist in its approach. Much of the

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<sup>24</sup> "Malcolm X Liberation University Pamphlet 1971-1972," Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; "Malcolm X Liberation University 1971 Brochure," (Malcolm X Liberation University "X" Press, 1971).; "Progress Report for the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization by Malcolm X Liberation University December 1, 1971 - June 30, 1972," Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; The purpose of the progress reports for IFCO was to supplement the findings made by IFCO representatives on their visits to MXLU. According to the report generated by the staff of MXLU, "It is not meant to be an all inclusive report, rather the report is designed to cover the highlights of our last six month's of operations." Much of the subsequent information on the operations of each MXLU department's progress will be derived mainly from this report, which was generated for the staff responsible for monitoring the progress at MXLU. This includes the projects and community ventures generated by the staff and students involved in the four main areas of study at the University.

emphasis for this department was on deconstruction of white media representations of Black people. This comprehension of the information sciences was coupled with understanding the technical aspects as well. To produce a “multi-skilled” communications technician, MXLU's program was designed as a two-year course of study with an additional six months of job training as fulfillment of the department's requirements.

The Communications Department's curriculum focused on eight key areas and these components were divided into five areas of applied technical skill development while the remaining three areas of the curriculum were constructed for theoretical purposes. The five applied skill areas included (1) Analytical Writing and Newspaper Production (2) Graphic Design and Layout (3) Printing (4) Photography and Cinematography and (5) Radio Production. In addition to MXLU students developing skills related to communications technology, the students also learned “to effectively use, repair and modify equipment available and be able to teach others the techniques involved in the production of printed, audio and visual material from idea to finished product.”<sup>25</sup>

MXLU students gained the opportunity to expand their experiential knowledge base in the Communications Department through fusing the various theories of analytical writing, newspaper production, analysis of color, graphic design and the techniques of silk screening with the proper training environment and technical apparatus, leading to the creation of a small print shop housed on the premises of MXLU. Students in the program of Communications Technology assisted in the production of two newspapers,

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<sup>25</sup> “Communications Department MXLU,” Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

*The African Warrior* and the *SOBU Newsletter*, later to become the *African World* and produced for the Student Organization of Black Unity/Youth Organization for Black Unity (SOBU/YOBU). The publishing house of MXLU, the “X-Press Cooperative Printing Company,” became responsible for printing books, pamphlets, leaflets, posters, etc. As MXLU expanded operations, the Communications Department progressed to a printing capability of 8,500 sheets per hour by the year of 1972. This in-house service made it possible to create literature and leaflets to be disseminated for the 1972 African Liberation Day (ALD). The printing shop of the University also produced literature on the African Children's Education Center as well as children's reading material for the education centers as well.<sup>26</sup>

MXLU students of the Communications Department also received instruction in the photography and cinematography. The use of 35mm format photographic processes, techniques of filmmaking for short films and slide shows was integrated into the curriculum. The University was able to secure the volunteer assistance of two Black male instructors who alternated weekends coming down to Greensboro to teach classes in the Communications Department. The instruction enabled the students and staff to produce a short film documentary on the developments surrounding ALD 1972 for educational purposes and speaking engagements by staff such as the Mwalimu, Owusu Sadaukai.

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<sup>26</sup> “Communications Department MXLU,” Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; “Progress Report for the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization by Malcolm X Liberation University December 1, 1971 - June 30, 1972,” Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 38, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; “Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University,” Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; “Malcolm X Liberation University Pamphlet 1971-1972,” Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

The Communications Department also provided instruction in radio production covering the areas of material production and oral presentation. Various seminars were held to discuss the interest of certain communications methods and how those methods would be implemented into the struggle for national independence. The theoretical areas of the communications theory, communications technology and cooperative management were structured according to the following principle:

...involve students in technical research in areas such as industrial processes, machinery, resources and so on and their relationship to the African struggle...Cooperative management is designed to allow management of communications operation in a cooperative fashion...Communications theory is designed to give the students a complete ideological understanding of concepts of communications.<sup>27</sup>

#### MLXU Engineering Department and Electrical Engineering<sup>28</sup>

The electrical engineering skill areas were designed to provide instruction in the fundamentals, theoretical and practical application of electricity and electronics. The significant objective of the program was to provide a structure for production, transmission, circulation and control of electrical power for residents of Greensboro and also for light industry. This intended skill area required the handling of “high voltage transmission lines, installation, electric motor and generator maintenance and control maintenance and operation of switch and distribution networks.”<sup>29</sup> The program, initially

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<sup>27</sup> “Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University,” Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>28</sup> “Civil Engineers for African World,” *The African Warrior*, February 5, 1971. Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 12 Folder 3, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.; This MXLU issue of the University newspaper provided critical insight into the functionality and objectives of the school's engineering department. The emphasis of the article stressed MXLU's philosophy of student placement upon completion in the African world, which was viewed as any place on the planet where Black folks are and their skills are needed. Students in departments would be able to see the value of their skills through school improvement projects moving beyond theory to application. An emphasis on plumbing and hand tool usage was also noted in the MXLU publication.

<sup>29</sup> “Malcolm X Liberation University Pamphlet 1971-1972,” Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

designed as a two to two and half-year program during the early phases of MXLU, would later be expanded to a three to three and a half year program by early 1972. Much of this was due to the improvements made upon the curriculum to include instruction in maintenance of radio communication systems, general radio repair of electronic devices and components, training in the development of industrial electricity and electronics skills, electrolytic refining of metals, dielectric and induction heating and electronic motor control for machine and other industrial operations. Upon completion of the student's first two years in the program, the advanced student was expected to assist in the programs in the capacity as an instructor as well.<sup>30</sup>

The progression of MXLU's Department of Electrical Engineering culminated in the development of an audio repair shop where the students were able to direct their training towards the repair of radios and phonographs. In addition to completing repair tasks of radios and televisions, some students advanced their training to radio construction. In a 1972 proposal for the development of MXLU's "Electrical Sales and Service Center," the personnel for the Electrical Engineering Department identified the growing need in the Greensboro area for electronics servicing and the economic potential that the development of an MXLU electronics repair shop could provide to the Black community of Greensboro.<sup>31</sup> According to the detailed report,

The Electrical Engineering Department of Malcolm X Liberation University has started developing and Electronic Service Center utilizing the personnel and resources that have been developed over the past two and one-half years. As of

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> "Proposal for the development of The Malcolm X Liberation University Electronic Sales and Service Center," Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 40, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; "Progress Report for the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization by Malcolm X Liberation University December 1, 1971 – June 30, 1972," Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 38, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

today, we have the capability in terms of personnel and equipment to service Black and White receivers, Stereo Tuner/Amplifiers components and systems, tape recorders and decks, automobile radios and tape player systems, and small house hold appliances. Presently, we have one technician working full time and the other three on a much lesser scale...There is only one Electronic Service Center in the Greensboro area that attempts to deal with the general consumer demand for reliable electronic service. From our research, we have found that the particular operation in question falls very short of meeting the consumer demand in this area...From talking to retailers and the general consumer of electronic equipment, and evaluating the market and our own abilities, we are very optimistic as to the possibility of capturing a large part of the market in this area...We also have plans to enter the retail end of the business and sale electronic equipment and accessories. We have an advantage at this point over the general retailer in Greensboro, in that we have the capability to install and service everything that we sell...Also, we would like to gain the ability to sell electronic equipment to those people who work with us at good prices...The objective is to produce around \$60,000.00 per year, provide jobs for people that work with us on an on going basis, and service whatever equipment the school needs, as well as be an ongoing training mechanism that can be used to benefit our people.<sup>32</sup>

### Mechanical Engineering

MXLU's mechanical engineering program was developed as a two and half to three year course of study. First year students who entered the program were expected to receive training in automobile fundamentals that included auto repair, auto tune-up and maintenance, and advanced analytical diagnostic techniques. Training also consisted of developing skills in welding fundamentals, which prepared students for welding and brazing. As mechanical engineering students advanced to the second year of the program, the training intensified to involve work in metal work, refrigeration systems (household refrigeration units, household air conditioning, absorption systems, etc.), chemical and physical metallurgy (ore extraction, and processing, physical characteristics of metals and alloys and heat treatment of metals, and Machine design and Manufacturing methods. The major intention of the program was to produce students to apply their skills for the areas of auto shop repair operation, welding shop operation,

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

refrigeration repair and maintenance, manufacturing of farm/agricultural machinery and implementation, and saw mill maintenance.

MXLU students of the Mechanical Engineering program applied their acquired skills toward the maintenance and repair of University vehicles as well as the creation of cooking skillets for sale in the surrounding community. Students of the department also constructed a large swing set for the usage of the African Children Education Center. The department's ability to advance its projects hinged mainly on the acquisition of equipment for the purposes of student application and training.

An example of the Mechanical Engineering Department's success at obtaining assistance in the form of equipment for the furtherance of training purposes was displayed in the fall of 1972 when Leonard L. Boon, a Black technician and self taught machinist, upon his death, donated a considerable amount of machinery to the Mechanical Engineering Department of MXLU. Boone, who had been influenced by the Pan-Africanist ideology and practices of Marcus Garvey and the UNIA, became interested in training Black folks "in machining and woodworking skills. His plan called for the graduates of the program to go to Africa to train Africans and help start self-help businesses there."<sup>33</sup> After Garvey's death the UNIA declined and many intended programs such as what Boone had intended using mechanical engineering techniques were aborted. Boone later obtained the opportunity to travel to Ghana and Nigeria during the winter of 1970. When Boone returned from his travels he expressed the dire need for housing and the shortage of technology on the African continent. He strongly felt that with some assistance to these areas many of his propose projects could be brought to

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<sup>33</sup> "Black Technician Wills Equipment to Malcolm X Liberation University," *The African World*, January 20, 1973.



fruition. Boone also identified that, “the housing shortage that many of these African states faced could be lessened by constructing home of portable type, from the abundant timber resources.” Boone never saw his projections materialize and later died October of 1972. However, the fore sight and self-less contributions of Boone to donate his equipment enabled the Mechanical Engineering department of MXLU to progress the department's curriculum for the students’ practical engagement.<sup>34</sup>

### Construction Engineering

MXLU's department of Construction Engineering identified with three major curricular components of study for the students of the program. The areas of 1) Construction Materials 2) Methods and Techniques 3) Construction Analysis and Design were developed as areas of students training to further the ideation of synthesizing the theoretical with application. The staff of MXLU's Construction Engineering Department felt that if an individual has a an applicable knowledge base that fuses theory and practice in the three general areas, then one should be able to construct a number of potential projects that could possible include: building furniture, houses, schools and even small factories.

The students of the two year program studied and gained practical experience in a curriculum that included 1) The Engineering Process 2) Hand and Power Tools 3) Building Materials 4) Construction Design 5) Surveying Land I & II 6) Drafting 7) Map Work and 8) Soil Mechanics. Students would the acquire skills enabled them to lay bricks, work form drafting plans, complete carpentry work, assess the work potential of building materials and perform soil analysis. Completion of the program was intended to

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

ensure a working knowledge of the construction process and enable students to construct projects for the purposes of Nation Building.

Students of MXLU's Construction Engineering Department were able to apply their training to build several structures of the campus of MXLU. One of the projects included a chicken house for the farm of the University. The department also provided their resources for the purposes of maintenance and repairs around the University as well the African Children's Education Center. One of the department's major tasks of late 1971 was to construct all of the necessary shelving needed for Greensboro's Uhuru Bookstore.<sup>35</sup>

#### Agriculture

The Agricultural program of MXLU was established as a twelve-month program that was compartmentalized into a three-fold program. According to MXLU's Agricultural Department, the programs aims were to "1) to provide brothers and sisters with the technical skills involved in the science of food production. 2) To train them to teach the practical as well as academic aspects of food production. 3) To provide food for the University family. The program's curriculum consisted of four concentrated areas of 1) Soil Science 2) Field Crops (fundamentals of plant science) 3) Poultry 4) Dairy and

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<sup>35</sup> Uhuru Bookstore's 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Celebrated, *The African World*, February 17, 1973. The Uhuru Bookstore was an auxiliary project of the Uhuru Corporation of Greensboro, NC. Founded in 1970, the Uhuru Corporation was established as a community controlled economic venture for the benefits of Greensboro's Black residents. The bookstore would exist as the corporation's first major project for developed for the purposes of providing jobs for Black folks and existing as a model of inspiration for people in the community. On February 5, 1972, the Uhuru Bookstore celebrated its first year anniversary and the commemoration of the establishment brought out more than 150 people to the occasion. The anniversary celebration highlighted several North Carolina authors and their works, including MXLU's Cleveland Sellers' *River of No Return* and Owusu Sadaukai's *On Black Liberation and Liberation Struggle in Mozambique*. According to Tom Dent's work *Southern Journey: A Return to the Civil Rights Movement*, Lewis Brandon, a close friend of Nelson Johnson (SOBU National Chair) and heavily involved in the Greensboro Movement, notes on page forty-four that, "Uhuru Bookstore, which I managed and where Nelson's wife worked, grew out of Malcolm X (Liberation University) and GAPP. The bookstore became a meeting place, a kind of cultural center."

Livestock. Once a student completed training in the Agricultural department, the expectations were to be able to produce a variety of edible products that would range from everyday household vegetables to cash crops. Students were also be trained on how to raise poultry, dairy and beef products.

The Agricultural Department of MXLU gained the ability to allow student training and performance due to the University's acquisition of approximately twenty-six acres of farmland which the school was able to rent for three hundred dollars a year. The department also purchased a trailer in addition to the other equipment, for the purposes of housing non-student workers. By acquiring the farmland, MXLU was afforded the opportunity to supply the University family with food grown by the students of the school.

Another opportunity that MXLU's Agricultural Department was able to capitalize on was the productivity of the farm's chickens. While producing approximately twenty dozen eggs a week, the school was able to sell eggs in the Greensboro community at a cut rate to which the residents were very responsive.<sup>36</sup> Upon identification of the farm's potential as it related to livestock production, the Agricultural Department constructed various proposals for both a cattle stocker operation and swine production as part of the overall expansion of farming operations. Some of the livestock operations included cow-calf production and stocker cattle broken into three sub-components of a) baby calf-fattening, b) teeter calf, and c) yearling operation. The swine production included the production of purebred stock; the production of feeder pigs; and the production of finishing feeder pigs. Having the makings for a lucrative cultural and economic venture

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<sup>36</sup> "Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University," n.d., IFCO Records, Box 30 Folder 39, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

for the University family especially as it pertained to student training, MXLU's Agricultural Department's most significant objectives for their farming operations were to

- 1) Re-channel the Agriculture technical personnel present at the institution to an involvement in mechanized production
- 2) Turn over investment returns to the institution
- 3) Further train cadres in the line of increase production.

Livestock production in the state of North Carolina and throughout the corn belt of the Midwest was acknowledged as a profitable enterprise, and MXLU's farming availabilities foresaw the potential of such a venture with relation to the investment of land, labor, capital and farming equipment.

#### SOBU's Pan-African Work Program & the Pan-African Skills Project (PASP)

Malcolm X Liberation University's transnational implementation of the theoretical framework of "Nation Building" was clear as early as the 1969-1970 MXLU academic year. Proposals and brochures alike provided prospective students, community organizers and potential volunteers with information on MXLU's culminating curricular activities that fused the training of its students to the intended application required in field. MXLU's curriculum committee formulated a trip to serve as a significant part of the Pan-African curriculum. Early MXLU proposal data referred to the trip as a transnational connection that would provide students the opportunity to live and work with Black folks on the African continent. The goal was to establish Malcolm X Liberation University as a viable institution through the student's field experience. MXLU eventually developed its international relationships with African countries such as Mozambique and Tanzania for the purposes of obtaining international students and support for coalition building. This was later reflected by Howard Fuller's announcement of the MXLU students that would move permanently to settle in the East African country

of Tanzania. Fuller and MXLU planned for six to eight students to reside in Tanzania for eighteen months utilizing their acquired skills from MXLU. Fuller commented that, the MXLU graduates would “live on land donated by the Tanzania government, but other funds for the move will come from the University.”<sup>37</sup>

The collaborative efforts of MXLU as a Pan-Africanist based educational institution and SOBU as a viable national Black student organization grew due to the bi-organizational effectiveness. Working in tandem, MXLU students were able to benefit from SOBU's Pan-African Work Program, which was developed by the Black student organization to “fill the void between rhetoric and relevant political work among students.” SOBU's Pan-African Work Program, which began domestically, assisted in providing students from various Pan-Africanist institutions such as MXLU of Durham/Greensboro, the Center for Black Education of Washington, D.C, or the Pan-African Work Center in Atlanta with opportunities to apply skills acquired through their respective Nation Building curriculums. From the project's 1970 inception, approximately forty students spent their summer months working in predominately Southern rural work sites on projects centered on the conceptual framework of self-reliance. Among the work projects, students assisted in producing early education centers, farming cooperatives, health centers, and communications projects. Students also conducted seminars on organizing efforts and tactics around community control. Students brought their talents to the areas of “Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Virginia and Washington, D.C., living at subsistence level under the direction of full-time SOBU personnel as well as local project directors.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> “Malcolm X Graduates To Settle in Tanzania,” *Durham Morning Herald*, n.d.

<sup>38</sup> “Work for Your People: Pan-African Work Program”, *SOBU Newsletter*, April 17, 1971, 11.

The international aspects of MXLU's program was later joined with the cooperative efforts of the Pan-African Skills Project (PASP) founded and administered by Irving Davis. As a member on the board of directors for the Pan-African Skills Project representing the interests of Malcolm X Liberation University, Howard Fuller was able to combine the projected support and training needed by American trained Blacks for the target areas in Africa with an emphasis on East African countries such as Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and Somalia.

The Pan-African Skills Project (PASP) ran by Davis “began in January of 1970 as a project of the African Commission of the National Committee of Black Churchmen (NCBC). It became an official policy of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania to recruit skilled Afro-Americans into service. Representatives of the Pan-African Skills Project entered into mutual discussions and current with that government.”<sup>39</sup> Irving Davis' past leadership and movement activity involved working as a full-time member of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) as SNCC transitioned into the phase of the Civil Rights Movement referred to as 'Black Power.’” Davis was credited as a SNCC member who assisted in fostering the ideological shift of SNCC into an organization that espoused more nationalistic underpinnings with a theoretical outlook of self-reliance. Davis also “ran SNCC's office of International Affairs and under his leadership, SNCC became the only U.S. based Black organization to have Non-Governmental Organization status at the United Nations.”<sup>40</sup> While working

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<sup>39</sup> “Proposal of the Pan African Skills Project,” 1., n.d., Pan African Skills Project Collection, Box 1 Folder 16, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>40</sup> “A Fallen Soldier in Memoriam – Irving Bernard Davis September 23, 1937-April 22, 1981,” n.d., Pan African Skills Project Collection, Box 1 Folder 15, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

in conjunction with James Forman, Davis was also responsible for constructing the tenets of the 'Black Manifesto,' and “As a result of the Manifesto, hundreds of national of national liberation movements and community activists groups became beneficiaries of support from virtually every major religious denomination.”<sup>41</sup> From the national and transnational attention the force of the document gained from numerous religious organizations, Davis was able to parley support into the founding of the Pan-African-Skills Project. Davis' international contacts that extended from his SNCC membership afforded him the leverage to wage a movement of support to recruit hundreds of state-side Black folks for work on the continent. According to PASP literature,

When an African sees another Black man doing a highly technical job that in part has only been done by a colonialist, it helps to bring about the psychological reality that inspires him to believe he can do it himself. The very presence of the Afro-American through the PASP in Africa reinforces that belief in a positive fashion.<sup>42</sup>

Under Davis, the PASP worked to secure candidates for positions in the areas of education, engineering, chemistry, business administration, pharmacy, medical laboratory technicians, accountants, nursing, biologists, food/nutritionists and dental orthodontists. The critical aim of the PASP was to provide placement in multi-faceted sectors of developing African nations. Since Davis was afforded the opportunity to work in conjunction with Fuller, Davis wanted to make sure that the coalition of MXLU with the PASP could produce the type of skilled technicians needed to meet the transnational needs of the program and African spaces throughout the Diaspora. After the success of the 1972 African Liberation Day (ALD) efforts (which will be discussed in the subsequent sections), the establishment of the African Liberation Support Committee

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

(ALSC) further reinforced the international coalitions of Pan-Africanism to continue the success of the PASP. Post ALD correspondence from Davis and staff of the PASP to the ALSC suggested that funding for the nation building project in Tanzania, could come from the Black Student organizations on college campuses from around the country. Davis suggested that “a one week intensive orientation in the U.S. would be given by Tanzanian to work for a two month period of time and that the group could be accompanied by biomedical and construction personnel from Malcolm X Liberation University.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> “Pan African Skills,” n.d., Pan African Skills Project Collection, Box 1 Folder 13, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; “Pan African Skills Project: Employment Opportunities for Peoples of African Descent in the Motherland Pamphlet,” Pan African Skill Project Collection, Box 1 Folder 1, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.



Davis also was noted for his theoretical position regarding the participation of Black folks in the Americas to the liberation struggles that were taking place on the continent. Davis' stance on the practicality of “revolution” went beyond measures of physical engagement such as guerilla tactics. But it included the intellectual engagement of practitioners that could assist in a revolution with like resources for the improvement of socio-political infrastructures. From August 22 to 28, 1971, the Regional Executive Secretary of the PASP acted as moderator to delegates of the East African Consultation in Dar es Salaam. The meeting, which was jointly sponsored by the Consultative Committee of Tanzania and the African Commission of the National Committee of Black Churchmen, commenced to provide “first hand accounts concerning members of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) conspiring to commit mass atrocities against the heroic and courageous struggling brothers and sisters in the South Africa region.”<sup>44</sup> The gathering consisted of representatives that pleaded their cases from the African Liberation Movements from organizations such as the Pan-African Congress (PAC) of Azania, Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU), Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), Popular Movement of the Liberation (PMLA) of Angola, South West African Peoples Organization (SWAPO) and the African National Congress (ANC) of Azania.<sup>45</sup> Davis, who represented the Pan- African Skills Project of the Africa Commission and the National Committee of Black Churchmen, served as a reminder of the resource potential

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<sup>44</sup> Priscilla Massie, ed. *Black Faith and Black Solidarity*.; Irving Davis, Summarized by Priscilla Massie, *African Liberation Movements* (New York: Friendship Press, 1973), 128-129.

<sup>45</sup> Proposal of the Pan African Skills Project, n.d., 3 Pan African Skills Project Collection, Box 1 Folder 16, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; Priscilla Massie, ed. *Black Faith and Black Solidarity*.; Irving Davis, Summarized by Priscilla Massie, *African Liberation Movements* (New York: Friendship Press, 1973), 128-129.

that the Black churchmen and other financially able African Americans were able to provide in assisting the African liberation struggle. According to Davis,

There is no African revolutionary movement anywhere seeking to import guerrilla fighters from America or any other place. Those actively involved in the movements understand that one cannot import a revolution. The fighters are the African peoples of their respective areas...African freedom fighters in territories may be African school teachers, soil scientists, farmers, nurses, technicians, etc, who function in these capacities. The liberation movements are establishing new societies in these areas as they engage in the struggle. That is what a real revolution involves, i.e. to break down the old order and replace the new.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 130.

## CHAPTER 5

### UHURU NA KAZI (FREEDOM AND HARD WORK)!!!<sup>1</sup>: THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS OF MALCOLM X LIBERATION UNIVERSITY 1969-1972

*The purpose of education is to prepare young people to live in and to serve the society, and to transmit the knowledge skills and values and attributes of the society. Wherever education fails in any of these fields, then the society falters in its progress, or there is social unrest as people find that their education has prepared them for a future which is not open to them.*

--Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As the 1960s and early 1970s burgeoned with expressions of Black consciousness, many Black Americans developed a transnational perspective through literacy circles and Afro-related periodicals that kept the common Black woman and man abreast of international affairs of the Black world. For more on this see Peniel Joseph's "Dashikis and Democracy: Black Studies, Student Activism and the Black Power Movement" in the *Journal of African American History*, 88, no. 2 (Spring 2003), 182-203. Also, see Colin A. Beckles' work, "Black Bookstores, Black Power, and the F.B.I.: The Case of Drum and Spear" in *The Western of Black Studies*, 20, no. 2, 1996. Scholar Colin A. Beckles presents a critical work that addresses the underpinnings of increased consciousness that is related directly to higher literacy rates and college attendance amongst Black folks. Beckles' article also identifies Black bookstores as centers and sites of intellectual resistance that provided "counterhegemonic material" for heightened cultural awareness. Much of the international awareness for Blacks in the U.S. revolved around information on the independence movements in Tanzania and Kenya, two East African countries in which Kiswahili came to dominate as the national language. Under the leadership of former schoolteacher Julius K. Nyerere, the country of Tanzania (a combined state of Tanganyika and Zanzibar in 1964) developed under scientific socialism or what Nyerere referred to as "Ujamma" or "family hood" as the expression for collective action. Later used as an effective tool for mass mobilization, the term "Uhuru" or liberation/independence was used and later Nyerere supplemented the catch phrase with "Uhuru na Kazi" or "Freedom and Work" for the promotion of gaining liberation for the development of Tanzania through hard work and action. Nyerere, who felt that his country was plagued by the social ills of ignorance and the lack of self-determination, was instrumental in shifting the school system under the government's control to reinforce the importance of education. Nyerere also reinforced this drive of self-reliance through self-help programs for the country of Tanzania as well. As Black folk in the U.S. caught wind of Nyerere's anti-colonial and anti-imperialistic work, so too did the motivations to learn the East African language of Kiswahili become vital amongst Pan-Africanist circles in the states. Because of this, it was common for Black folk involved in some sort of Pan-Africanist movement activity to use the phrase "Uhuru na Kazi" to signify the need to work for the freedom sought by those throughout the Black world. The libratory slogan could also be seen throughout the pages of SOBU's newsletter, *The African World*. For further information on the life and work of Julius K. Nyerere and Tanzania see *Freedom and Development: Uhuru Na Manendelo: A Selection From Writings and Speeches 1968-1973*; *Ujamma: Essays on Socialism*; and also *Freedom and Unity: A Selection From Writings and Speeches, 1952-65*, all works written by Julius K. Nyerere.

<sup>2</sup> "African Free School Pamphlet," n.d. "Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 22 Folder 6, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture; This information by Julius K. Nyerere was provided as an introductory quote by the informational pamphlet of the African Free School of Newark, NJ. The African Free School, founded by Imamu Amiri Baraka in 1967 functioned largely on the seven principles of the Nguzo Saba: Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility) Ujama (Cooperative Economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity), and Imani (Faith) created by Dr. Malauna Karenga of the US organization. These core principles comprised the theoretical foundation of the African Free School. For further information on the underpinnings of Nyerere's educational theories see *Education for Self-Reliance* by Julius K. Nyerere, March 1967.

*The difference between training and education is that in training you can't do anything by yourself; in education you can take that which you've learned and apply it to concrete needs.*

--Dr. Maulana Karenga, *The Quotable Karenga*<sup>3</sup>

Riding the wave of momentum from the Duke University protests, the decision was made to establish an independent Black institution to provide a relevant education for the advancement of endeavors that resonated with the critical needs for the ever-changing Black student and meet the needs of Black folk around the world. Hopkins reports, "A simple truth was realized throughout the movement: that those who are oppressed cannot look to those who oppress them to deal in any way with the nature or source of the oppression. If Black people in Durham, North Carolina wanted to a relevant educational institution they would have to build it themselves."<sup>4</sup> The consensus regarding the state of Black youth and education was that the national development of Black Studies programs as a result of urban revolt would be enough to satisfy Black students on predominantly White campuses. However, the building sentiment amongst those Black students who fought for academic and cultural representation was that the integration of Black Studies programs meant an inevitable convergence of interests that would manifest as co-optation of the Black student struggle versus liberation. In a 1971 monthly editorial column for the *SOBU Newsletter*, Nelson Johnson, the national chairman for SOBU provided poignant insight into the perspective of Black Studies juxtaposed to revolutionary action. According to Johnson,

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<sup>3</sup> Clyde Halisi and James Mtume, ed. *The Quotable Karenga* (Los Angeles, CA: US Organization, 1967), 3.

<sup>4</sup> Chuck Hopkins, Interim Report: Malcolm X Liberation University. *Negro Digest/Black World* 19, 1-12 (November 1969 - October 1970), 40-41.

The Black studies fever, however riding high on long white money, set out to accomplish the impossible or at least pretend to accomplish the impossible. The sincere initial work in Black studies has indeed been beneficial. The very nature of politics in education has been drawn into sharper focus because of the struggle to establish Black studies programs. It should be realized, however, that certain areas of categories of endeavors can become exhausted in their usefulness and their maintenance become a force counter to their original revolutionary intent. Contemporary Black Studies programs seem to be moving toward a “negritude approach in education for our people. Many of the personnel selected to direct these programs come from neither the exploited masses nor the “revolutionary intelligentsia” but instead from the content bourgeoisie.”<sup>5</sup>

The overwhelming feeling amongst many Black college students about the already existing state of Black studies programs was that, “clearly no nation could permit its educational institutions to prepare people for its own destruction. Having come to this realization, many Brothers and Sisters moved on to develop alternatives.”<sup>6</sup>

Black Students of Duke University were in no way removed from the aforementioned disposition as they continued to cite the lack of “Black control” as it related to Duke's attempt at a new Black Studies program. In their attempts to establish the Black Studies program on Duke's campus, members of Duke's AFro-American Society continued to criticize the University's negligence of Black Student representation on a committee that included five faculty members and three students, even though the AFro-American Society initially proposed to be an equal committee of both faculty and students. In addition, Duke University's way of providing a “Black Studies” department and curriculum was to reengineer the pre-existing curriculum of Duke University. Instead of constructing courses for the establishment of a Black Studies department, the University announced one month prior to the beginning of the 1969 academic year that three pre-existing courses would be renamed and only one new course would be added.

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<sup>5</sup> “Black Studies and Revolution,” *SOBU Newsletter*, February 6, 1971, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Because Duke had not sincerely moved toward establishing an identifiable department, the fate of the pre-existing courses including the proposed “new” course would be under the direction of departments such as English and History, thus leaving the direction of Black Studies at Duke to resemble more an inter-disciplinary major versus an independent program. With regard to Duke University's inadequate solutions, a member of Duke's AFro-American Society commented,

...there is not one Black instructor, there is no autonomous Black studies department, there is not budget, there is no director, and most of all there is no Black control...the AFro-American Society can in no way recognize what exists at Duke as a Black studies program.<sup>7</sup>

In response, many of the Black Students of Duke University decided that they would take classes at the yet to be established Malcolm X Liberation University. For many Black folks outside of Duke, the next logical step was to work towards the construction of the type of educational experience and environment conducive for an emphasis on Black Nationalism. This independent institution would provide the training ground necessary for the pedagogy and curriculum of 'Nation Building' and Pan-Africanism that had long been sought after.<sup>8</sup>

#### MXLU Planning Stages and Episcopalian Grant Controversy

Brothers and sisters met at the Franklinton Center in Bricks, North Carolina, as a result of the national call to support the development of a new Black University in North Carolina, There they discussed what an effective educational institutional infrastructure for Black folks should look like. Malcolm X Liberation University became chartered, thus solidifying the institution as a non-profit entity and gaining it “the customary

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<sup>7</sup> “Black Studies Plans Rejected By Duke Afro-American Group,” *Durham Morning Herald*, October 3, 1969. North Carolina Collection Clipping File through 1975, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

provisions contained in non-profit corporation charters, including the right to obtain and sell property and a pledge not to participate in political campaigns.”<sup>9</sup> On the school's charter, the following were listed as incorporators: Bertie Howard, Sandra Philpot and Timothy Harris, all residents of Durham and apart of the initial fifteen member MXLU board of trustees.<sup>10</sup> Much of the summer planning months were dedicated to the construction of proposals and position papers related to the school. Also, a lot of time was expended on the printing of pamphlets and fliers to document the school's aims and objectives.

The planning stages and progress for MXLU are tracked in state newspapers such as the *Durham Morning Herald*, the *Durham Sun*, and the *News and Observer* of Raleigh-Durham, the *Duke Chronicle* and the *Greensboro Record*. Much of the publicity surrounding the anticipation of the University centered on the developmental progress of the University, with headlines announcing, “Malcolm X U Taking Shape” and “Operations of Malcolm X U. Outlined by Howard Fuller.” Much of the information gained by the press on the early stages of the MXLU pertained mainly to the aims and objectives of the University; the combined role of Howard Fuller and the surrounding Black community; and the institutional plans of MXLU that included brief explanations of entrance requirements, yearly tuition responsibilities, and ideological perspectives of “Nation Building” and Pan-Africanism.

Fuller, the school's figurehead and chief administrator, maintained an adamant position regarding the aims of MXLU, which were stated as to “work with Black people.” On numerous occasions, Fuller was asked by the press to describe the average student at

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<sup>9</sup> “Malcolm X University Chartered,” *Durham Morning Herald* June 7, 1969.

<sup>10</sup> “Malcolm X University Chartered,” *The News and Observer*, June 7, 1969.

the University. Fuller remarked, “He's Black—and he wants to learn.” For many, this would still not suffice so Fuller would explain what MXLU was to stand for versus the conjured myths of MXLU being a military training center for Black radicals, or that the establishment of MXLU represented the beginnings of a Communist institution.

However, as MXLU remained under heavy scrutiny by the white press for objectives that echoed of Black Nationalism, the yet to be established institution would come under its most direct criticism in regards to the school's funding sources ironically in direct alignment with an aspect of the white power structure, the national Episcopal Church.<sup>11</sup>

In 1967, the national Episcopal Church held a general convention in Seattle, Washington. A part of the convention's agenda addressed the church's role in assisting “the poor and disenfranchised [to] gain social, political and economic power in order to have an effective voice in decisions which affect their own lives.” This general consensus of pro-activity amongst the organization produced the \$9 million Urban Crisis Program Fund to assist with social and economic supplementation to foundations and minority groups identified for such assistance.<sup>12</sup>

During the planning stages for MXLU, Fuller and the planning staff of MXLU recognized the Urban Crisis Program as a viable source of potential assistance to aid in the establishment of the educational institution. Thus, a grant proposal was forwarded to the national Episcopal Church during the late spring months of 1969 while the MXLU

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<sup>11</sup> “Brochure Outlines Malcolm X Plans,” *Durham Morning Herald*, August 23, 1969.; “Malcolm X U Taking Shape,” *Durham Morning Herald* September 27, 1969.; “Malcolm X U Doing Well,” *The News and Observer*, October 5, 1969.; “Aim: 'Work With Black People',” *Durham Morning Herald*, October 10, 1969.; “Operation of Malcolm X U Outlined by Howard Fuller,” *The News and Observer*, October 10, 1969.; “Malcolm X Ready to Open: Nature of Program Still Unclear,” *Durham Morning Herald*, October 19, 1969.; “'No, We Do Not Teach Violence', Fuller Says of Malcolm X Univ.,” *News and Observer*, November 3, 1969.

<sup>12</sup> “Episcopal Money Reported Helping Malcolm X School,” *The News and Observer*, October 11, 1969.; “Effect of Episcopal Meet On Grant Dispute Unknown,” *Durham Morning Herald*, October 22, 1969.



interim-planning committee continued to solicit nationwide assistance in the establishment of MXLU. As early as July of '69, MXLU received word that \$15,000 of a \$45,000 grant had been approved for the educational institution.<sup>13</sup> This first grant was made on an emergency basis and was approved by Rev. E. N Porter of Durham, director of the diocese's Urban Crisis Program. The additional \$30,000 of the grant was later approved by the bishop and the national church administration. The funding of the school created shockwaves amongst the North Carolina 40,000-member diocese that covered 39 counties from Edgecombe to Mecklenburg, North Carolina. With prior understanding and communication with Howard Fuller, the national diocese approved the grant with knowledge that MXLU was to be instituted for the purpose of training Black youth for community leadership. However, this was not enough for the impending reactions that ensued from the diocese's members throughout the state of North Carolina. The announcement of the grant created internal divisions, and eventually a meeting was called consisting of a twenty-member council of laymen and clergymen to address the terms of the grant and the apparent divisions over it. Outraged diocese members expressed their sentiment along the lines of being uninformed about the decision making process of the church. One church officer expressed their complaints telling the local press that local Episcopalian totally unaware of the proceedings until they read about it in the newspapers.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.; The \$45,000.00 grant that MXLU received in 1969 would have in 2009 the buying power of \$268,262.53. This figure was found using the inflation calculator located at <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpical.pl>.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.; "Grant Stirs Up Episcopalians", *The News and Observer*, 22 October 1969.; "Malcolm X School Announced", *The News and Observer*, 14 October 1969.; "Grant to Malcolm X University Gets Varied Reactions From Episcopalians", *Durham Morning Herald*, 15 October 1969.; MXLU's procurement for funding from religious organizations extended to include a consortium of organizations that were largely effected by the indictment of James Forman's Black Manifesto. Included in the list were the religious organizations such as: the Unitarian Universalist Association, and the World Council of Churches. Another

The controversy over the grant to MXLU drew the attention of the Union of Black Clergy and Laity that was in full support of Bishop Fraser's actions to assist MXLU with the grant. The Union of Black Clergy members commented,

throughout the history of the church, financial contributions of Blacks have never been refused nor have we refused to contribute to a diocese which supported institutions which we could not attend or facilities to which we could not gain access...we therefore now find ourselves in a position which makes it impossible for us to support the ideas and concepts projected by those who oppose social change...it is difficult as Christians to comprehend the mission of the church as embracing the divorcement of Christianity from social change.”<sup>15</sup>

Bishop Thomas A. Fraser, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of the North Carolina, stood by the initial decision of the diocese to disseminate the grant, largely because of the decision making body that approved the grant. The grant the national church already approved was not under consideration for withdrawal since the national church was not bound to act on any decisions made by the local branches. In addition, out of the twelve-member committee, ten members decided on the grant to MXLU, which was a prerequisite for the approval of the grant. However, Fraser, who was troubled by the remarks of the diocese members and by the publicity generated by the grant, found the split feelings of the church to be unfortunate; but nonetheless, he remained unchanged in his initial decision to award MXLU the funding. Fraser, committed to the initial tenets of

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example of this are the funding awards granted by the Black Affairs Council during the years of 1968 and 1969. Working in conjunction with IFCO, the BAC funded programs geared toward the Black community. Programs and organizations included: The Black Community Fund of Philadelphia (1969-1970), Center for Black Education of Washington, DC (1969-1972), Committee for Unified Newark of Newark, New Jersey, and the Dodge Revolutionary Movement of Detroit, Michigan. Malcolm X Liberation University received funding from the Black Affairs Council through the Plandome Special Grant for the amount of \$8000.00. “BAC assisted in only two parts of MXLU's multifaceted program: Education Center for Children and its Community Seminar Programs.” For additional clarity on the Black Affairs Council look at: *Empowerment: One Denomination's Quest for Racial Justice 1967-1982: 1983 Study of the Unitarian Universalist Association by the Commission on Appraisal*. Also, look at the work entitled, *The Black Empowerment Controversy and the Unitarian Universalist Association 1967-1970* for additional information on the number of programs that received funding through the grant initiatives aimed at Black community programming.

<sup>15</sup> “Black Church Group Backs Disputed Episcopal Grant,” *The News and Observer*, October 31, 1969.

social change, remained consistent to the charge of the national church, which met subsequently in 1968 (following the 1967 Seattle convention) to address the operations and priority of Urban Crisis Program Fund.<sup>16</sup>

Not to be out done by the actions of Bishop Fraser, the Episcopal body vehemently urged the executive council of the national Episcopal Church to adopt a resolution to “review its screening processes for awarding grants.” During a seven-hour meeting, while maintaining their supposed “confidence” in Bishop Fraser, members of the local Episcopal body remained firm in their protests of Fraser's decision. In addition, at least two of the Episcopal churches in the Raleigh-Durham area permitted “the members of their congregation to designate the use of their annual pledge strictly for local use because of opposition to the national church's plans.”<sup>17</sup> Other church congregations such as St. Ambrose Episcopal Church, pastured by the Rev. Arthur J. Calloway, voiced that even though many of the members of his congregation had questions about MXLU he didn't foresee any financial pledges being withheld because of the national decision to approve the funding. Calloway remarked that, “My congregation is Black—and is a little bit more sympathetic with the school.”<sup>18</sup>

Additional pleas from North Carolinian Episcopalians continued to come from pastors such as Reverend Thomas R. Thrasher of the Chapel of the Cross Episcopal Church. Reverend Thrasher provided a moving address from which he attempted to appeal to the humanism and Christian familiarity of Episcopalians who continued to

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<sup>16</sup> “Effect of Episcopal Meet On Grant Dispute Unknown,” *Durham Morning Herald*, October 22, 1969.

<sup>17</sup> “Episcopal Body Urges Process Review,” *Durham Morning Herald*, November 1, 1969.

<sup>18</sup> “Grant Stirs Up Episcopalians,” *The News and Observer*, October 22, 1969.; “Episcopal Body Urges Process Review,” *Durham Morning Herald*, November 1, 1969.

struggle with the action of the church. According to a segment of Reverend Thrasher's address,

As much as we disagree with the principle, we ought to try to put it into perspective. We are talking about \$45,000.00 out of a budget of \$14,000,000.00—about 32/10,000<sup>ths</sup> of 1%. Our Lord plainly told us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Is this one mistake to be allowed to endanger that whole enterprise?...So whether it be in Church or in State I call for a more reasonable frame of mind, a willingness to settle for something even though it may not be all we want at the moment. After all, the conflict is not between angels on one side and devils upon the other but between men—some black, some white, some brown, some yellow—but all terribly human.<sup>19</sup>

The MXLU funding controversy was further compounded by a federal grand jury investigation into the events and organizational connections that aided in producing the grant awarded to MXLU. Much of the additional scrutiny arose because of a \$200,000 grant awarded by the National Episcopal Church's to the Interdenominational National Committee of Black Churchmen (NCBC). Two of the NCBC members also held joint board membership on the Black Economic Development Conference (BEDC), which evolved from the \$5 billion demands of Forman's *Black Manifesto*. The obvious support of the BEDC by the NCBC escalated the investigations into all funding connections of MXLU. However the growing consensus voiced amongst members and affiliates of the NCBC and MXLU was that the church's initial stance was to assist the Black community through financial measures though there continued to be a hypocritical stance of racist action which antagonized the organizations through court actions and news related propaganda.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> "Episcopal Rector Speaks: About That Money to Malcolm X U," *The Chapel Hill Weekly*, October 22, 1969.

<sup>20</sup> "Federal Grand Jury Probes MXLU Grant," *Durham Morning Herald*, October 27, 1969.

Fuller's attempts to form alliances for the financial aid of MXLU included interaction with the National Urban League headed by Whitney M. Young, Jr. Young, who was critical of Black Power activists, voiced his opinion regarding the operational aims of MXLU to comment that he was “only concerned that a university prepare people to compete in the society in which they live.”<sup>21</sup> Young, who gained a considerable amount of respect for Fuller, felt that he could support MXLU if it “prepares people compete in the mainstream.”<sup>22</sup> Responses like that of Young to the emergence of MXLU were indicative of “old guard” civil rights activists that were partially if not totally opposed to the approach of a self-determinative theoretical and practical position as it related to the movement. But Fuller, who was not foreign to opposition posed by the veteran civil rights leadership, maintained his proactive and aggressive approach by publicizing the intentions of MXLU and other liberation programs that developed during the latter part of the 1960s in the vein of Black Nationalism and Internationalism. He had gained a reputation of militancy and activism in the North Carolina area and made no qualms about confronting the veteran civil rights leaders on behalf of maintaining the honor of the yet to be erected MXLU. This is evident in the fact that he and approximately twenty of MXLU staff and students showed up at an awards banquet hosted by the North Carolina chapter of the NAACP wearing Malcolm X sweatshirts to address comments made by Kelly Alexander, the North Carolina state president of the NAACP. Fuller's who vehemently opposed the comments, urged Alexander to deny the statements criticizing MXLU if the statements were not true, so that the press and other sources would not get the perspective that two Black groups were at odds with one

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<sup>21</sup> “Fuller to Confer with Urban League on MXLU Funding,” *Durham Morning Herald*, October 31, 1969

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

another. Fuller and the MXLU staff eventually departed for refusing to pay the entrance fee, but not before those in attendance were made aware of the emerging institution that was to be operating in Durham, North Carolina.<sup>23</sup>

Furthering the momentum of the impending independent Black institution became a significant priority for staff and potential students of MXLU. This was made most apparent during a press conference organized by the MXLU staff prior to the institution's inauguration. On October 9, 1969, Howard Fuller addressed questions during a "curb side" press conference that took place outside of the Durham site undergoing renovations in anticipation of the Oct 25 inaugural ceremonies and October 27 opening day. While sitting at a table adorned with a red, black and green banner with Chuck Hopkins and "wearing a grey Malcolm X Liberation U sweatshirt which carried the likeness of the slain leader,"<sup>24</sup> Fuller spoke to approximately a dozen newsmen and thirty or so on-lookers. Fuller began his commentary by informing the press that his work tenure for the Foundation for Community Development (FCD) was over and that he was now employed with Malcolm X Liberation University. A news release of MXLU's projected plans and operational outlines was disseminated to the press referring to Fuller as the HNIC. One reporter asked, "What does HNIC stand for?" Fuller responded by saying, "It stands for Head Nigger in Charge." Fuller clarified, "It's a cultural expression to say that I'm it, that the buck stops here. And rather than get hung up with 'chancellor', we felt it would be very hip to it in the true nature of the Black people, so I'm, the head nigger in charge."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> "Fuller to Confer with Urban League on MXLU Funding," *Durham Morning Herald*, October 31, 1969.; "NAACP Bars Fuller, Group," *Durham Morning Herald*, October 12, 1969.

<sup>24</sup> "Operation of Malcolm X U. Outlined by Howard Fuller," *The New and Observer*, October 10, 1969.

<sup>25</sup> "Malcolm X U Set to Open Doors Oct. 27," *Durham Morning Herald*, October 10, 1969.; "Aim: 'Work With Black People'," *Durham Morning Herald*, October 10, 1969.; "Operation of Malcolm X U. Outlined

Reading from a prepared statement, Fuller's press conference statements included the following remarks:

...the purpose of the University is to provide a framework within which Black education can become relevant to the needs of the Black community and the struggle for Black liberation...I don't consider Malcolm X a permanent institution. Malcolm X makes sense today...Inflexible institutions tend to be unresponsive and self-defeating...Black people controlling their own institutions in America will have an effect on America's present policies toward Africa as well as preparing Black people for the roles they will play when Africa becomes an independent Black continent...the struggle is not a one, two, 10 or 20 year struggle. It is a 40, 50 or 60 year struggle.<sup>26</sup>

A significant aspect in preparation activity for MXLU was the coalition forged between MXLU staff and SOBU staff and personnel. This became even more apparent in the planning of the opening day ceremonies for MXLU which were organized in conjunction with SOBU's October 21-26 conference on Black education for which Fuller was the opening session keynote speaker. The weeklong conference was held in Durham, North Carolina, at North Carolina Central University to focus and examine the question of education for Black people and the role of Black Studies programs as they related to the future of Black education. This convergence of the two organizations turned into a recruitment tool and planning assistance opportunity for MXLU because of the prominent national figures associated with the SOBU conference.<sup>27</sup>

#### MXLU: Opening Day Ceremonies

Malcolm X Liberation University opened its doors on Saturday October 25, 1969. The collective work of Malcolm X Liberation University/Student Organization for Black

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by Howard Fuller," *The New and Observer*, October 10, 1969.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> "Student Organization for Black Unity Proposal," December 20, 1969, Cleveland Sellers Papers, Box 11 Folder 12 Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.; "Aim: 'Work With Black People'," *Durham Morning Herald*, October 10, 1969.; "Malcolm X Ready To Open: Nature of Its Program Still Unclear," *Durham Morning Herald*, October 19, 1969.; "Form New Black Students Unit in N.C.," *Chicago Daily Defender*, October 23, 1969.

Unity staff and prospective students from around North Carolina made the inauguration a highly anticipated event with coverage stretching as far as Milwaukee and Chicago in historically Black publications such as the *Milwaukee Courier* and the *Chicago Defender*. Approximately 3500 community residents celebrated the opening day ceremonies for MXLU. The festivities involved a festival of Black folks in African clad garments who spoke of the greatness of the day. The university's inauguration included a parade that stretched a half a mile, led by Cleveland Sellers and Howard Fuller, who were in charge of the day's events. Truckloads of participants arrived for the inauguration march. African drummers, percussionists and dancers filled the streets of Durham in recognition of the festivities. And young brothers sporting vibrant colored dashikis patrolled the rooftops in preparation for the commencement activities. Supporters traveled as far as Washington, D.C, Brunswick, N.J, and Atlanta, GA, for example, The Harambee Singers who "opened the ceremonies with their deeply gospel rooted version of "The Black Magician," and made the audience join in.<sup>28</sup> Milton Coleman, who reported for the *Milwaukee Courier*, noted that,

Black, green and red flags of the African people were displayed on all cars in the parade. A large banner of the same was at the columns head. Community residents lined the streets at some points three and four deep and many joined the march. The sound of drumming, gourd rattles, and cowbells, handclapping and shouting filled the air, as did the song of sisters in front...In front of the freshly painted red, black and green building a platform of similar colors had been erected. Facing a semi-circle of chairs, a few barricades and host of Black people, sat the platform guests.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> "At MXLU Opening, Fuller emphasizes need for continuous struggle" *The Milwaukee Courier*, 2 November 1969; "Day-Long Celebrations Mark Malcolm X School Program: African-Clad Group Marches to School", *Durham Morning Herald*, 26 October, 1969, p 1A, 8A.; "New Malcolm X School" *Chicago Daily Defender*, 4 November 1969.

<sup>29</sup> "In Durham, NC. 'Liberation' University Opens", *The Milwaukee Courier*, November 2, 1969.



Honored guests of the day included Sister Betty Shabazz, widow of Malcolm X. Sister Shabazz shared the speakers' platform with Nathan Garrett, executive director of the Foundation for Community Development (FCD) and Courtland Cox, director for the Washington DC Center for Black Education (CBE). Sister Shabazz provided a heart-warming speech. She warned against creating unwarranted divisions in the Black community based on class lines and that Black people would have to form a united front to combat the viciousness of racism in America. Sister Shabazz also chastised the Black leadership for being too 'bourgeoisie' and unhelpful when it came to the masses of Black people, who continued to suffer degradation and discrimination. She also referred to Stokely Carmichael as a leader who developed in the legacy of her late husband, Malcolm X, by stating that Carmichael could have been Black America's greatest hope if he had been supported and of any other racial or ethnic background.<sup>30</sup> Carmichael, who was in Guinea at the time working with Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, provided a statement that he sent from Guinea in his absence. In honor of the MXLU inauguration, Carmichael wrote,

The development of the institution is a living example of the development and growth of our struggle, because those of you who were the founders and gave direction to this school have all clearly understood what our struggle is all about. Through years of hard work, organizing and learning—we have finally come full circle around to recognize the fact that we are an African people, that we must be about building a nation, that we must train and develop cadres of young brothers and sisters who will have the skills to help us do this...I am sure that Malcolm X Liberation University and its sister institutions will become a major driving force in this struggle to change the course of our history and put us on the road to total liberation....<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> "At MXLU Opening, Fuller emphasizes need for continuous struggle," *The Milwaukee Courier*, November 2, 1969; "Day-Long Celebrations Mark Malcolm X School Program: African-Clad Group Marches to School," *Durham Morning Herald*, October 26, 1969, 1A, 8A.; , "Opening of Malcolm X U Includes all-day Ceremonies," *The Duke Chronicle*, October 28, 1969, 1, 8.; "Malcolm X Liberation U Opens!", *MOJO*, December 1969.

<sup>31</sup> Stokely Carmichael, "We Are All Africans," *Black Scholar* 1, no. 7, May 1970; Stokely Carmichael, former chairman for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and then emerging spokesperson

In the statement, Carmichael alluded to the slain leader, Malcolm X, by quoting past speeches in which Malcolm X emphasized the need for Black people to make the transnational connection of Africans throughout the entire Diaspora. Malcolm X's rhetoric regarding the transnational connection of Blacks in Mississippi and in the Congo resonated not only with Carmichael, but also with the audience of over 3,500 march participants and supporters of MXLU. Thus, the zeal for Pan-Africanism of which Malcolm X's excerpt expressed, became the programmatic foundation on which MXLU concentrated the university's operations. Carmichael's letter closed out with the famous salutation, "With an undying love for Black people, wherever we may be, Stokely."<sup>32</sup>

Fuller, who delivered the closing speech of the days' ceremonies provided the crowd with moving rhetoric that combined the energy and involvement that converged the activity of the Durham and the Greensboro communities. Fuller praised all those who assisted in the planning and development of the University from what Fuller referred to as "an old, dilapidated dirty warehouse into the two story, six room structure it is now."<sup>33</sup> Fuller also acknowledged the planning committee that made the dedication day a success. He informed the crowd that the school and those who represented MXLU family were not involved in making threats or any type of militaristic action; however, he wanted to be clear regarding his stance about MXLU. He said unequivocally, "This building belongs to Black people. Any aggression against this building will mean that it is

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during the Black Freedom Movement was in Guinea studying with President Sekou Toure, president of Guinea and President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. Carmichael would relay in his speech addressed to MXLU that Presidents Toure and Nkrumah were both pleased with the establishment of MXLU for its representation of a fruitful and promising institution for African people in America and abroad.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> "At MXLU Opening, Fuller emphasizes need for continuous struggle" *The Milwaukee Courier*, November 2, 1969.

aggression against Black people.”<sup>34</sup> Fuller continued to comment on the love of learning that must continue to be engaged as a component of revolutionary action as well as the greater importance of learning through the independent action of establishing something for Black folks that would take place at MXLU. Fuller, who was noted for quoting Frederick Douglas, paraphrased the historical figure in his closing:

If there is no struggle, there is no progress. And those of us who profess to favor freedom, but yet depreciate agitation, are men who want the crops without plowing up the ground. We want rain without the thunder and the lightening. We want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters...This struggle may be a moral one or it may be a physical one, or it maybe both a moral and a physical one but it must be a struggle...Because power concedes nothing without demand. It never did and it never will. And people may not get all that they pay for in this world, but they most certainly will have to pay for what they get.<sup>35</sup>

The community assistance that Fuller referred to came in the form of pulling debris and vines from the structure of the rat infested building that transformed the abandoned warehouse into MXLU's first institutional site. Much of the cleaning and renovation of the MXLU site at 428 E. Pettigrew was also accomplished through the creativity of MXLU's tireless staff and prospective student body. “The students got the building cleaned up through a typically guileful tactic. They called the city sanitation bureau and told them that there was a community clean-up drive. Former Duke Student and AFro-American Society chairman Chuck Hopkins stated that, “The city was only too happy to provide sanitation trucks free of charge for so noble a purpose.”<sup>36</sup>

MXLU's early progression and potential as an institution can be discerned from the planning stages of the University extending back into the summer months of 1969 when the University's committees were being formulated. The meetings and organizing

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.; “Black University Survives in N.C by Jack White,” *Race Relations Reporter* 2, no. 12: July 6, 1971.

strategies of the projected University also produced the inaugural dedication day issue for MXLU's school newspaper, *The African Warrior*, dated October 25, 1969. The issue provided the Durham, Greensboro, and surrounding North Carolina communities with information on the school through a significant article entitled, *Malcolm X U: then, now and future*. The article contains an account of the activities, which included the activity on Duke's campus, names of organizations, and a brief history of the community involvement that led to MXLU's emergence in 1967 to its founding in 1969. This issue also highlighted the bi-organizational relationship between MXLU and SOBU that was critical in the development of MXLU's infrastructure and procurement of staff and students.

The importance of MXLU providing its own information for the Black community became just as critical as the institution itself due to the propaganda that was being produced by white media outlets in the Durham and Greensboro areas. Consistently, articles from white community newspapers were constructed that provided inaccurate and contradictory information which was obviously produced to discount the efforts and energy that converged on an international level to support the founding of MXLU. An example of this is provided by the article produced on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October of 1969 by the *Durham Morning Herald*, titled “Malcolm X Ready to Open: Nature of Its Program Still Unclear.” This work was in direct contradiction with two previous articles posted on MXLU--one by the same newspaper, the *Durham Morning Herald* on August 23, 1969 entitled “Brochure Outlines Malcolm X Plans” and the other an article by the Raleigh-Durham periodical, *The News and Observer*, dated October 10, 1969 entitled “Operations of Malcolm X U Outlined by Howard Fuller.” Much of the coverage that

MXLU's activities received by Durham's conservative *Morning Herald* came as no surprise as many White residents and conservative Black folks in Durham maintained a watchful eye on the progression of the Black institution.<sup>37</sup> Sensationalized news articles failed at providing a broader perspective of Black progress, let alone a view of MXLU as an accomplishment for Black educational autonomy. This led the MXLU family to undertake the critical initiative to provide information on the interests and progress of the independent Black institution.

The October 25, 1969 MXLU opening day ceremonies symbolized the strength and willingness of support and resources that the community was able to provide for the advancement of the institution. The combined efforts dating back to Duke's Black student activism became the prefatory base on which the preparation and planning manifested curricula and operational initiatives for MXLU. And because of this work, the concept of an independent Black university in the state of North Carolina became a reality for MXLU students, making the staff's official first year of operation in Durham of 1969.

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<sup>37</sup> Osha Gray Davidson, *The Best of Enemies: Race and Redemption in the New South* (New York: Scribner, 1996), 162.; Davidson's account of the conservatism of the *Durham Morning Herald* provided valuable insight into the relationship of the news media outlets that covered the activity of MXLU Durham and surrounding areas. The *Morning Herald's* accounts of race relations and Black activity in the city were consistently one-sided at best. An example of this stemmed back to 1920 when the Klu Klux Klan increased membership and terrorist activity in North Carolina claimed the life of Ed Roach, a Black worker who was accused of assaulting a fourteen-year-old White girl. Roach was lynched and according to Davidson's work, the *Morning Herald* reported the activity of the Klan as a mob that "performed its task quietly and in a well organized manner." Some forty years later, the *Morning Herald's* report of the student protests of North Carolina failed at providing adequate news information as an editorial commented that, "race relations in Durham reached a dangerous low in the sit-down protest and advising the misguided students that difficult as is the assignment, racial issues ought to be resolved in good will..." MXLU's existence in the news media of many North Carolina news outlets became one of vilification, to construct the perspective of a Black militant group in the state of North Carolina.

## MXLU Operations 1969-1970

With much enthusiasm and support, MXLU opened for the first day of classes on October 27, 1969 with a student body that ranged in age from 15 to 40. The academic diversity and experience of the students included high school dropouts as well as students who had completed as much as three years of college. The original enrollment expectation was exceeded to include twenty more students, which brought the initial student body for the year of '69 to a total of 51 students. Out of this student body, MXLU would lose 34 of those students due to personal reasons. Other students were asked to leave or were sent home for disciplinary infractions. This experience enabled the University to make the proper adjustments for a modified student evaluation process to assess the type of student that would be better suited for the framework of MXLU. This application and selection process was also applied to the procurement of resource people as well.

A very important modification made during the first year of operation for MXLU centered on the curriculum. Drastic changes were made during the academic year to the curriculum for the purposes of practical application. The curriculum committee and staff made the valuable decision to move from the mere study of theory and concepts to a more aggressive, pragmatic approach in order to develop the “Nation Building” skills for which the University professed to be nurturing the African communities domestic and abroad. First year curriculum changes also saw the addition of an economics course to the MXLU course load.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Proposal For Malcolm X Liberation University, n.d. IFCO Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; “Malcolm X University: Alternative To The System,” *The Charlotte Observer*, December 1, 1969, North Carolina Collection Clipping File through 1975, UNC Library, Chapel Hill.

The press' preoccupation with the University increased with staff and MXLU students receiving continuous requests for tours of the facility and interviews. Demands from the North Carolina press and other media outlets for Fuller to interview grew as well. An example of this is from a published December 1, 1969 interview/article in *The Charlotte Observer* by staff writer Bradley Martin. Martin was granted permission to interview students of MXLU and also Howard Fuller. Prior to the interview, Fuller selected three students to assist as interviewees as well as tour guides of MXLU. Questions to them ranged from curiosity about the institution's intentions to whether any of the student body were members the "Black Muslims." Reporters were so eager, they often inquired if they could sit in on a class. Fuller replied to the reporters, "There are two rules. First, no white may sit in on a class. Second, no reporter may sit in on a class." Befuddled, reporters asked Fuller why he was willing to grant an interview with those types of restrictions? Fuller replied, "The value of talking to you...is that a lot of our people (still) read your paper."<sup>39</sup> Frustrating reporters may have added fuel to the fire of an already charged atmosphere given the dynamics of an all Black university in the South. Nonetheless, the activity and operation of MXLU remained unaltered as it related to the business of educating Black folks.

The didactic and unapologetic approach of MXLU students and staff was not relegated to visiting reporters looking to pry into MXLU facilities. MXLU staff made their presence felt around nearby college campuses, and example being a November 11 forum that took place on Duke's campus that year to commemorate and re-examine the execution and socio-political climate around the revolt and reactions to Nat Turner. The

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<sup>39</sup> "Malcolm X University: Alternative To The System," *The Charlotte Observer*, December 1, 1969. North Carolina Collection Clipping File through 1975, UNC Library, Chapel Hill.

event, present by Duke's AFro-American Society, provided a space to discuss William Styron's work, *The Confessions of Nat Turner*. Many of the members of Duke's Black students contended that Styron's work lacked an accurate historical account of Nat Turner's revolt. Eleanor Campbell and Sandra Green, both instructors of MXLU, were in attendance at the event and provided alternative perspectives on the historical account of Turner. Green clarified, for example, "the real Nat Turner was a dynamic, virile person" and not Styron's "sniveling Sambo which must exist for the ante-bellum Southern white."<sup>40</sup>

Also, in early November of '69, Fuller addressed questions from the Episcopal forum regarding MXLU and the institution's application process with full disclosure of intent in securing the grant. Those in attendance submitted questions by jotting them on index cards, which were provided to Fuller. He prefaced the discussion by informing those in attendance that he might not answer all of the questions depending on what was asked. And from the cards handed to Fuller, he responded to issues that varied from the rumor of MXLU being a communist institution to the question of violence as part of the organizational framework of MXLU. Regarding communism, Fuller replied that, "the aims of the Black separatist university in Durham clash with the ideals of communism and socialism." He further noted that, "There's a lot of racism in (the two ideologies) and I don't want any part of them either. No, we're not Communist," he remarked. As for the issue of militancy and the potential of an institution that taught violence, Fuller responded in the rhetorical fashion of the slain leader, Malcolm X, by saying, "If you're going to require us to be nonviolent, then you'll have to require your (white) people to be non-

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<sup>40</sup> "Afros hold Nat Turner discussion," *The Duke Chronicle*, November 12, 1969.



violent. Then maybe we can talk about violence.”<sup>41</sup> During the questioning session, Fuller was also prodded about his religious convictions to which he was adamant about keeping private. He merely told the audience, “I don't think that is any of your business. Whomever I believe in is my own personal thing.” However, the audience remained persistent about the application process for which MXLU acquired the Episcopal grant. One of the committee members asked Fuller, “Were you as honest with the committee (which authorized the grant) as you've been with us? To this, Fuller said, “I was as honest with the committee as I could be. They didn't ask all the questions you've asked, but they asked most of them...And I was honest.”<sup>42</sup>

The Episcopal forum ended with Fuller's explication of the MXLU curriculum, aims and objectives and projected University engagement for the coming year. Fuller continued to stress “self-reliance” as MXLU's primary theoretical and conceptual framework for their anticipated success. He also informed the Episcopalians that the University family was in the process of securing additional funding sources from “Black-controlled” sources; however, he was not in a position to reveal those potential financial sponsors. Additionally, he disclosed that he was in the process of planning a funding campaign both in and outside of the country so that MXLU could continue its progress toward becoming a more autonomous financial institution. This sense of urgency for financial independence was increased after the local parishes asked the national church to withhold its approval of grants like the one made to MXLU unless local officials were given greater input in the approval process. For many local residents and sympathizers of MXLU, this came as no surprise, especially since the local parishes experienced a sharp

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<sup>41</sup> “No, We Do Not Teach Violence, Fuller Says of Malcolm X Univ.,” *News and Observer*, November 3, 1969.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

decline in financial contributions from local parishioners after they learned of the grant that was awarded to MXLU.<sup>43</sup> Because of this, the likelihood of MXLU receiving future funding from the Episcopal branch was slim to none. The actions of the Episcopal group might have created a hindrance due to the negative press it spurred that attempted to defame the institution. However, MXLU was able to tap into IFCO's Social Action Works grants program, and the independent institution acquired a \$15,000 grant to supplement Episcopal monies and aid in cutting the University's debt.<sup>44</sup>

Fuller's meeting at the Episcopal Forum also marked a significant point that transcends the mere publicity that MXLU activities received from just the local press. In attendance at the forum in civilian clothing were three members of the Raleigh Police Department. Beyond the overt disclosure of their presence, the officers provided statements to the press regarding why they were at the forum, commenting that they were present because "they were 'interested' and wanted to know what was going on."<sup>45</sup>

MXLU's 69-70 year brought about a significant change in the structure of the University when the decision was made to move the school's operations to Greensboro. The discussions to relocate began as early as February of 1970 and continued until the University administration was able to finalize their decision on the future of the school. Significant factors that weighed in the decision to move the school's base of operations

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.; "Malcolm X University Going to Greensboro," *Durham Morning Herald*, August 21, 1970.

<sup>44</sup> "IFCO Grants \$312,318 For Social Action Works," *Chicago Daily Defender*, April 4, 1970.; The total IFCO grant was disseminated to twenty Black, Chicano and American Indian community organizations and development projects. Organizations that benefited from the grant included but not limited to Los PADRES (Priests Associated for Religious, Educative and Social Rights) a group of Mexican American priests in the Roman Catholic Church based in San Antonio, TX; the National Black Sister's Conference--a one-year-old organization of Black nuns in the Roman Catholic Church; The American Indian Movement (AIM); Garfield Organization of Chicago; and the Organized Migrants in Community Action (O.M.I.C.A) of South Florida, which was an organized to provide information and assistance to farm workers in the area of civil rights, jobs, legal aid, and other needs.

<sup>45</sup> "No, We Do Not Teach Violence, Fuller Says of Malcolm X Univ.," *News and Observer*, November 3, 1969.

related to the need for expansion of the University's programs as well as the determined importance of existing in a community (Greensboro) that had traditionally been more militant than the Durham community. Prior to the official University announcement of relocating, Fuller remarked that the students of Durham's North Carolina Central University had never been very active. He also noted that in an "integrated" Durham, "You can tell the white houses by the 'For Sale' signs in the front yards." The promise of being in all Black community made the lure of living in Greensboro even more attractive to the MXLU staff and students. From a curricular standpoint, MXLU staff felt that because the University made pedagogical modifications, the school and students needed an environment that would be able to substantiate the University's changes. The move to Greensboro would enable the resource staff of MXLU to benefit from the technical assistance of the students and faculty members of North Carolina A&T, a technical institution.<sup>46</sup>

At a press conference held at the SOBU national headquarters, Fuller announced the relocation plans of MXLU were to be completed by October 5, of 1970. While emphasizing that the crux of the decision had nothing to do with being forced out of Durham, Fuller assured the press the move was predicated on the foreseen potential of maximizing the space that the new Greensboro location would have to offer. The reception and assistance from the Durham community had been paramount for MXLU's first year of successful operations and there was an expectation of greater support to be anticipated from the Black community in Greensboro. One point made plain was that

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<sup>46</sup> "School Move Not Decided," *Greensboro Record*, February 18, 1970.; "Malcolm X University May Move," *The News and Observer*, August 1, 1970.; "Malcolm X May Move to Gate City," "Malcolm X May Move To Gate City", *Durham Sun*. 3 August 1970.; Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University., n.d., Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

even though the event officially categorized as a “move” to Greensboro for the operation of the University, the Durham building that served as the base for MXLU's classes would still be used for the benefit of MXLU programming “[including] an Early Learning Center, a High School Forum, and some special seminars for adults.”<sup>47</sup>

In Greensboro, the new main classroom location was established at 708 Asheboro Street. The new complex became the center for all of the school's activities. The building, which was really two buildings, was the former education building of a church. Prior to the building being acquired by MXLU, the location was owned by a Black Masonic Lodge. The Masonic organization rented the building to MXLU. The new base of operation included four houses to serve in the combined efforts of the total MXLU learning complex. The move also benefited several Greensboro residents who had received city water connections under the sponsorship of MXLU, thus solidifying the school's intended support to the Greensboro community and increasing the influence of the school in the process. Fuller informed the press that the students of the Greensboro location would be engaged in work projects on thirty-six acres of land just outside of Durham that had been loaned to the University. Outside of attendees at the press conference, additional support came in the form of statements that were released to the press “by some fifteen members of the 'Greensboro Black community,' including three doctors and four ministers.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> “Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University”, Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>48</sup> “Malcolm X School Plan Announced”, *News and Observer*. 29 August 1970.; “Malcolm X University To Complete Move By Oct. 5”, *Durham Morning Herald*. 29 August 1970.; “Malcolm X University Going to Greensboro”, *Durham Morning Herald*. 21 August 1970.; “Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University”, Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

As shown by the announcement of MXLU's move at the SOBU national headquarters, MXLU's growing coalition with SOBU led to the MXLU family to join the national Black student organization in Greensboro. In addition to the bi-organizational strength that came from the alliance of the two organizations, MXLU's new Greensboro location stood to benefit from the existence of the Greensboro Association of Poor People (GAPP) and the two Black colleges of A&T and Bennett, the historically Black woman's college. All of the combined factors would mean enhanced community reinforcement and sustained support through the partnerships emerging because of the convergence of the activity of the all of the organizations.

Even greater than the potential of local support was the renewed national appeal of Greensboro, North Carolina, as an aggressive site for Pan-Africanism.<sup>49</sup> Tom Dent's work, *Southern Journey: A Return to the Civil Rights Movement*, and William Chafe's *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina and the Black Struggle for Freedom* both speak to the critical importance of this regional shift in expressions of Black Nationalism to the South. According to Dent's book,

...black militants in Greensboro moved ahead to the point where the town quickly acquired the reputation of *the* center of black power ideology in the South. Malcolm X University, a private college espousing the black aesthetic and named for the assassinated New York Muslim leader...People came to Greensboro from all over the country because of the excitement around Malcolm X University. When SNCC splintered into factions in the late sixties, several SNCC leaders headed for Greensboro...The black community across the board was supportive...Volunteers arrived from everywhere to teach and help out.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> IFCO Project Evaluation and Recommendation: Malcolm X Liberation University October 20, 1970. Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 38, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>50</sup> Tom Dent, *Southern Journey: A Return to the Civil Rights Movement* (Athens, Georgia: the University of Georgia Press, 2001), 43.; William Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 220.

This dispersal of SNCC members brought about the addition of new membership of former “Snickers” to existing organizations and the creation of other independent Black educational ventures in the latter part of 1960s. This would become the case in Washington, D.C., with Charlie Cobb whose work in establishing the SNCC Freedom Schools later materialized in the formation of the Center for Black Education (CBE) in October of 1969. The creation of CBE in the “North” not only served the purpose of expanding the concept of Black education, but with the backing of Cobb, CBE was established as the northern branch of MXLU, and the two institutions collaborated on curriculum improvements from a Pan-Africanist centered perspective.<sup>51</sup>

#### MXLU Operations 1970-1971

Operations for the 1970-71 school year opened on Oct 5<sup>th</sup> at the new expanded Greensboro location on Asheboro Street to the great anticipation of community residents. The opening day ceremonies delivered by Fuller provided the audience with a glimpse of the past year’s activity and obstacles that were presented to the MXLU family. Fuller also informed the audience of modifications made by the Council of Elders for the 1970-71 operational program, which included three critical components to be integrated and stressed for the academic year: 1) ideology 2) skills 3) a positive attitude towards physical work. Fuller also added,

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<sup>51</sup> Center for Black Education, *The Struggle for Black Education* (Washington, D.C.: Drum and Spear Press and Center for Black Education, 1972).; “A Position Paper: Center For Black Education,” *Negro Digest/Black World* 19, no. 1-12 (March 1970), 38.

So we have survived a year. It was not always a pleasant year. We had many problems and at different points we lacked clear direction, but we hung on and we have profited from those mistakes and those problems. In addition we have done what many people said we could not do – we opened, we carried out a program, and we are now ready to begin another year. We are no longer looking back, we are looking ahead. This is a new year and we expect to move forward in a strong, positive manner.<sup>52</sup>

Changes in the University's centralized location were not the only modifications made in service of the progression of the school's Pan-Africanist activity and programs. Around this time, Fuller changed his name to Owusu Sadaukai, meaning "one who clears the way for others." And the title couldn't have been more befitting of the emergent figurehead of MXLU, since demands for the young activist's time were increasing in conjunction with MXLU's increased reputation as the Pan-Africanist educational institution of the South for Black Power activity.<sup>53</sup>

MXLU's second school year began with a student enrollment of thirty-four full time students. Four of the students were sent home for disciplinary reasons with the other two leaving on their own for personal reasons. The fluctuations in attendance did not stop the University's expansion. The school was able to benefit from more space in the newly acquired Greensboro location in spite of the site's top floor being occupied by

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<sup>52</sup> "Opening Day Statement October, 1970 Mwalimu Owusu Sakauki." The document is in the author's possession and was provided by Dr. Howard Fuller from his private collection.

<sup>53</sup> Osha Gray Davidson, *The Best of Enemies: Race and Redemption in the New South* (New York: Scribner, 1996), 293.; From this point on in the document, Howard Fuller will be referred to as Owusu Sadaukai.; Name changes amongst Black folks in the 1960s and 1970s became more prevalent as more Kiswahili courses were integrated into university curriculums as Black studies began to sweep the U.S. In the period leading up to the 1970s, African language offerings on college campuses experienced a significant increase. Languages such as Kiswahili, Yoruba, Hausa, Bantu, Amharic, Bambara, Ewe, Twi, Igbo (or Ibo), Kikongo, Tswana and Tigrinya became more prevalent in Pan-Africanist circles. These important cultural expressions led to the emergence of name changes in Black community. Some of the more popular names used were Amiri, Tamu, Uhuru, Malaika, Karenga, Masika, Tukufu, Jamila and Kazi. For more information on Black cultural expression and African language, see the work of M. L. Nambuo Temu, "African American Students' Self-Awareness Through Kiswahili Language" in the *Journal of Black Studies* 22, no.4 (June 1992), 532-545. Also check *African Culture: The Rhythms of Unity* edited by Molefi Assante and Karimu Assante; *Yorugu: An African-centered Critique of European Culture, Thought and Behavior* by Marimba Ani as well as *Emerging Afrikan Survivals: An Afrocentric Critical Theory* by Kamau Kemayo.

another organization. The space became free during the school year, which provided more space for expanded lab facilities. These improvements were also supplemented by the acquisition of more equipment to give MXLU a fully functional Bio-Medics lab. The addition of four Greensboro houses brought MXLU's total of community residences to eight houses that could be used as dorms and living quarters for students and staff.

The work of the staff and personnel remained consistent. Moreover, the school benefited from the assistance of part-time volunteers from the Greensboro community. The year also saw the implementation and successful operation of the Children of Africa Program that serviced approximately thirty-five children in the Greensboro community with a sizeable concentration of Black youth coming from a local Greensboro housing project. In spite of these gains, MXLU's financial needs persisted. However, the institution was able to break even largely on income received for speaking engagements.<sup>54</sup>

Coinciding with the establishment of institutions like MXLU and CBE came increased motivation nationally to investigate alternative educational solutions for cultural reinforcement as it related to Black folks. The inspiration produced not only more independent Pan-Africanist institutions but also the need for the consolidation of efforts amongst schools that shared theoretical and ideological perspectives. At a meeting in New York in June 1970, a collective of Pan-Africanist institutions met to formulate what would be known as The Federation of Pan-African Educational

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<sup>54</sup> IFCO Project Evaluation and Recommendation: Malcolm X Liberation University October 20, 1970. Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 38, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; "Quarterly Report for IFCO by Malcolm X Liberation University November 1, 1970 – January 30, 1971," Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.



Institutions to be headed by Leon Moor, a resource person in African Civilization and the engineering department of MXLU.

The federation included the following: MXLU of Greensboro, North Carolina; CBE of Washington D.C.; The Chad School in Newark (of which Moor was director); Our School of New York City; Clifford McKissick Community School (CMCS) of Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and the Pan-African Work Center (PAWC) of Atlanta, Georgia. Out of the federation the only post-secondary institutions were MXLU and CBE; the other institutions focused primarily on Pre-k to high school aged Black youth. All of the institutions curricular focus was Pan-Africanism which enabled the administrators at the various schools the opportunity to gain valuable insight for the progression of their respective institutions. This insight also manifested itself through the establishment of a 'skills bank' by the member institutions of the Federation who sought “qualified faculty members, engineers, teachers and others who could provide their talents and pedagogical skills at one of the Federation schools. A significant amount of this contribution came from MXLU. For example, MXLU was able to provide the Chad School of Newark with Director Leon Moor as well as an assistant administrator. Sadaukai also provided assistance by giving lectures at the school as well.<sup>55</sup>

Pre-Text to an MXLU Ideological Shift:  
Owusu Sadaukai (Howard Fuller) Inside Mozambique

The latter part of MXLU's the 1970-71 school year was largely affected by the decision of Owusu Sadaukai to attend a meeting sponsored by the National Committee of Black Churchmen (NCBC) and the Tanzanian Consultative Committee for the purposes of coordinating efforts with African clergymen on the continent. Pulling together some

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<sup>55</sup> “Pan African School Federation Seeks Cooperative Solutions,” *SOBU Newsletter*, December 5, 1970.

fifty Black Americans and their African counterparts in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania marked an event of historical transnational significance. The conference, which took place from August 22 through August 29 of 1971, converged around the theme of “Black Identity and Solidarity” and “The Church as a Medium for Rapid Social Change.” Both American Blacks and native Africans presented variously-themed papers at the conference. The major significance of Owusu Sadaukaia paper he presented titled “Black Education,” which centered on the larger political and social dynamics that necessitated independent Black education. As the head of MXLU, Sadaukai also held the responsibility of representing SOBU and the IFCO international committee (a group focused on supporting the liberation struggles on throughout the African Diaspora).

While in East Africa, Sadaukai planned to broaden the parameters of his trip beyond Tanzania to visit Kenya, Ethiopia, Zambia and Nigeria for the purposes of personal enrichment as well as to further his mission of international support for MXLU and SOBU. He wanted to actualize a transnational connection beyond rhetoric and theory. With plans not to assume the 'tourist mentality', Sadaukai gathered as much information as he possibly could about the liberation struggles taking place on the continent. To do this he knew that he would have to be as proactive as possible in his solicitation for potential contacts from the various groups. Little did Sadaukai know, his aforementioned intentions would not only come to fruition, but he would be presented with a life-altering opportunity while on the African continent that would change his perspectives on the worldwide liberation struggles for Black people.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> “The Church, medium for rapid social change theme of confab,” *The Chicago Daily Defender*, August 7, 1971.; “Inside Liberated Mozambique,” *The African World* January 8, 1972.; “The 31 Day Diary of Owusu Sadaukai (Howard Fuller): Inside of Mozambique,” August 1971, 3. Document in author’s possession provided by Dr. Howard Fuller from his private collection.

Out of the liberation struggles on the continent, one that gained considerable support from Black folks in America was that of the people of Mozambique who were struggling to break the colonialist yoke of the Portuguese. Since the mid-1960s, the Mozambican struggle had produced an anti-Portuguese guerrilla fighting force, the Mozambique Liberation Front, or FRELIMO, and it was causing havoc to the “NATO-backed Portuguese forces in a protracted war of national liberation.”<sup>57</sup> Blacks in America that supported the struggles of Blacks in the Diaspora held a deep-seated respect for freedom fighters of Mozambique and regarded their plight as a source of inspiration. This attention and admiration for FRELIMO was soon adopted by filmmakers Bob Fletcher, a former member of SNCC and a freelance photographer, and Bob Van Lierop, an attorney from New York who had given up his regular law practice in order to investigate ways in which to assist the liberation movements on the African continent. Since the late 1960s, Fletcher and Van Lierop “had been planning to do a film and total audio-visual documentation of the FRELIMO struggle, in conjunction with Boubaker Adjali, a well known Algerian photo-journalist who had already been inside the liberated sections of Mozambique and Angola. However, because Adjali fell ill, Sadaukai was invited to Mozambique by FRELIMO in his place.”<sup>58</sup>

Sadaukai's trip, which was initially planned for sixteen days, was understood as a privileged opportunity to experience the liberated areas of the African continent not free to the international press or organizations with claims to assist in these areas for the liberation struggles. With this approach, Sadaukai departed for Mozambique with

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<sup>57</sup> “Inside Liberated Mozambique,” *The African World* January 8, 1972.

<sup>58</sup> “The Church, medium for rapid social change theme of confab,” *The Chicago Daily Defender*, August 7, 1971.; “Inside Liberated Mozambique,” *The African World* January 8, 1972.; “The 31 Day Diary of Owusu Sadaukai (Howard Fuller): Inside of Mozambique,” August 1971, 3. Document in author’s possession provided by Dr. Howard Fuller from his private collection.

Fletcher and Van Lierop on the morning of August 27, 1971 for the experience of a lifetime. Besides the film makers, Sadaukai packed two cameras, one with color slides to make prints for MXLU and the other with black and white film so that he could provide photos for *The African World*, SOBU's publication.

Sadaukai, who felt that he was not prepared for the trip neither mentally nor physically, still convinced himself that he couldn't pass on the opportunity and thus found himself being picked up at the Songea airport about two hours after boarding from Dar es Salaam. Once arriving in the restricted area, the three Black Americans were picked up and taken to the FRELIMO compound under the command of Comrade Cipriano Mashava. Once there, the gentlemen were greeted and introduced to the Freedom Fighters, who acted as interpreters and armed protection while the visitors were under the auspices of the FRELIMO group.<sup>59</sup>

Sadaukai, who remained in constant dialogue with the FRELIMO soldiers (averaging 22 to 23 years of age), was consistently impressed and reminded of how informed the people of Mozambique were regarding issues in United States. One of the Freedom Fighters, Comrade Cornelio Mbumilia, who had been in FRELIMO for six years, was a student in Tanzania and very fluent in English, Spanish and Portuguese, and well aware of the conditions of Black people in the United States. Fletcher assisted the young soldier in comprehending the struggle by comparing the plight of Mozambicans to that of Black folks in Mississippi, and with the help of this analogy, Cornelio's perspective was broadened further. Cornelio asked further questions about American Blacks such as Sonny Liston, Muhammad Ali, and Angela Davis. He surprised his

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<sup>59</sup> "Inside Liberated Mozambique," *The African World* January 8, 1972.; "The 31 Day Diary of Owusu Sadaukai (Howard Fuller): Inside of Mozambique," August 1971, 3. Document in author's possession provided by Dr. Howard Fuller from his private collection.

American guests even more with questions on Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers in the larger context of African politics. The conversations were not only fruitful for Cornelio, but as Sadaukai also furthered his curiosity, so began his most edifying experiences. And he had only spent one day with the soldiers of FRELIMO. According to a diary entry of Sadaukai,

I have tried to analyze my feelings at this point. It is very difficult. I keep thinking of people states and elsewhere who keep referring to the liberation struggles as jive. Yet I am on the verge of going into an area where brothers and sisters are waging armed struggle – armed struggle as opposed to verbal struggle. We aren't even in Mozambique, but the atmosphere of these brothers tells you something important is happening. When you compare that attitude with some of the jive, self-proclaimed 'revolutionaries in Dar and the U.S., it really has an impact. I haven't really thought about the possibility of an attack while we are in there but it is quite possible. Mentally, I am prepared for that (we will see when I get there). This is what we keep talking about. All of a sudden it is no longer talk, but it is reality. I am about to jump over maps, pamphlets, books, lectures, etc and about to physically be a part of the armed African liberation struggle. It's really deep, and I imagine it will be deeper when we actually set foot in Mozambique.<sup>60</sup>

The following day, the three American guests of the FRELIMO Freedom Fighters arrived at the Mozambican campsite of FRELIMO after a five and a half hour ride through rough terrain and dangerous driving conditions. Once at the site of about fifteen huts, the gentlemen were greeted by Comrade Armando Gubueza, “national political commissar for FRELIMO”. Gubueza had been in New York with Fletcher and Van Lierop where he had spent an enormous amount of time in the Black community. Because of his experience and exposure, Comrade Gubueza too spoke English very well and was also fluent in speaking Portuguese. The soldiers at the FRELIMO camp were introduced to the Black Americans “as people from the United States who were supporting the struggle of the Mozambican people against imperialism.” Comrade

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

Gubueza spoke in Portuguese for the sake of the FRELIMO soldiers while Cornelio acted as interpreter. He conveyed the message that the role of the United States was highly significant as it related to the support of the enemy and oppression of Mozambican peoples. It was further explained to the three Black Americans that a large majority of the bombs dropped on the indigenous people of Mozambique were manufactured in the United States. Many things became clear and problematized for Sadaukai, this Black American who sought to engage in the worldwide liberation of people of African descent. One thing Sadaukai desperately wanted clarification about while on his excursion was the question of ideology. Even more important for Sadaukai were the questions that he began to formulate from his encounter with the soldiers, questions such as how did the Freedom Fighters view their struggle? Who was the enemy? What were they fighting for? What were they trying to build?

This line of critical inquiry and other information would be extended to Sadaukai and his fellow Black Americans. As they continued to learn about the perspectives of their African sisters and brothers, they readjusted their own viewpoints of the liberation struggles. Sadaukai learned soon enough that for the Freedom Fighters of FRELIMO, their allies were considered anyone who was willing to struggle against imperialism. This information began to trouble the staunch perspective Sadaukai held regarding whites, global imperialism and races/faces aligned with the oppression of colored peoples on the planet. For the young Black American, the reality of being in the midst and process of liberation with those who existed within the context of an everyday struggle, which was all out war in the physical sense, prompted thoughts and a comparative analysis of his positions on race and the meanings behind neo-colonialism and

imperialism. After days of questioning and dialogue with the soldiers of FRELIMO, Sadaukai underwent the numerous periods of introspective reflection that produced the writing of his diary. He realized some aspects of his initial analysis of oppression and race might need to be adjusted. Like Malcolm X before him who fought for transnational brotherhood through Pan-Africanism and gained a broader perspective through his international trips to Mecca and the African continent, Sadaukai faced a re-evaluation of his ideations while in the midst of war torn Mozambique.<sup>61</sup> Another diary entry of Owusu Sadaukai shows this,

Time and again they made point that the struggle was against imperialism, world-wide imperialism. Anyone struggling against imperialism, they agreed was a friend. I had personally conceived of our struggle as being against white people who represented and controlled the forces of imperialism. However, there was also no doubt in my analysis that Black people who represented the forces of imperialism had to be fought against as well. As I thought back on it, I clearly saw that much of my thinking had been conditioned by my like in the world's most racist society. And further, given this particular situation we face in America that was a valid analysis. Thus I concluded, it became a matter of the particular circumstances in which one found himself; this was one of the fundamental molders of ideological analysis...I see very clearly the contradictions in my own life within our "movement" in the United States that we must be more aware of. I also see that leadership by mouth has no place in a revolution, or for that matter in a school like Malcolm X Liberation University. Leadership comes from what you do by example. Revolution is also no place for ego trips, pouting arguments that have no constructive base, etc. I just hope when I get back I can somehow turn the experience into a positive force for Malcolm X Liberation University and the Black People's Union Party.<sup>62</sup>

Sadaukai's epiphany was further supported by the constant realization that he and the two filmmakers were gaining the experiential knowledge that Black folks back in the states had only theorized and pontificated about.

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<sup>61</sup> Fanon Che Wilkins, "In the Belly of the Beast: Black Power, Anti-Imperialism and the African Liberation Solidarity Movement, 1968-1975" (doctoral dissertation, New York University), 140-141.

<sup>62</sup> "The 31 Day Diary of Owusu Sadaukai (Howard Fuller): Inside of Mozambique," August 1971, 3. Document in author's possession.

Because FRELIMO came under the attack of Portuguese troops and air strikes, the initial expectation of a sixteen day trip was exceeded, and now the Black Americans' time with FRELIMO became indefinite. Since they didn't know when they would be able to return to Dar es Salaam, Sadaukai was able to capitalize on the time with the commanding officers and soldiers of FRELIMO. Much of the dialogue took place in between the twenty-five mile per day hikes on narrow trails that were used to avoid the wider roads usually mined by the Portuguese military. These journeys took the Freedom Fighters through thick elephant grass that made a line of vision impossible, elephant droppings and simple log bridges.

One of Sadaukai's most interested entries analyzed the contributions of Black women in the movement beyond the duties of merely assisting men. He writes, "On these marches, there is no place for weak-kneed male chauvinism. The FRELIMO sisters are given no special privileges and they meet the challenge well."<sup>63</sup> One female soldier so highlighted was a young Black woman named Maria, who gained more than full consideration of "Comrade" from her male counterparts of FRELIMO. Maria was all of twenty years old, five feet, two inches tall and just one hundred pounds. In addition to the rifle draped over her shoulder, she carried a knapsack on her back and another load of over fifty pounds on her head. She seldom used her hands to steady the load, and at one point even broke into a brisk trot."<sup>64</sup> Maria, who had been involved with FRELIMO since the age of thirteen did not receive her mandatory four months of military training until she reached eighteen years of age. Upon completion of her training she joined up with FRELIMO's women's battalion during which she primarily used rifles and light

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.



machine guns for combat. In addition, the young female Freedom Fighter was educated at the African American Institute in Tanzania for five years and spoke the English language exceptionally well. There was also another young woman of FRELIMO, Theresa, who was sixteen years of age and the youngest of the contingency whom Sadaukai witnessed as a soldier fighting with her male counterparts.

Even more surprising to Sadaukai was the humanitarianism of the liberation force; not only did FRELIMO require political education for their soldiers but also those captured by FRELIMO. FRELIMO's policy of providing political education to all captured Africans was a significant factor as to why the guerrilla army had such a high success rate of recruitment for soldiers to fight against Portuguese.

While in Mozambique touring and interacting with FRELIMO, much of Sadaukai's time was spent formulating action plans for the implementation of his experiences at MXLU and for SOBU. Sadaukai spoke extensively with Comrade Gubueza about FRELIMO building a relationship with MXLU, SOBU and IFCO. Much of the discussion was focused on the possible assistance that the independent educational institution and Black student group could provide to the Freedom Fighters as it related to FRELIMO projects like the orphanage that was being developed at one of the campsites.

One of Owusu Sadaukai's most important encounters abroad in the midst of visiting FRELIMO was his meeting with Samora Michel who became the first president of Mozambique once the country gained its full independence from Portugal. Michel, who was a Marxist, informed Sadaukai of the significant role that Black folks in the United States could and should play in aiding in theirs and other anti-imperialist liberation struggles on the African continent. Michel remarked to Sadaukai that, "We

don't need any more people...Africa's full of people. Our problem is the politics of the United States. We need a voice inside of the United States that can speak to our interest. If you could play a role in that, it would help us much more than sending folks over here who have no idea what they're doing."<sup>65</sup> This very candid and forward advice helped Sadaukai to identify the methods in which food, clothing, educational materials, and medical personnel could be integrated into the action plans geared toward the assistance of groups like FRELIMO. These material deficiencies could be filled with human resources such as a Bio-medics crew or supplies.

With these observations and the opportunity to dialogue with the soldiers and see firsthand the realities of revolution, the answers for Sadaukai became quite clear as to which direction he wished to steer MXLU and aid SOBU. As a board member for IFCO and the head of IFCO's international task force, Sadaukai was well aware of how he could begin to use his experiential knowledge to inform the organization of how international assistance could be provided to aid in liberation struggles in Africa. Sadaukai's time in the liberated areas of Mozambique totaled thirty-one days. Fletcher and Van Lierop ended up staying an additional two weeks to complete the filming of what became a pivotal documentary to aid in disseminating information about the liberation struggles on the African continent.<sup>66</sup> The film, "*A Luta Continua (The Struggle Continues)*", distributed by Tricontinental Films in conjunction with the African Information Service (AIS), became one of the most popular documentary films that

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<sup>65</sup> Signe Waller, *Love and Revolution: A Political Memoir: People's History of the Greensboro Massacre, Its Setting and Aftermath* (New York & Oxford, 2002), 54-55.; The information on the exchange between Sadaukai and Senora Michel was provided by an interview by Nelson Johnson for Waller's work. One of Johnson's most pivotal roles in this development related to the prefatory reasoning and motivations behind Sadaukai's actions for international solidarity once he returned from the continent. Johnson, who was the national chair for SOBU, became even more instrumental in this development through the student organization.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 19-22, 26, 32.; "Inside Liberated Mozambique," *The African World*, January 8, 1972.

detailed the atrocities of Portuguese colonialism and the valiant fight of FRELIMO guerrillas. In addition, the film was widely circulated throughout the United States through organizations aligned with the support efforts for the liberation movements on the continent.<sup>67</sup>

The month spent with FRELIMO solidified Sadaukai's credibility as a national voice of the movement and provided the benefit of not only rhetoric but the experience of having participated in leading treks and coming under attack with an African liberation organization that most Black "revolutionaries" in the states only theorized about. Upon his return, Sadaukai's journal recollections were detailed in a six-part series in *The African World* with black and white photographs taken in the bush of Sadaukai with FRELIMO soldiers against the Mozambican landscape. Sadaukai's return also marked a pivotal time for MXLU, as the University family readied itself for a potential expansion of operations that would provide the school with even more national and international leverage. The only question was could the independent Black institution withstand the

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<sup>67</sup> Fanon Che Wilkins, "In the Belly of the Beast: Black Power, Anti-Imperialism and the African Liberation Solidarity Movement, 1968-1975," (doctoral dissertation, New York University), 136.; Robert Van Lierop, who was very much influenced by Malcolm X but never had the chance to formally meet him, was an attorney by training who's work on the anti-Vietnam War movement in New York and support work for SNCC thrust the young lawyer further into movement activity. Van Lierop's work on *A Luta Continua* (The Struggle Continues) later produced a sequel, *O Povo Organizado* (The Organized People), which was filmed shortly after Mozambique's independence in 1975 and later released in 1976. The funding raised from the showing of the films across the country went to the building of a clinic in the Nassau province. For the full personal account of Robert Van Lierop, see "Robert Van Lierop, *A Luta Continua*" in *No Easy Victories: African Liberation and American Activists over a Half Century, 1950-2000*, edited by William Minter, Gail Hovey and Charles Cobb, Jr., 2008, 142-143.; "IFCO Exposes Plot: South Africa Plans Dialogue with Negroes'," *SOBU Newsletter*, 1, no. 19, July 10, 1971.; The initiation of the task force and related matters was due to the uncovering of a clandestine meeting that was planned between members of the U.S. government and South African officials in July of 1971 in Johannesburg. IFCO officials were invited to the meeting; however, they refused to attend. The meeting was supposed to be an exchange between the United States-South Africa Leader Exchange Program, Inc. IFCO charged South Africa with using the issue of dialogue as a shield to hide apartheid from the public to give the false perception about Apartheid. IFCO strongly felt that any participation by Black organizations would give the proponents of Apartheid more of a legitimate image in the U.S. As head of IFCO's International Task Force that was developed to investigate related matters, Sadaukai worked in conjunction with related organizations to contribute medical aid, clothing, food and financial resources directly to the liberation organizations on the continent.

social and political forces in the state of North Carolina that were working for MXLU's demise?

#### MXLU Operations 1971-1972

The third year of operations for MXLU began on October 2, 1972 with a total of thirty-six students. The class included four students from the first year and ten students from the second year. The resource personnel for the start of the third year totaled nine individuals. Four of the nine resource persons were former first year students of MXLU's entering 1969 class. The third year of the school's operations was in serious questioning with the most concerns focused on the growth and improvement of the institution's infrastructure and facilities.<sup>68</sup>

Much of this concern was warranted. MXLU's approach to curriculum development had been organic the previous two years of operation, and its success was due to the emphasis on a self-reliant approach to curriculum for practical use in Black communities worldwide. But students and activists alike wanted to capitalize on the opportunity to build the institution's programming as consultants, resource people, or students. The inevitable need to expand became apparent. Obviously, the move to the Greensboro location had been a definite turn in the right direction to meet the objective of University growth, but with the attention gained from local media outlets came a cloud of negativity that followed the success of the Black independent venture as well. At times, the negative backlash came in more than just propagation of print media, it came in physically damaging forms to the institution as well.

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<sup>68</sup> "Proposal For Malcolm X Liberation University," n.d., 5. Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 38, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

Since the inception of MXLU, threats of violence ensued from Whites whether they were against students or against the resource staff of the school. A disturbing example took place in January of 1970 when some White residents were so infuriated with the success of the MXLU that they burned down one of the residences that school used as a men's dormitory.<sup>69</sup> By early 1971, MXLU's total operations consisted of the Greensboro location of centralized operations; the former Durham location which was the initial site of the University and since being used for children's and community outreach programs; and, spread amongst the communities of Durham and Greensboro, a total of ten houses that the school used as dorms for women and men students and resource personnel of the school. As an institution, the school was effective but it needed facilities that were more self-contained for safety reasons, in addition to the need to maximize the programming interests. The aforementioned dynamics would receive a potential answer for the impending need for a more centralized MXLU. And the potential of this venture would provide MXLU with the type of national and international leverage from African Liberation organizations and leaders who were in support of the school's aims and objectives, thus translating into even more of a perceived threat by the state of North Carolina and the federal government.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> "Black University Survives in N.C.," *Race Relations Reporter* 2, no. 12 (July 6, 1971), 5.; "Firearms, Ammo Found in House Here After Fire," from unknown periodical--in owners possession, January 13, 1970.; The house used by MXLU as a dormitory for male students of the school contained rifles and ammunition in one of the rooms of the house. The information was disclosed by Fuller, who at the scene of the incident advised one of the officers for safety precautions. One of the MXLU students from Chicago claimed one of the rifles was registered, but according to the federal agents, they were investigating the ownership of the other weapons. The firearms and ammunition came as a bit of a surprise to many. However, the threat of white violence in the community prompted defense measurements by members of the independent institution.

<sup>70</sup> "Proposal For Malcolm X Liberation University," n.d., 12. Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 38, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

## MXLU Operations 1971-1972: Palmer Memorial Institute Controversy

MXLU's intentions for further expansion were made known to community residents, and by the start of the 1971 summer, MXLU received notification from a member of the community about a potential property for sale. The potential location, Palmer Memorial Institute (PMI)<sup>71</sup> of Sedalia (approximately ten miles outside of Greensboro), was closing due to financial difficulties, and the operations staff found it to be a lucrative decision to bid early for the former site of the internationally recognized Black preparatory boarding school. The unfortunate financial fate of PMI was largely due to a fire on February 15, 1971 that resulted in the loss of the school's classrooms, library, administrative offices and the PMI's auditorium. At a board meeting on May 29, 1971, the trustees of the PMI felt that it would be in the best interests of the institution to close the historic institution. By the close of PMI's 70-71 academic year, the total indebtedness of the institution was \$250,000.00 with an additional \$140,000.00 due for 1973. The total book value of PMI's property was valued at \$1.5 million. This included 270 acres of land, twelve buildings, a farm and all of the PMI's equipment used for farming and agricultural purposes. Of the total 270 acres, only an estimated 70 acres was in use by the PMI for total operational purposes. The remaining land, estimated to be about 200

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<sup>71</sup> Palmer Memorial Institute (PMI), the oldest Black preparatory school in the United States, was established in 1902 through the tireless work of Charlotte Hawkins Brown. Gaining national and international acclaim and student membership, the Black educational institution provided African Americans with an educational base for cultural "refinement." Funded largely through the assistance of White philanthropists of the New England area, the school was named after Alice Freeman Palmer, the first woman president of Wellesley College located around Boston. Brown, a teacher, speaker and writer was a staunch advocate of education was a self-proclaimed disciple and follower of the principles of Booker T. Washington's agrarian-based curriculum for Black folks of the period. Brown was a vigorous applicant of Washington's principles and hoped to achieve middle-class appropriation and respectability for Black folks through education for the African American elite of the period. See the later notes attached for Wadlington and Knapp's work, *Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Palmer Memorial Institute: What One Young African American Woman Could Do*. Also see the work for Diane Silcox-Jarrett, *Charlotte Hawkins Brown: One Woman's Dream* as reference points for information related to PMI outside of other primary sources provided in notes sections of this document.

acres, was wooded land and unused real estate for the most part. The vast potential of the property in Sedalia made it imperative for MXLU staff to exhaust all measures possible to in order to purchase it.<sup>72</sup>

Working in conjunction with members of PMI's board of trustees, MXLU proposed to acquire the property of PMI as early as July of 1971. During this early summer period, MXLU's offer was the only educational offer made to the trustees of PMI. MXLU's purchase offer for the property was for a sum equaling PMI's outstanding debts, totaling \$250,000.00. With its expansion strategy in motion, MXLU was moving further along in fulfilling the intentions of a four-point plan of institutional growth and development that was outlined as follows:

1. To provide the needed space for the expansion of Malcolm X Liberation University.
2. Acquisition of the PMI property would provide MXLU with an opportunity to develop joint economic opportunities with the Black community of Sedalia. An example of this was for the development of a conference center out of one of the dormitories formerly used by PMI.
3. To provide a major center for the Pan-Africanist training of Black people on a national level similar to that of the work being done by the Foundation for Community Development in Durham.

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<sup>72</sup> Charles W. Wadelington & Richard F. Knapp, *Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Palmer Memorial Institute: What One Young African American Woman Could Do* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 210.; Diane Silcox-Jarrett, *Charlotte Hawkins Brown: One Woman's Dream* (Winston-Salem, North Carolina: Bandit Books, 1995), 107.; "Malcolm X University May Buy Palmer Site," *Greensboro Record*, August 31, 1971.; "Institute Trustees Split Over Sale: Black University May Purchase Defunct School," *Durham Morning Herald*, September 1, 1971, North Carolina Collection Clipping File through 1975, UNC Library, Chapel Hill.; "Malcolm X University Seeks A Campus", *The Asheville Citizen*, September 2, 1971, North Carolina Collection Clipping File through 1975, UNC Library, Chapel Hill.; "Sedalia Area To Discuss Ways To Block Palmer Institute Sale," *Greensboro Daily News*, September 3, 1971.; "Funding Proposal Letter From Howard Fuller to Bishop Charles Golden of the Commission on Religion and Race-Minneapolis, MN – October 22, 1971", 1. Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

4. Attainment of the property would provide MXLU with ample farmland for the purposes of additional economic development. Projected ventures for MXLU included crops sales for the surrounding community and a food processing plant. Agricultural production on the campus could also be used to provide food for the institution and conference center.<sup>73</sup>

To ensure greater financial leverage for the purchase of the PMI property, MXLU began a fundraising campaign and solicited sponsorship from various organizations that were sympathetic to the causes of the Black movement. This move to request funding proved to be fruitful and provided MXLU with the necessary supplemental support required for purchasing power, in addition to the supplemental funding needed for the first year operations of the new PMI facilities. With MXLU administration on board in a calibrated effort for organizational advancement, the odds to purchase PMI favored MXLU since MXLU's initial proposal was approved by a vote of 4-2 with only one member abstaining from the proceedings. However, since there wasn't a two-thirds quorum of the 15-member board present when voting took place, approval of the full board would be needed. As the planning stages for the PMI property got underway, this technicality was not a factor of concern for the MXLU organization since the president of PMI, Charles W. Bundridge, commented that he believed the entire board would go along with the action to sell PMI to MXLU. However, this underestimation of PMI's trustee board was only the beginning in terms of oversights on the part of MXLU as it related to obtaining the property.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> "Funding Proposal Letter From Howard Fuller to Bishop Charles Golden of the Commission on Religion and Race-Minneapolis, MN – October 22, 1971", 2. Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>74</sup> "Funding Proposal Letter From Howard Fuller to Carolyn Wilhelm of the United Methodist Women's Division of Minneapolis, MN – October 22, 1971," 2.; "Sedalia Area To Discuss Ways to Block Palmer Institute Sale," *Greensboro Daily News*, September 3, 1971.; Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; "Malcolm X University May Buy Palmer Site," *Greensboro Record*, August 31, 1971. In



On September 3, 1971, residents of Sedalia and representatives from five surrounding communities met at Bethany United Church of Christ to strategize about how to block the planned sale of Palmer Memorial Institute to MXLU. The meeting was called in response to the increased community opposition toward the perceived PMI leanings to sell to the independent Black institution. As a more audacious show of opposition by community residents, “they formed the Citizens for Palmer Committee and circulated a petition urging that Palmer be kept open or at least be sold to an organization more in keeping with Brown's principles.”<sup>75</sup> The Citizens committee, which began to mount an aggressive campaign to halt the sale the PMI campus, blamed the school's financial troubles on the trustees' failure to prepare for the school's future as reasoning behind PMI's need to close. These occurrences also came on the heels of Rev. Dr. Julius Douglas' decision to resign from the PMI board of trustees. Dr. Douglas' disagreement with the initial decision to sell the PMI campus to MXLU caused him to resign from the board. A disgruntled campus grounds worker for PMI remarked to representatives of the press and MXLU that, “We don't need Malcolm X here. We've had our share of troubles, but not like other places and we don't need troublemakers to tear apart our communities.”<sup>76</sup>

The petition, circulated in Greensboro and other rural areas of North Carolina such as Gibsonville, McLeansville, Wadsworth, and Whitsett, referred to the proposed

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preparation for the procurement of the PMI property, the MXLU financial advisor/accountant approximated the monthly expenditures of the projected site at \$7,500.00. This figure included salaries, utilities, and other miscellaneous operating costs.

<sup>75</sup> Sedalia Area To Discuss Ways to Block Palmer Institute Sale,” *Greensboro Daily News*, September 3, 1971.

<sup>76</sup> “Sedalia Area To Discuss Ways to Block Palmer Institute Sale,” *Greensboro Daily News*, September 3, 1971.; Charles W. Wadlington and Richard F. Knapp, *Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Palmer Memorial Institute: What One Young African American Woman Could Do* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 210.

sale of PMI to MXLU as a measure that would “lessen the value” of the property in the area and “disorganize the entire section.”<sup>77</sup> The anti-MXLU propaganda was even more didactic to inform residents that, “the loss of this section, North Carolina and whole country should this institution close as such and quickly be thrust into the hands of an irresponsible organization or any group that advocates rioting or the separation of the races.”<sup>78</sup> Many of the residents who were proactive enough to voice their concerns about MXLU claimed to be advocating for their children in the Sedalia and surrounding communities, which were predominately White. The Citizens for Palmer Committee went on to secure the allegiance of North Carolina's governor, Robert Scott, the North Carolina State Superintendent of Public Schools, Craig Phillips, and the long-time president of the Greensboro chapter of the NAACP, Dr. George C. Simkins. They wanted the officials to either transition the property for other educational purposes for the state or to turn the PMI property into a “well organized rest home for the aged.”<sup>79</sup>

MXLU supporters attempted to counter the opposition efforts by going door to door with their own petition drive to garner more support from the more liberal minded Black residents of the surrounding communities. However, the political backing of the Citizens for Palmer Committee proved to be too powerful and MXLU was forced to withdraw their proposal for the PMI campus. After much consideration, in mid October of 1971, MXLU renewed its bid for the PMI campus with two key addenda in the renewed petition. First, MXLU would “assume all of Palmer's liabilities on a lease

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<sup>77</sup> Sedalia Area To Discuss Ways to Block Palmer Institute Sale,” *Greensboro Daily News*, September 3, 1971.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.; Charles W. Wadelington and Richard F. Knapp, *Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Palmer Memorial Institute: What One Young African American Woman Could Do* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 210.

agreement with the option to buy,” And secondly, all of the “properties in the lease agreement would remain in control of Palmer's trustees.”<sup>80</sup>

With MXLU facing the political resistance of a number of North Carolina counties and the state government, one would assume that the assembly of organizations would be enough to deter or defeat the efforts of MXLU. As a guarantee that the PMI campus would not be obtained by the independent Black organization, the efforts of the federal government was the inevitable blow to take MXLU out of the running to obtain the PMI campus. Former SNCC member and Civil Rights Movement/Black Power activist, Dr. Cleveland Sellers provides significant insight on the Palmer controversy. Dr. Sellers, who was a part of MXLU since the inception of the institution remarked that the federal government's role in the Palmer controversy was such as that all measurements had to be taken to assure that MXLU could not acquire the PMI campus. According to Sellers, the federal government approached Bennett College, an all women's HBCU, with the opportunity to purchase PMI. Bennett College, which had no prior interest in the Palmer campus, was offered the property by the federal government to be used as a satellite campus. In addition, the PMI board of trustees was offered almost twice as much versus what MXLU had initially offered.<sup>81</sup>

With MXLU out of the running for the PMI campus, the board of trustees narrowed their choices to eight proposals that they felt were the most compatible with the aims of PMI. As the trustees finalized the selections, the committee was most impressed with an offer received from W.C. Donnell from United Holiness Church to establish an all Black preparatory school with a junior college and also a seminary. Of all of the

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<sup>80</sup> “Bid For Institute Renewed,” *Durham Morning Herald*, October 15, 1971.

<sup>81</sup> Dr. Cleveland Sellers, interview with author, Columbia, SC. January 28, 2008.

proposals received for the sale, the offer made by the United Holiness Church was initially the most impressive since the church was explicit about continuing the tradition of PMI started by Charlotte Hawkins Brown. The church even agreed to retain Bundrige and many of the former PMI staff if it received the PMI campus. So after corresponding throughout the late summer and early fall of '71, the sale to the United Holiness Church seemed final. However, at the last minute, the United Holiness Church did not receive the PMI campus because the PMI trustees decided to accept Bennett College's offer in a "closed-door meeting."<sup>82</sup>

In November of 1971, it was announced that Bennett would take over the Palmer campus; however, at the time of Bennett's takeover, the historically Black woman's college lacked the financial resources and had no concrete plans for the property. In 1982, the trustees of Bennett voted to discontinue further educational programs on the PMI campus and to sell forty acres of the developed land to the American Muslim Mission (AMM) which was the organization that morphed out of the Nation of Islam during the post-mortem years of the organization's founding leader, Elijah Muhammad. Under the direction of Warith D. Muhammad, the AMM secured the PMI campus for the purpose of educating the children of the Muslim sect as was done at the organization's initial educational institution, the University of Islam in Chicago.<sup>83</sup> According to one of

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<sup>82</sup> Charles W. Wadelington & Richard F. Knapp. *Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Palmer Memorial Institute: What One Young African American Woman Could Do*. (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), p. 210.;

<sup>83</sup> Charles W. Wadelington and Richard F. Knapp, *Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Palmer Memorial Institute: What One Young African American Woman Could Do* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 211.; Diane Silcox-Jarrett, *Charlotte Hawkins Brown: One Woman's Dream* (Winston-Salem, North Carolina: Bandit Books, 1995), 107.; Ernest Allen, Jr., "Religious Heterodoxy and Nationalist Tradition: The Continuing Evolution of the Nation of Islam," *The Black Scholar* 26, no. 3-4 (1996), 15-21.

most comprehensive works on PMI and all events related, Historians Wadelington and Knapp's *Charlotte Hawkins Brown and the Palmer Memorial*,

The AMM purchased Palmer's fifteen surviving buildings from Bennett College for approximately \$500,000 and opened a school with about thirty students. AMM leaders found that some members of the Sedalia community were upset that Palmer had been purchased by a group whose principles were at odds with Brown's Christian and integrationist legacy. Local parents feared that the new neighbors would attempt to convert their children to Islam, but after residents met with officials of the AMM, most were impressed by the sect's actions and goals. The AMM's plans to operate a college and boarding school somewhat reminiscent of the old Palmer were nevertheless destined to fail. The organization's misfortune, however, made possible the acquisition of the campus by North Carolina as a state historic site depicting Brown's life and legacy as well as other contributions by African Americans to the state's educational history.<sup>84</sup>

MXLU's failure to capitalize on the potential expansion opportunity in the PMI property was a devastating blow to the independent Black institution. The magnitude of attention that MXLU garnered in its attempt to acquire PMI's campus was enlightening to the leadership of MXLU. This truism became evident just a year earlier when MXLU decided to relocate to Greensboro. However, the intricacies of the PMI controversy highlighted the concentrated and painstaking efforts expended by not only the individual but institutional acts of discrimination by White antagonists. But the energies of conservative Black folk in the North Carolina counties were just as detrimental if not more to the growth of MXLU. This awareness of opposition, while devastating to the morale of the MXLU family, became even more disturbing for the young MXLU activists. It had become apparent that in order for MXLU to prosper, the institution

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<sup>84</sup> Charles W. Wadelington and Richard F. Knapp, 211.; The work of Wadelington and Knapp as associated with the Historic Sites Section of the North Carolina department of resources and as curators of research was critical as it related to historizing the legacy of Charlotte Hawkins Brown and the Palmer Memorial Institute. Their work on Brown and PMI is the most explicitly detailed and comprehensive historical scholarship the historical figure and the institution.

would have to become even more aware of the concerted effort by a body of conservative Black folks to undermine the progress of MXLU. Blindsided by the community's resistance towards the MXLU attempts at expansion into Sedalia, James L. Lee, then the director of operations for MXLU, remarked that the MXLU family was "deeply hurt by the division within the Sedalia community."<sup>85</sup>

MXLU Operations 1971-1972 continued: In Preparation for ALD

Despite the Palmer incident, operations at MXLU proceeded with an added aggressiveness to produce the type of pragmatist programming that would gain MXLU consideration as the "vanguard" of Black independent educational institutions. MXLU's leadership proceeded with a broader comprehension of the necessities of resiliency as it related to the institution's matters. Much of these adjustments became apparent in the correspondence between the MXLU administration and the IFCO personnel assigned to the quarterly evaluations of the school. The academic year saw an increased concentration on the bifurcation of MXLU's internal and external operations, with the external focusing even more on operations in the Black community.

During this period, MXLU increased the institution's equipment holdings for the departments of Bio-Medics, Agriculture, Communications and Engineering. With the additions of more lab equipment and the community volunteer assistance of a local Greensboro pharmacist, MXLU students added to the experience of their "Nation Building" portfolios. The summer component of the academic year also provided two MXLU students with the experience of working with physicians at a hospital in Harlem, New York and a community health center in Newark, New Jersey. The importance of

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 266.

those students' medical work was that it aided greatly in the planning for MXLU's free health clinic. The agricultural department was also able to use crops grown on the school's farmland as a food outlet for the schools' students and resource people. As community involvement, it also sold eggs at a cut rate for local residents. The school also increased the work being done in its communications and engineering departments of the school. Also, MXLU was able to provide activist support for the Greensboro community's efforts to highlight the problems of police brutality.<sup>86</sup>

Media and press interest did not wane during this academic year, as the *Greensboro Record* ran a four part series of articles on MXLU in late 1971 through early 1972 to highlight the school's activities its historical beginnings, even the theoretical/practical objectives and framework of the school. The four part series conducted on MXLU aided in providing readers with information that moved beyond the demonizing attributes levied at the school in past articles that had painted the operations of the institution in an unfavorable light. The *Greensboro Record's* staff writer, Peter Leo, was able to provide audiences with the voice of MXLU students to supplement the institution's operational objectives. In addition, the second article of the part two installment entitled, "Classroom Dialogue: Building Things,' But Not Here," offered a glimpse of MXLU classroom interaction with a report from a first year seminar class of the University. That day's class, which was instructed by Owusu Sadaukai, covered the question "Do we Africans, Afro Americans, Negroes, colored people, etc.—do we have a

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<sup>86</sup> "Malcolm X Liberation University Progress Report to IFCO December 1, 1972 to June 30, 1972," dated July 5, 1972. Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; The purpose of the progress reports prepared for the staff of IFCO was to provide IFCO with written documentation to supplement their visits to MXLU. The report's disclaimer was that it was provided as a comprehensive report, but it was designed to cover significant happenings at the institution.

culture?” The topic, which solicited a number of responses from the first year MXLU students, kept the class engaged with a number of complex responses and pensive looks as the young people attempted to provide critical and well thought responses to their instructor. One student was so elated that the only response the young person was able to muster up was, “That’s deep, man. That’s deep.” Sadaukai kept the class thoroughly engaged on the topic of culture and even asked the visiting reporter at the end of the session, “I hope it wasn’t too boring for you...I really get wound up in this stuff.” The concluding article of the four-part series gave more insight into the complex world of Owusu Sadaukai, who by this time had won attention as the recognizable face and figurehead of MXLU heavily involved as he was with numerous organizations in the cause on Black liberation. This notoriety was so lucrative that Sadaukai was able to parley his demand for speaking engagements that then commanded \$25,000 a year to assist in easing the financial stressors of MXLU.<sup>87</sup>

With such an obvious display of leadership and national and international recognition, Sadaukai was now poised to bring even more attention to MXLU, SOBU and the international struggles of Black folks since they now had a workable, transnational educational base in MXLU and a viable organization in SOBU. Sadaukai’s time on the African continent had given MXLU and SOBU credibility in Africa amongst movement folks who were reassured that his actions represented a sincere interest in Pan-Africanism that went beyond the conjecture of mere “arm-chair” activism. In addition,

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<sup>87</sup> “Controversial School Comes of Age—First in a Series of Four,” *Greensboro Record*, November 24, 1971.; “At Malcolm X—Dawn to Dusk Education,” “Classroom Dialogue: ‘Building Things,’ But Not Here—Second of Four Parts,” *Greensboro Record*, November 25, 1971.; “At MXLU: ‘Meeting Needs’—Third of Four Parts,” *Greensboro Record*, November 26, 1971.; “Howard Fuller: Respect For Those Who Struggle—Final of Four Parts,” *Greensboro Record*, November 27, 1971.



MXLU's curricular and practical influence began to move even further from merely studying the work of Cabral, Nyerere and Nkrumah to strategizing how these and other highly regarded African leader and practitioners could become more physically integrated into the fold of the University's future plans of action. Sadaukai's proactive attempts to build coalitions with FRELIMO and other Freedom Fighter organizations legitimated MXLU along with SOBU to now act as the nexus of Pan-Africanist activity in the South, if not the entire U.S. Now poised with the theoretical and experiential knowledge, Sadaukai understood the need to unite the liberation struggles of the Black world on a grand scale to disseminate the urgent message of anti-imperialism regardless of the phenotype of the oppressor.

By the end of 1971, Sadaukai's motivations to further the assist the liberation forces on the African continent earned him an inspiration of historic proportions. That idea would be known as come in the form of African Liberation Day (ALD), and Malcolm X Liberation University would become the site for the first planning meeting for this event. Sadaukai foresaw this potential demonstration of national and international scope as a probable measure to bring attention to the plight of the African continent. The event could also be used as a tool to disseminate information about the brutal realities of colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism as it affected Africans on a transnational level away from the propaganda that was reported by White media sources in America and abroad.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> "1<sup>st</sup> Draft of General Congress of Afrikan People (CAP) Summation of National African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC) 1972-1975," n.d., reel 4, no. 297.; *Black Unity: Breaking the Chains of Oppression (1972 ALD Documentary)*, DVD-ROM, (Produced, Directed and Written by Roy Campanella, Jr. and Henry Johnson), 1972. Film narrated by Fred Thomas. and in author's possession. A copy of the ALD documentary was provided by Dr. Howard Fuller from his private collection.

In January of 1972, a planning meeting was held at MXLU for the ALD demonstration. The meeting produced a steering committee that came to be known as the African Liberation Coordinating Day Committee (ALDCC) of which Sadaukai was the national chairman. The initial ALDCC committee consisted of a core of men and women who were responsible for the committee's early efforts of organizing for the demonstration. Those individuals included Antoine Perot, Chairman of Supporting Council; Florence Tate, Information Director; Mark Smith, Director of Operations; Mwanafunzi Hekima, Logistics Coordinator; Juadine Henderson, Secretary-Treasurer; and Cleveland Sellers, Field Secretary. Sadaukai also called upon the assistance of IFCO to aid in financing the ALD demonstration. Some of the ALDCC's major needs consisted of opening up a national office in Washington, D.C with a projected staff of five people. And, of the approximated ALD \$18,000 operating budget, \$3000 was subsidized by an IFCO grant with the full support of IFCO's executive director, Lucius Walker.<sup>89</sup>

Sadaukai and the ALDCC's call for support is best exemplified in a letter that describes his inspirations and experiences on the African continent which had led to the mobilization efforts for ALD. According to the letter dated February 17, 1972, Sadaukai revealed his intentions for national mobilization to achieve the following objectives:

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<sup>89</sup> "ALSC and the Black Liberation Movement by Revolutionary Workers League," n.d. reel 4, no. 905.; Komozi Woodard, *A Nation Within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) & Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 173.; Cedric Johnson, "From Popular Anti-Imperialism to Sectarianism: The African Liberation Support Committee and Black Power Radicals," *New Political Science* 25, no. 4 (December 2003), 485; "IFCO Memorandum February 14, 1972," Interreligious Foundation For Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 39, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

The African Liberation Day Co-ordinating Committee (ALDCC), an ad hoc national group, has been established to marshal support of Black people in the Americas for the valiant liberation support of Black people in the Americas for the valiant liberation struggles now being waged by our brothers and sisters on the African continent, particularly in South Africa, Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe (Rhodesia).

As a beginning we are attempting to do the following things: “1) help make the masses of African (black) people in the United States, the Caribbean, and Canada aware of the political conditions in Southern Africa and the armed struggles being carried out by the brothers and sisters there; 2) to educate African (black) people in these countries about the relationship between what is happening to our people in Africa and what is happening to us in the United States and other places; and 3) to organize a national protest demonstration against the United States foreign policy which supports European colonialist rule in Southern Africa. This planned action is a result of meetings with liberation movement leaders in Mozambique during a prolonged trip to the continent last fall, during which I was able to witness the hard daily struggle our brothers and sisters are waging to regain control of their land. When asked how the masses of our people in the United States could best support them, I was advised that the most useful thing we can do at this stage is to provide them with strong moral support by showing the world our concern through massive Black protest and demonstration against U.S. involvement in Southern Africa.”<sup>90</sup>

In addition to building the national grassroots initiatives amongst less publicized Black activists and organizations, Sadaukai was also successful in garnering the support of the more well-known Black-activist figures of the era to round out the national steering committee of the ALDCC. This prominent national committee was unique in its membership due to the diversity of these figures. Members of the steering committee represented churchmen, Black Panthers, congressmen, intellectuals, and fervent communists. The list of individuals included the Rev. Ralph Abernathy of the Southern

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<sup>90</sup> Ronald W. Walters, *Pan Africanism in the African Diaspora: An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Political Movements* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 70.

Christian Leadership Conference; Angela Davis who at the time was on trial for conspiracy to commit murder and kidnapping; Reps John Conyers, Jr. (D-Mich.) and Charles Diggs (D-Mich.); Stokely Carmichael; Del. Walter Fauntroy (D-D.C.); the Rev. L. Maynard Catchings, communications executive of the National Council of Churches; H Rap Brown, who then was imprisoned in a New York jail awaiting trial on robbery charges; the Rev. Dr. Charles Spivey of the World Council of Churches; Black Panther Leader, Huey P. Newton; Julian Bond (D-Georgia); Ruwa Chiri of United Africans for One Motherland International (UFOMI); Ron Daniels of the Mid-West Regional Black Coalition of Youngstown, Ohio; Haki Madhubuti (Don L. Lee), Chicago based poet; Betty Shabazz, activist and widow of Malcolm X, among others.<sup>91</sup>

For the remainder of the 71-72 academic year, MXLU became a hub for the coordination activities of the ensuing ALD demonstration, which further advanced the school's credibility around political action. The school was also increasing in recognition as a major force in the national and international demonstration efforts. Through the school's assistance and support efforts provided by students and personnel, MXLU helped to bring about the first Black Political Prisoner Conference in North Carolina. MXLU also acted as a major catalyst in the organizing efforts for the North Carolina participation in the Gary, Indiana convention called by the Black Congressional Caucus, which produced over 4,000 delegates from forty-nine states and the District of Columbia. In conjunction with these organizing efforts, MXLU's staff and students would assist greatly in the mobilization efforts to ensure the success of Sadaukai's brainchild.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 71.; "Blacks Mobilize for African Liberation," *The Washington Post*, April 1, 1972.; Cedric Johnson, *Revolutionaries to Race Leaders: Black Power and the Making of African American Politics* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press), 140.

<sup>92</sup> "Malcolm X Liberation University Progress Report to IFCO December 1, 1972 to June 30, 1972",

In order for the ALD to gain the necessary force, it became vital for the ALDCC to enlist the much-needed aid from the organizational experience, work and membership of the national SOBU chapters and campus affiliates. With the personnel of MXLU and SOBU working in tandem to do the necessary grassroots organizing and promotion for the event, it was assured that the demonstration would be more than successful. This bi-organizational coalition amongst MXLU and SOBU produced the effective support for a demonstration that largely required the energies of students and young people in order to be effective

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dated July 5, 1972. Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO) Records, Box 30 Folder 37, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; "4,000 Convene for A Black Beginning in Gary," *The African World*, II, no. 12, April 1, 1972.

## CHAPTER 6

### WORKING FOR AFRICAN LIBERATION WITH THE STUDENT ORGANIZATION FOR BLACK UNITY (SOBU): HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS, PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITY 1969-1971

*Your obligation is as students to use your analytical minds for the development of your people, not yourselves—that's a nigger concept. I want to beg you. Be concerned with the problems of your people. Study and analyze those problems. I want to beg you, because your people need you, if you don't recognize it. It's time to stop jiving. Get serious about the situation and do some work for your people.*

--Stokely Carmichael<sup>1</sup>

*Students, more fundamentally youth, merely represent a point of departure in our work, not an elitist group. Because the forces that be have dictated that a significant number of African youth are in fact situated in schools across this country, it makes sense to organize the accessible sector of African youth to participate in the struggle for the liberation of all our people. The history of "student" involvement in the struggle has always been characterized by a mobility from the campus to the center of the Black community where the work must be done.*

--Nelson Johnson, SOBU National Chairman<sup>2</sup>

As two distinct Black student organizations working for the improvement of Black folks through the tenets of Black Internationalism/Pan-Africanism, MXLU and SOBU impacted the progression of post-Civil Rights expressions of Black Nationalism that transitioned from Black Power to a nationalism that expanded to include transnational class-conscious perspectives of the Black Liberation Movement. MXLU most effectively existed as an educational institution that provided pedagogical expressions crafted for the usage of deconstructing Eurocentric perspectives and approaches prevalent amongst Black students in the U.S. at that time. Coupled with

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<sup>1</sup> "Stokely Carmichael to Students: 'You have an Obligation to Your People—Study, Work,'" *SOBU Newsletter*, April 3, 1971, 7.

<sup>2</sup> "The Struggle in Perspective by Nelson Johnson SOBU National Chairman: 'Students in the Struggle,'" *SOBU Newsletter*, May 1, 1971, 4.

MXLU as an established and viable Pan-Africanist student organization, SOBU provided the organizational impetus for the mass mobilization of Black students for the purposes of both on and off campus activity at HCBUs and PWIs. Equally important as MXLU's, SOBU's organizational framework for effective Black student mobilization was critical in aiding in the successful recruitment for numerous political events that involved the potential indoctrination of Black college-aged students through SOBU's political education and theoretical programs. Working in tandem, MXLU and SOBU effectuated the necessary regional and national grassroots organizing required for the successful promotion and production of the 1972 African Liberation Day demonstration.

This chapter identifies the sophistication and dynamics of SOBUs organizational structure and programmatic intentions, which evolved from the tenets of Pan-Africanism. A significant historical aspect that drives the distinctive scholarly value of SOBU's history and evolution is the concentric relationship that paralleled the activity of MXLU. As MXLU and SOBU members oscillated between the educational institution and student organization, parallel planning developed organically between the educational institution and Black student organization along Pan-Africanist lines. In addition, MXLU and SOBU's bi-organizational activity will be thoroughly explicated to provide clarification on the ideological and programmatic shifts, the theoretical progressions and splits endured by both organizations.

## On The Road to Establishment: SOBU's Interim Development Period

From October 21 to 26, 1969, a week prior to the commemoration activities for Malcolm X Liberation University (MXLU), SOBU convened the organization's first national conference in Durham, North Carolina. The conference, which was scheduled to coincide with inaugural activities of the newly formed independent educational Black institution, assisted in solidifying the fraternal operations of MXLU and SOBU.<sup>3</sup>

The aims of the SOBU forum were to bring Black students and other interested Black folks together around liberating themes and to map out some concrete specifics to be applied in the Black community. SOBU conference planners also felt that since similar Black student gatherings around the themes of progression for Black folks had failed to receive the appropriated amount of detailed attention and accuracy by the White press, those White newsmen who attended its opening day activities were asked to leave. Notable activists who attended and conducted workshops for SOBU's first national gathering included Jim Lee, Charlie Cobb of the Center for Black Education; and other former SNCC activists Cleveland Sellers, Jimmy Garrett, Courtland Cox and Willie Ricks. Panels were moderated on topics such as "Black People—The International Struggle," and anti-imperialist films such as *The Battle of Algiers* were viewed to showcase the success of Algeria against French imperial domination.<sup>4</sup>

After two days of speeches, panels and group discussions, organizers of the conference actually changed certain aspects of the week's symposium for maximal

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<sup>3</sup> "Student Organization for Black Unity: A Proposal for The Development of a Training Institute," n.d., Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 11 Folder 2, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

<sup>4</sup> "SOBU at NCCU," *The African Warrior: A Malcolm X Liberation University Publication*, October 25, 1969.



fulfillment of those in attendance. According to these modifications, the conference was partitioned into five areas to advance the construction of positions and programs for the purpose of implementation. The workshop areas included the following:

1. The development of vehicles of definition and communication for Black people;
2. The development of the rationale for independent educational institutions for Black people and the definition of support measures that Black people could undertake for the maintenance and expansion of such institutions;
3. The analysis of the rationale for Black Studies programs, outlining the limitations of institutionalized Black Studies programs in facilitating the end of authentic education for Black people and making recommendations about how to deal with the various forms of co-optation for Black Studies programs;
4. The development of community projects that could be undertaken by students which would be consistent with the objective of greater independence of the Black community;
5. The development of “single shot” programs or projects that are educational in nature with a view toward raising the level of political awareness among Black people.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the formulation of these five critical areas of Black student and activist investigation, the conference participants benefited greatly from a specific amelioration regarding education. Participants developed an insistent consensus for the “support of independent educational intuitions, such as Malcolm X [Liberation University]. Largely for this reason, the newly born staff, some of whom were drawn from conference participants, began to organize political and material support for MXLU as well to

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<sup>5</sup> “Student Organization For Black Unity Proposal December 20, 1969,” Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 11 Folder 1, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

articulate a Pan-Africanist ideology and its application to the specific conditions of Black Students on both Black and White campuses.”<sup>6</sup>

To some degree, SOBU’s first national conference failed to present clarity on what the conference should produce; however, the gathering provided the significant benefit of students being able to increase their theoretical comprehensions of the ideology of Pan-Africanism. From this, six SOBU coordinators departed the week’s activities as supporters of Pan-Africanism with the intention of promoting the ideology on their college campuses to provoke students to become critical analyzers of what was considered to be the next logical phase for the development of Black Power. This nationwide provocation spurred by the proactive attempts to instill aspects of Pan-Africanism conjured inquiry as to what exactly Pan-Africanism was and how it could be applicable to the conditions of Black students and rank and file Black folks. Other questions that arose were “Do we go back to Africa? When do we go back to Africa? How do we build a nation? How do we get trained for nationhood while in European universities? How do we become meaningful participants in the struggle without sacrificing present luxuries?”<sup>7</sup> As expected, these questions by Black students aided in the political education and campus organizing objectives of SOBU and the expansion of the Black student group on national college campuses.

SOBU sought to transcend the “old tactics” of campus mobilization that they felt had been exhausted and/or ideologically inconsistent. SOBU felt that its strategies

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<sup>6</sup> The Student Organization For Black Unity: A Look Backward and Forward July 1970,” Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 11 Folder 1, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

addressed the urgencies that were in alignment with a newer generation of 1970 Black college students that had either adopted or sympathized with Pan-Africanism. Consequently, by early 1970, SOBU implemented a structure and organizational impetus that reflected matters which were relevant to the Black community. SOBU progressed to assert an improved national structure concentrated on the promotions and activity of Ideology, Community Programs, Campus Programs, Pan-African Affairs, and Informational Services. The subsequent sections on SOBU will outline a combination of the organization's structure, historical development and activities from 1970 up to the 1972 efforts in conjunction with MXLU's activities for African Liberation Day in 1972.

#### SOBU Operations, Programs and Organizational Activity 1970-1972

Entering into the 1970s, SOBU's presence as a Black student organization in the context of the domestic Black Liberation struggles represented more than just a national compliment to the establishment of MXLU's educational initiatives. SOBU came to signify the ideological maturation of Black Power that sought definitive measures for the progression of Black folks. SOBU's emergence created for a SNCC renaissance and an opportunity for mentorship by former SNCC members to the current generation of Black students as "Black Power" was progressing from its infantile stages and morphing into the most natural progression of Black Nationalism, and that was Pan-Africanism. SOBU unapologetically pronounced the internationalization of anti-imperialistic Blackness that conjoined the oppressions of the Diaspora to the back roads of North Carolina and Georgia. Because of this aggressiveness, the Black student of the 1970s unashamedly embraced the theoretical, practical and aesthetics of Blackness that spoke to the spirit of

Garveyism and the commonality of worldwide liberation movements against tyranny and oppression.

The ideological base of SOBU, Pan-Africanism, appropriated the historical, cultural and physiological ties to Blacks in the Diaspora because of their roots on the African continent. These ties were unequivocally binding around the concept of Pan-Africanism aligned with the importance of anti-imperialism and land as a symbol for liberation. SOBU's theoretical initiatives that evolved from Pan-Africanism expanded by 1970 to illustrate the organization's ideological development. Most of these ideological advancements were divided through study and engagement with the texts of theoreticians that posited an African-centered/anti-imperialist worldview.

#### SOBU's Organizational and Structural Development 1970-1972

The developmental structure of SOBU began as an operational initiative to be governed by a decision-making body or a National Board of Directors. From the inception of SOBU in May of 1969, the organization's board was composed of eleven members, all associated in some way with the Black liberation struggle. The core staff of SOBU was divided into two categories that included the central staff and the area staff. The tasks of the central staff consisted of compiling and disseminating the organization's information, printing and distributing the SOBU newspaper and also coordinating the national activities and general administration. Those individuals working for the area staff were responsible for the expansion of membership through community and campus activities where SOBU as an organization was or had the potential for growth as an organization. The initial SOBU area staff consisted of ten area coordinators easily brought on because of the promotion that the organization received through

demonstrations and organizational relationships. The area coordinators were also responsible for direct contact with Black students in their respective areas to disseminate information and assist in the planning of conferences and workshops. The area staff members of SOBU were to coordinate the activities for their area as well as help with other areas if need be. In addition, the developmental stages of the organization sought a Nation Building initiative with an emphasis on task-oriented programming that extended from SOBU's departmental programs.<sup>8</sup>

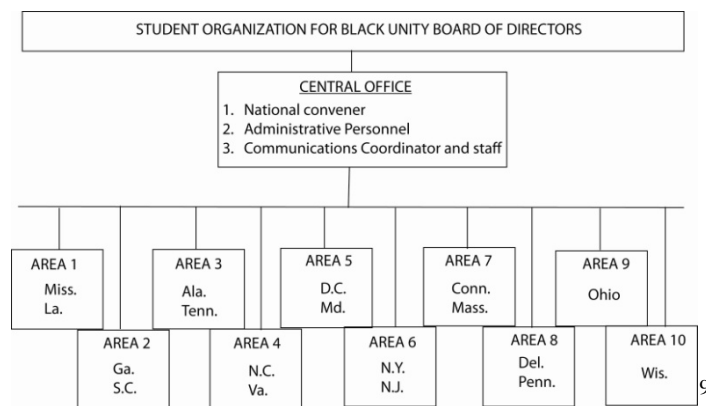


Figure 3. SOBU National Organization Structure

SOBU's partnership with groups like PASOA and the Pan-African Work Center of Atlanta and the Center for Black Education of Washington, D.C. led to the ideological growth and tangible development of programs that naturally expanded the mission and student membership of the organization. This was greatly witnessed in SOBU's Second National Conference that took place April 1-4 of 1971 in Frogmore, South Carolina. An

<sup>8</sup> Student Organization for Black Unity Proposal December 20, 1969, Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 11 Folder 1, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.; SOBU Explains National Program, October 17, 1970, 7. In this initial issue of SOBU's informational organ, the *SOBU Newsletter*, it became overtly clear that the organizational aim of the Black student group was Pan-Africanism and to further the cause of an African Student Nationalist Movement.

<sup>9</sup> Student Organization for Black Unity Proposal December 20, 1969. Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 11 Folder 1, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

estimated 150 Black students were in attendance representing schools from as far as California, Massachusetts, and also Texas. The aims and objectives of the conference were to begin the work of organizing.

The conference included the opening keynote address by MXLU's Mwalimu, Owusu Sadaukai. Sadaukai vigorously urged students to begin an alteration of their lifestyles and value systems to totally eradicate the use of drugs and apathetic behavior for the betterment of the overall struggle. Sadaukai also emphasized the need for Black students to transcend the sensationalism and zeal of the movement to sincerely engage the struggle through study and scientific analysis. Much of SOBU's Second National Conference focused on the dilemma of Black students and how the organizations could restructure to model the use of Pan-Africanism for operational effectiveness.

SOBU Vice-Chairman Tim Thomas provided an in-depth historical analysis and interpretation of Pan-Africanism that tied the role of Black students to the utilization of Pan-Africanism for potential membership increase. Mark Smith, SOBU Coordinator of Campus Programs, provided students with an analysis of the Black Student Movement that couched the activity of Black students within the ideation of Black Power. Smith stressed the need to dispel myths and propaganda about "pseudo-advancements" constructed around the movement. He commented that,

Romanticism had established certain myths of an intellectual vanguard, a Blacker-than-thou syndrome and an attitude that 'things are always happening somewhere else'. What actions we take is not the movement of a vanguard but the development of history – the position that our grandparents and their parents worked to get us to. As for being Blacker, if you are going to take the credit for being the most hip, you must take the responsibility for doing the most teaching. Finally, things happen where you are if you are serious about what you are doing,

and actions elsewhere you can relate to where you are. We have to Pan-Africanize everything we do.<sup>10</sup>

Adding to the vital re-considerations which SOBU members were asked to make regarding their roles in the movement, SOBU's second national conference largely focused on furthering the ideological framework of the organization and assisting Black students with their organizing skills. The convention was even more critical due to the establishment of a domestic African Youth Movement in the U. S. with a focus on socialism as an ideological epicenter. Finally, SOBU's Second National Conference led to the amendment of the national and regional structure and established eight geographical regions, covering the entire nation. The new SOBU structure would aid in increasing the work output and discipline of the organization.<sup>11</sup>

By 1971, the SOBU structure evolved to include: a National Convention, a National Governing Council, a National Chairman, Regional Boards, Regional Chairman, State and Local Chapters. The new structure developed to consist of a more intricate national governing board for the explicit purposes of addressing the growing needs of the organization as they paralleled the ever-expanding membership of the Black student group. Considered as the "key" working divisions of the organization, the elected delegates from the state and local chapters comprised the infrastructure of the national convention. The management and organization of the six interconnected departments was administered by delegates of the SOBU Governing Council. Those departments included International Affairs, Training and Ideological Development, Community

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<sup>10</sup> SOBU Sets April 1-4 National Conference, *SOBU Newsletter*, March 20, 1971. ; "SOBU Conference Outlines the Students' Role in the Struggle," *SOBU Newsletter*, April 17, 1971, 1, 7.

<sup>11</sup> Search for a Vanguard: A Series of Anthologies Covering The Black Liberation Movement in the 1970's. SOBU-YOBU-FFM 1969-1976(Chicago: People's College Press), 11.

Affairs, Informational Services, Campus Affairs, and Printing and Material Distribution.<sup>12</sup>

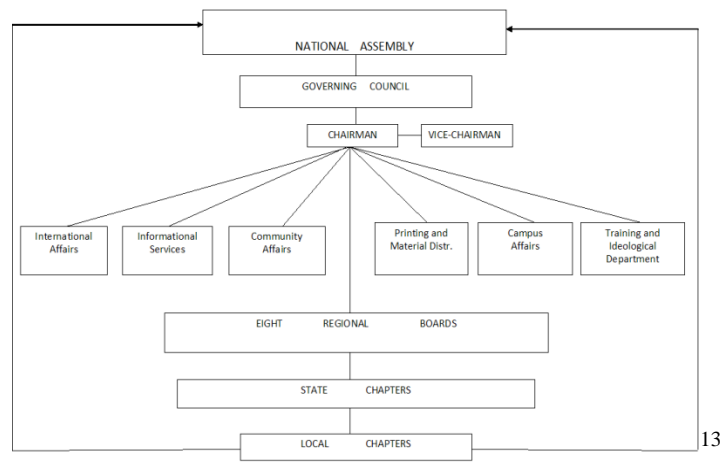


Figure 4. SOBU's New Organizational Structure

Later, in December of that same year, SOBU convened regional conferences in New Haven, Connecticut, Columbia, South Carolina, and in Lawrence, Kansas, to address the organization's expansion and, again, the practical utilization of Pan-Africanism in the struggle. SOBU officers Tim Thomas and Mark Smith provided edifying lectures during the workshops that emphasized the importance of maintaining a class critique in the ideological framework of Pan-Africanism that could diagnose the exploitive nature of imperialism as the highest expression of capitalism on a global scale. National Chairman Nelson Johnson urged for the dismantling of capitalism and for students to remain consistent in their community involvement and issues that affected the plight of Black workers. "Students at this particular conference were reminded of the November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1970 invasion of Guinea and given a role they could play in the unity

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Search for a Vanguard: A Series of Anthologies Covering The Black Liberation Movement in the 1970's. SOBU-YOBU-FFM 1969-1976 (Chicago: People's College Press), 11. This diagram describes the SOBU National structure once it was re-configured after the organization's second national conference in April of 1971.



with the people of Guinea and Pres. Ahmed Sekou Touré.”<sup>14</sup> The conference concluded with the reinforcement of regional organizational structures, and the election of officers for national, regional, state and local duties in preparation for the upcoming 1972 year for SOBU activity.<sup>15</sup>

#### SOBU Training and Ideological Development 1970-1972

By 1970, the SOBU party line was that African nationalist students must have the appropriate skills to assist Black people in the transition from a co-dependent status to physical and psychological positions of self-reliance. SOBU stressed the need for Black people to affirm themselves through the principle of self-determination. This would require the necessary practice of collectively establishing boundaries to legitimate the actions of Black folks toward self-direction for the purpose of leading their own lives.<sup>16</sup>

SOBU produced an ideological paper that addressed the underpinnings of Pan-Africanism in the context of a ‘worldwide’ perspective. And from this vantage point, SOBU based the operational effectiveness of the organization on the principles of those ideologies. At the most fundamental levels of SOBU, it was expressed that “any ideology which seeks to speak to our (Black) people must speak to their day-to day problems also the nature, the cause and solution of those problems. To be successful we feel that our ideology must be national in character, scientific in principles and international in scope.”<sup>17</sup> This view also incorporated the communal principle that stressed the importance of Black people not divorcing their individual strife and

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<sup>14</sup> SOBU Regional Conference Report: Geographical Expansion and Political Growth, *The African World*, December 11, 1971, 6, 9.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Work for African Liberation with the Student Organization for Black Unity Information Pamphlet. In author’s possession.

<sup>17</sup> Student Organization For Black Unity: Ideological Paper, Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 11 Folder 1, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

adversities from the total oppressions experienced by Black people as a whole. SOBU expressed that individual successes and mis-perceived representations of ‘upward mobility’ did not characterize the total experience of the race. Hence, the struggles of Black folks needed to be indicated by national characteristics. Meaning, the distinctive problems of the race needed the support of group coalitions and collective group action for total effectiveness.<sup>18</sup>

The SOBU ideological foundation also incorporated an international scope that was centered on two critical tenets for organizational advancement. A SOBU position paper on the ideological posture of the Black student organization addressed this reasoning as such:

First, a study of our history tells us that African people around the world should be done in the efforts to rid themselves of oppression. Culturally, economically, and politically it is necessary to rebuild the links within the African world which were so deliberately destroyed by our oppressors. Secondly, as we shall soon see, those structures and systems which oppress us cross all geo-political boundaries and depend on an international hegemony for their continued existence. Therefore, our struggle must be prepared to align itself with all progressive forces.<sup>19</sup>

Essential to the ideological advancements and reconsiderations of SOBU was the constant intersections between SOBU and organizations such as the Pan African Students Organization of America (PASOA), who were major proponents of Guinean president, Sékou Touré and his ideologies on communism. SOBU had been working in conjunction with PASOA as early as 1970 to rally support for the commemoration of the Sharpeville Massacre and for a Harvard University conference on the thematic of ‘The African Peasant and the African Revolution’ (these activities will be explicated further in the

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

subsequent sections). SOBU's intersections with the African-born student membership of PASOA aided in problematizing SOBU's initial Pan-Africanist approach that had evolved from race-based Black Nationalism. And as SOBU entered the year of 1971, the organization's ideological position assumed more of an anti-imperialist stance as the liberation movements in Africa gained success. More U.S-based Black youth were inspired to scientifically engage the struggle along ideological lines for effective praxis.

A significant happening for SOBU was the aforementioned second National Conference that convened at Frogmore, South Carolina in 1971. An important conference objective was to further the development of SOBU's infrastructure and also the organizational skills of SOBU membership throughout the organization's national representation. Most important and critical to the future direction of the student group was that "the convention [establish] as a broad objective the building of a viable African Youth Movement with a Pan-African socialist ideological base."<sup>20</sup> This organizational move translated to the establishment of programs that reinforced ideology of leftist leanings and Pan-Africanism. Further progressing SOBU's flirtations with communism was the organization's study of dialectical and historical materialism for the continued critique of political economy and the tenets of capitalism as they related to imperialism and global hegemonic oppression.<sup>21</sup>

By late 1971 going into 1972, SOBU's ideological line settled on a leftist position, thus undertaking the ideations and philosophical perspectives of Marxism. This also included a more 'scientific' approach as it related to analyzing objective reality.

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<sup>20</sup> Search for a Vanguard: A Series of Anthologies Covering The Black Liberation Movement in the 1970's. SOBU-YOBU-FFM 1969-1976 (Chicago: People's College Press).

<sup>21</sup> Black Liberation Movement Since 1969, Unpublished Paper, 42, Dr. Abdul Alkalimat private collection.

Despite SOBU's early opposition to Karl Marx and his theoretical edifications relating to societies and economy, SOBU's ideological evolutions developed to embrace Marxism beyond the social constructions of race. This included Karl Marx's social and historical perspectives that related to race and non-European peoples. According to SOBUs evolved 1972 ideological position on Marx and Marxism,

Some of us continue to make statements like, 'Karl Marx has no value to us—he was a racist white boy.' And so he was. But it is senseless to reject certain works and certain concepts because they come from Europe and Europeans, if they apply to all men. Yes, Marx was a European; so was Alexander Graham Bell. Does that mean that revolutionary African forces should not use the telephone? Mathematics was invented in Africa; does that mean that there is such a thing as African mathematics? Is there any tribe, race, or nation on earth where two plus two does not equal four? If not, then we must concern ourselves with those fundamental universal laws.<sup>22</sup>

SOBU's relationship to the aforementioned quote on Marx only provided a segmented perspective of the organization's ideological and theoretical positions on the solution for Black liberation. SOBU as a Black student organization embraced the practice of study. And the influence of theoreticians that included Malcolm X, Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral, Marcus Garvey, Sékou Touré, and Michel Signor, amongst others, aided in the critical re-interpretation of the domestic Black struggle in the context of global imperialism. However, by 1972 SOBU's integration of Marxist theory was not a replacement of the organization's initial stance of Pan-Africanism or Black internationalism. Rather, SOBU's adoption of what was considered by many Black Nationalist circles to be 'racist' ideation was a significant indication of the organization's reflexive ability to develop a more complex and amalgamated ideological position in order to further the projects of the organization.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 2.

SOBU became increasingly insistent that the Black struggle needed more investigation attached to race-based unification. SOBU felt that the theoretical traditionalists of Black Nationalism were deficient of critical analyses that could potentially yield the practical solutions to oppression of Blacks in a domestic context. SOBU put forward the position that Nationalists needed to maintain the traditional tenets of Black Nationalism but also adjoin scientific analysis for those tenets' improvement. Regarding this point, SOBU stated that, "to be scientific in method is to recognize that it is impossible to mechanically superimpose solutions to national struggles in Africa on our struggle here."<sup>23</sup> Thus, SOBU continued to improve and expand upon the theoretical boundaries of Black Nationalism with the appropriate flexibility to address conditions as they were affected by imperialism, racism, culture and region while attempting to understand the many dimensions of global oppression.<sup>24</sup>

By 1972, SOBU had become grounded in a five-part ideological and organizational position that was an obvious synthesis of socio-political, historical and economic influences from a global context. Largely driven by a "materialist approach," these five ideological improvements represented increased critical analysis to include: 1) World View 2) Identity and Nationalism 3) Capitalism 4) Monopoly and Imperialism and 5) Capitalism, Black Nationalism, Black Folks, White Folks.

The SOBU perspective of addressing the critical needs of Black people from a World View, was an inclusion of SOBU's use of 'materialism' as a methodology for deconstructing the reality of Black folks in the early 1970s. From this ideological aspect, SOBU extracted many possible solutions available and applicable for systemic change.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

A theoretical position that the organization hoped to implement aligned with the philosophical tenets of materialism and the dialectical. The combination of the two principles afforded the Black student organization with ideological measurements to assist in studying the qualitative changes of society. These measures also integrated the use of 'historical materialism' for a differentiated approach for studying history as it related to oppressed peoples with specific attention to Black people throughout the Diaspora.

The SOBU ideological principle of *Identity and Nationalism* was integral to constructing the organizations theoretical perspectives on the placement of Black people in American society. The phenomena of infusing Marxist thought into its objectives earned the student organization the reputation of 'leftists' in relation to the other Black Nationalist camps of the era. However, SOBU's perspective of Black people in America was definitely not that of a 'melting pot,' versus that of nation that was most identifiable by the plethora of European nationalities that comprised the infrastructure of American society through the privileges of 'whiteness.' SOBU argued that "African people have had a particularly hard time reconciling the prevailing propaganda with the realities of our existence."<sup>25</sup> Drawing from the socio-cultural comprehensions of a people lacking a national identity due to the breach created through the institution of chattel slavery, SOBU put forward the argument that critiqued the aspects of capitalism that fosters an individualistic society. SOBU recognized that Black people were prone to take on individualistic solutions because of the competitive nature produced from westernized indoctrination, which was steeped in racist practices. SOBU's outlook concerning Black

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<sup>25</sup> Student Organization For Black Unity: Ideological Paper, 7-8, Cleveland Sellers Collection Box, 11 Folder 1, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

people (that included Marxism as a driving force) by 1972 was that “...we conclude that we are a *people*, and as such, have a right to determine our own future—that is, the response to the racist nature of our oppression must lie in nationalism.”<sup>26</sup> This pronouncement was also made in light of comprehending that world oppression was not homogenous to folks of African descent. SOBU made it clear in their ideological progression that the approach to struggle would differ depending on a variety of factors that stemmed from social, historical and economic tropes not geographically specific as far as oppression was concerned. An important ideological distinction between the differences of U.S.-based ‘Black Nationalism’ and Black Internationalism is illuminated by this interpretation,

It is, for example, misleading to compare the election of a Black man as mayor of Chicago or Newark with the election of Julius Nyerere in Tanzania or Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, and then brag that by the election of such a man we have attained “political independence.” At one point in time, the election of leaders of a mass-based political party to office, that is the gaining of “political independence”, meant that the masses controlled the state...it is undeniable that their control over the state gives them the potential to seize the means of production as well as land, mines, factories, etc. African people in America cannot hope to control the means of production by electing representative to the state apparatus. And it is precisely our lack of control over these things that provide us with a living that is at the core of our oppression. Thus our analysis must go deeper than a simple analogy to Africa or any other part of the world. Our nationalism is to liberate us, and we must make concrete analyses of concrete conditions facing us in America, Guyana, Kenya and wherever we are, to chart the correct course of action.<sup>27</sup>

SOBU hoped that the organization’s ideological position of nationalism would aid in fostering “psychological decolonization” from the effect of global racism and the damaging effects of stratifying societies on the basis of color for the reinforcement of

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

white supremacy. SOBU couched its understanding of racism as an inevitable consequence of *Capitalism*.

SOBU argued that, as a system of production driven by the acquisition of land, capitalism drove the expansion of the African Slave Trade, creating competition in the market and forcing the global urgency for free plantation labor in the Americas. SOBU's ideology positioned its contentions with capitalism outside of the then existing trends to oppose the tenets of the Westernized mode of production. SOBU was explicit about the organization's clarifications of viewing the underpinnings of capitalism as having rested most effectively on the benefits of African enslavement and exploitation. As students who sought to deconstruct the principles of capitalism to further the educational aspects of the understanding global inequality, SOBU was clear that the bifurcation of "class" versus "race" depleted the potentiality of the Black Liberation Struggle. With an intricate grasp of the dynamics of oppression as it related to Black folks, SOBU emphasized that the nature of Black oppression was not monolithic, but rather the result of both elements. This stance was clear in 1972 when SOBU stated, "We must not allow ourselves to become involved in either/or arguments because 'the answer' is neither 'either' nor 'or'...and acceptance of the race/class nature of our struggle brings us back to the conclusion that it must be national in character and scientific in principle."<sup>28</sup>

SOBU's fourth ideological tenet, *Monopoly and Imperialism*, identifies origins of global oppression and exploitation in relation to hegemonic activity around forms of capitalism. This stance on imperialism was couched historically with critical analysis on the Berlin conference of 1885 from which the Berlin conference was produced for the

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.



purposes of pilfering the human, natural and undeveloped resources of the African continent (Asia as well as Latin America). SOBU principled its ideation on the historical consistencies of nations that had imposed their will on nations and peoples ill-equipped for defense or resistance against such powers. For SOBU, Brothers and Sisters in locations such as Jamaica, Trinidad, Guyana, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Barbados, the Bahamas and Africa constituted the global community of Black Folks affected by the destructive actions of monopoly and imperialism.

The fifth and last ideological facet of SOBU, *Capitalism, Black Nationalism, Black Folks, and White Folks*, emphasized the need to reconsider the general cause of Black people as a unified block. This tenet also stressed SOBU's stance on the White working class as it related to future coalition building along class lines and common interests around dismantling capitalism and worker exploitation. By early 1972, SOBU unequivocally stated that for three distinct reasons building coalitions with White worker groups—while there might be obvious good that could come from working together—it would be virtually impossible as it related to practical application between the two groups. Why? SOBU rationalized 1) the permeation of racism in American society and aggression of working class Whites towards Black folks 2) the history of the labor trade union through which White workers had sold out the interests of Black workers for capitalist gains and 3) the long arm and effectiveness of American imperialism, i.e., the effects that tokenism had on White workers looking to advance their conditions and obtain “success.” SOBU described this by using the theoretical approach of Kwame Nkrumah as he termed the process, the “embourgeoisement of the western workers.”

According to a SOBU position paper on this evolved ideology concerning the White working class,

The old production line workers who formed the main bulk (of the work force) at the turn of the century are now only 12 of the 60 million in the work force. These changes have led to a growing identity of workers with the bourgeoisie. The “embourgeoisement” of the white worker has been enhanced by the fact that many of the ‘old’ working class positions are being occupied by Black people. We form about 4 million or 30% of the 12 million “productive” workers. Growing in numbers everyday, Black people increasingly seem to be the ‘real’ proletariat, thus reinforcing the bourgeois of white workers.<sup>29</sup>

#### SOBU Community Programs 1970-1972

SOBU’s student-community relationship entailed a vested interest in the improvement of the Black community. The adamancy of SOBU’s intentions for community programs is made evident in the continuous efforts of the student organizations members who maintained a presence in various sectors of the Black community. They worked to nurture this position, never distancing the aims and objectives of the Black student movement from community folks who stood to benefit the most from the ideological and economic improvements inherent in the students’ progressiveness. SOBU advanced the position that, “the work most relevant to the building of an African nation will be done in the Black communities—wherever they exist.”<sup>30</sup> SOBU mainly strove to construct and implement programs in the Black community that would ultimately nurture and establish independent institutions. The community affairs arm of SOBU undertook the vital task of defining the criteria by which

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<sup>29</sup> Student Organization For Black Unity: Ideological Paper, Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 11 Folder 1, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

<sup>30</sup> Work for African Liberation with the Student Organization for Black Unity Information Pamphlet. In author’s possession.

the programs for the community would be developed. In addition, SOBU strove to improve the “political consciousness” of Black folks through its programming.<sup>31</sup>

In order to organize for the purposes of community development and nation-building, the community affairs subdivision of SOBU categorized the activities of the department into several major categories:

- Projects of a service nature: tutorial programs, clothing programs, breakfast and food programs, etc.
- Projects for the furtherance of economic development and survival: buying clubs, cooperatives, job survey and assistance, etc.
- Projects for the development of a political nature: addressing the questions and issues related to public schools, challenging the administrative control of school boards and political activity related to community development, etc.<sup>32</sup>

SOBU community support entailed the furtherance of independent educational institutions, namely the Federation of Pan-African Educational Institutions that included: Malcolm X Liberation University of Durham and Greensboro, North Carolina; the Betty Shabazz Early Education Centers of MXLU also located in Durham and Greensboro, North Carolina; the Center for Black Education and Children’s Education Center in Washington, D.C.; the Pan-African Work Center in Atlanta, Georgia; Chad School of Newark, New Jersey; Our School of New York City; Clifford McKissick Community School located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and the Willie E. Grimes Community School of Greensboro, North Carolina.<sup>33</sup>

SOBU not only supported the educational ventures of the aforementioned institutions by providing support in the forms of personnel, but SOBU later became

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Search for a Vanguard: A Series of Anthologies Covering The Black Liberation Movement in the 1970’s. SOBU-YOBU-FFM 1969-1976 (Chicago: People’s College Press).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 6.

proactive for the organization of a new education center in the Spring of 1970. "SOBU, cooperating with Malcolm X Liberation University, United Organizations for Community Improvement (UOCI) and Operation Breakthrough (OBT) moved to make this a reality by setting up the Betty Shabazz Early Education Center,"<sup>34</sup> which was an auxiliary institution of MXLU. Motivated by the bi-organizational activity of SOBU and MXLU, led SOBU to propose an early education center in the Black community as a response to the growing need for early education centers. SOBU felt that the advent of more early education centers would assist in the improvement of the Pan-Africanist ideological fundamentals of students who would one day enter into an institution similar to those included in the Federation of Pan-African Institutions.<sup>35</sup>

The SOBU perception of all community work was that it be "social, educational, economic or otherwise—as political in nature." SOBU's community involvement also included the organizational development of the Pan-African Work Program for the physical implementation of "nation Building." The program was tabbed as an organizational agenda that provided a bridge of relevant political action for Black students and the community. Those who wished to apply for the program were required to be at least eighteen years of age and the SOBU selection committee for the program evaluated the applications based on intended seriousness of commitment to working for the liberation of Black people through nation building. The Pan-African Work Program took place over the summer months and was created to give assistance in poor rural areas of the South in order to aid with the developmental stages of long-term community

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<sup>34</sup> "SOBU Proposal For an Early Education Center, Spring 1970," Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 11 Folder 2, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

institution building. The Pan-African Work Program assisted Black folks in the states of Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Virginia and Washington, D.C.<sup>36</sup>

Critical to the Pan-African Work Program were the former veteran SNCC members who acted in the capacity of mentors and consultants to SOBU project coordinators and members. With a major emphasis on hard work to instill the principles of cooperative activity for productivity, many of the student participants worked for no pay and received only a small stipend for toiletries and other personal items. In fact, the work was so meaningful that “many of the students involved in the program found at the end of the summer session that they had made meaningful progress and chose, rather than to return to school, to continue working with the project, sometimes getting a job in the area or even transferring to a nearby school.”<sup>37</sup> SOBU’s educational developments also progressed to the development of a national organizational and ideological institute in August of 1971. This institute was conducted for thirty days on a full-time basis.<sup>38</sup>

SOBU community activity extended to the continued relationship and coalition building with PASOA for the staging of rallies that commemorated the March 21, 1969 South African Sharpeville Massacre in which eighty-three people were killed in protest of the Pass Laws. SOBU co-sponsored a march and rally with PASOA in 1970 and 1971 in New York City, and several hundred students converged in support of the international event. In 1970, students congregated on Hammar skjold Plaza outside of the United Nations to hear the various speakers that included Peter Milotsi of the Pan Africanist

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<sup>36</sup> “Work for Your People: Pan-African Work Program,” *SOBU Newsletter*, April 17, 1971, 11.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 11.; Search for a Vanguard: A Series of Anthologies Covering The Black Liberation Movement in the 1970’s. SOBU-YOBU-FFM 1969-1976 (Chicago: People’s College Press).

Congress, Yemi Agbeyegbe of PASOA and also the special husband and wife guests, Miriam Mekeba and Stokely Carmichael. In 1971, the commemoration produced by the work of SOBU, PASOA, and also the Nigerian and Palestinian students' unions joined SOBU and PASOA in Mt. Morris Park of New York City to support the event. The 1971 gathering was held as a part of a "six-day Southern Africa Week (March 15-20) held in conjunction with the SOBU Pan-African Medical Program." In addition to the rally, Black Students on various college campuses and throughout the Black community were instrumental in the collection of medical supplies for the Pan-African Medical Program that would ultimately be donated to the liberation movements of the continent.<sup>39</sup>

#### SOBU Campus Programs 1970-1972

SOBU's campus programs differed from the activity of its community programs in that SOBU aggressively sought to take advantage of the strategic concentration of Black students on predominantly white institutions as well as at historically black colleges and universities. SOBU expressed that because many Black students were protected from the propagated economic brainwashing that occurred in the outside world, they had the potential to become social change agents and a force to be respected in the fight for African liberation.<sup>40</sup> SOBU's campus affairs department issued the following statement:

The possibility of realizing the potential of African students starts with the understanding that the educational institutions in which students are participating are in philosophical opposition to the objectives and authentic interest of Black people. The presence of students on these campuses, however, need not make them immune to the struggle for national liberation. The type of work to be done

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<sup>39</sup> "Sharpeville Rally," *SOBU Newsletter*, March 6, 1971.

<sup>40</sup> Work for African Liberation with the Student Organization for Black Unity Information Pamphlet, 7, in author's possession; Search for a Vanguard: A Series of Anthologies Covering The Black Liberation Movement in the 1970's. SOBU-YOBU-FFM 1969-1976 (Chicago: People's College Press), 6.

on college campuses will be dictated in large measure by the circumstances of the particular campus and the surrounding community. SOBU will seek to establish affiliates or chapters on college campuses; the affiliates or chapters will provide basic political education through workshops, seminars, group study, conferences, etc.<sup>41</sup>

From this, SOBU sought to enhance the Nation Building potential of Black students while they worked toward matriculating through their respective university programs. Through SOBU workshops and affiliated political education programs, the organization placed an emphasis on the course selection for Black students as it related to future usefulness for assistance in African liberation. The results of urging for technical skills brought about the establishment of “Skills Banks,” on various SOBU affiliated campuses for the purpose of identifying students whose skills and expertise could be used for Pan-African work. SOBU’s major objective with the skills bank was to couple Black students with an ideological perspective that reinforced the tenets of self-reliance and community work for Black people in resource poor areas, domestic and transnational.

The campus programs of SOBU also focused their departmental sights on relevant education for Black folks under the suasion of “traditional systems” of westernized education that Blacks were subjected to. For SOBU, “the quest for relevancy through Black Studies programs must be understood completely, taking into account many of the very fundamental neo-colonial and selfish potentials inherent in such programs.”<sup>42</sup> Exhausted by the integrationist/accommodationist pedagogy inherent in Black colleges and universities, SOBU sought to challenge these potential educational institutions to answer the call for African liberation. Greatly dissatisfied with the “traditional” standards

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<sup>41</sup> Search for a Vanguard, 6.

<sup>42</sup> Work for African Liberation with the Student Organization for Black Unity Information Pamphlet,, 7. In author’s possession; Search for a Vanguard: A Series of Anthologies Covering The Black Liberation Movement in the 1970’s. SOBU-YOBU-FFM 1969-1976 (Chicago: People’s College Press), 7.

espoused by many HBCUs, SOBU conversely identified the defense of those standards as nothing more than disillusionment with the imitation of whiteness. Because the majority of post-secondary Black students existed in these aforementioned institutions, the work to bring those students into the fold could not be shunned or dismissed. Thus, SOBU's actions to assist Black colleges and universities went beyond mere campus lectures and workshops. The charge to assist led to "Save Black Schools" program in the state of North Carolina.<sup>43</sup>

In 1963, the Carlyle Commission produced a report on the status of higher education for the State of North Carolina which concluded that the configuration of education in the State of North Carolina should be structured in a pyramid style. In turn, the governing body of the State in charge of education adopted the blueprint that situated junior colleges at the bottom of the pyramid. At the third level of the construct were four year teaching colleges/institutions, and the second level of the pyramid constituted colleges that offered degrees at the master's level. The pyramid's hierarchy called for a consolidation of University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with the campuses of Greensboro and in Raleigh. From this structure, the educational modus operandi for the State of North Carolina was established for the years 1963 through 1967.

North Carolina's adopted higher educational structure became a critical indicator as to how the futures of certain educational institutions would fare with relation to their projected degree granting status as well the state's educational financial prioritizations. SOBU believed "As the most prestigious institution in the state's higher educational structure, the University of North Carolina received more than a proportionate share of

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.



state financing, and consequently, it did most of the developing.”<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, the educational stratification for the State of North Carolina relegated the granting of doctoral degrees only to the University of North Carolina campuses. This meant that many to most of the Black colleges and universities in the state would only receive the bare minimum of financial assistance due to top priority given to the University of North Carolina campuses. These decisions were administered based on how the post secondary institutions of the state were positioned and identified on the educational pyramid.<sup>45</sup>

In 1967, the State of North Carolina faced challenges in the re-structuring of the educational pyramid to incorporate the change in status of many of its colleges and universities. An amendment came in the form of a compromise called the “Regional University status.” The rationale behind this compromise in the educational legislation became very evident. The new Regional University status placed selected schools in a higher budgeting class thus increasing their annual financial yields. However, the new category did nothing about the super ordinate status of the UNC schools and furthered the declination of post- secondary Black institutions in the State of North Carolina. “Black colleges had been designated universities, but their relative status remained the same. The well established policy of using Black institutions as pawns to be manipulated in the interest of white universities also remained intact.”<sup>46</sup>

With Black colleges and universities facing increasing financial deficiency, the close of the 1960s brought some critical truths to light pertaining to Blacks and higher education in the State of North Carolina. Facing a crisis by the early part of 1971, three

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<sup>44</sup> “Save Black Schools: What is Future of Black Higher Education in North Carolina April 1971,”

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

major points of Black educational interest needed to be addressed in order to map out the methods and resources needed to maintain the existence of Black post-secondary education in the State of North Carolina.

- 15.1% of all students in attendance at state institutions of higher learning attend one of the five predominantly Black institutions.
- The predominately Black institutions receive approximately 12% of the total budget appropriation for all state schools.
- Predominantly Black institutions have always received a smaller percentage of the state appropriation compared with their white counterparts (Based on the number of enrolled students).<sup>47</sup>

The research data Black institutions compiled was used to further identify the inadequacies that were systematically constructed by the State to halt Black progress in higher education. But most importantly, the aforementioned statements begged the following questions: What interventions should be established for Black institutions? How would the reconstitution of North Carolina's educational pyramid affect Black educational institutions? Even though Black colleges and universities in the State of North Carolina had received the status of "university," the five Black post-secondary educational institutions in North Carolina were in dire financial conditions due to the two previous state re-configurations of educational financing. As the 1970s progressed, the chief financial benefactors of education were both small and large White post-secondary institutions in the State of North Carolina.<sup>48</sup>

By the early Spring of 1970, Robert Scott, then the governor of North Carolina, met with the Board of Higher Education and pushed for another economic plan that would decide the future of higher education. The twenty-one member board appointed

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

by Governor Scott was to vote on a new plan of reorganization from five options provided. And the historic position of subjectivity of Black colleges meant the five Black schools in North Carolina faced potential changes that only added to their detriment.<sup>49</sup>

Much of the concern for the future of Black schools in North Carolina arose because of the federal government's lack of financial support and attention during the Nixon era. In an open letter provided in the *SOBU Newsletter*, SOBU focused on the beginnings of the Black schools detriment of the state. According to the article,

The federal and state governments have begun cracking down on "racially identifiable schools" especially on the college level while at the same time President Nixon has begun to compromise in his "desegregation plan," on the lower levels to appease the powerful southern leaders like Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. At the same time Black state supported institutions have begun to drastically raise tuition and other fees and administration requirements.<sup>50</sup>

In addition to tuition increases at Black schools of higher education, the most damaging factor identified in Governor Scott's reorganization plans was a uniformity of standards that included-- academic standards, admittance standards, tuition and fees and uniform requirements for faculty and administrative personnel at Black and White schools. By constructing a set of homogenous standards, the Black schools of the state would be phased out by not being able to meet the standards set by the White institutions of the North Carolina.

By February of 1971, SOBU formed the Committee of Higher Education with the aim of drawing up alternative proposals to remedy the problems that Black schools of higher education faced in North Carolina. "It was also decided that during the week of Feb 15-20, there would be campus-wide meetings the various Black institutions to

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> "An Open Letter: Save The Black Schools," *SOBU Newsletter*, February 6, 1971.

dramatize and further educate Black students, faculty and administrators to the need for a united front” to combat the attack on higher education in the state of North Carolina.<sup>51</sup>

Peculiar to some members of Black Nationalist circles were the motivations and energies focused on saving Black schools. This questioning stemmed from how the historically Black colleges and universities were perceived in the Black community. In many to most cases, a bifurcation between community and Black campuses was constructed that pitted Black people in and of the community against students who were also children of sharecroppers and brothers and sisters from the block. The motivation to save Black schools was driven by the need to make Black schools more than emulation factories of whiteness. SOBU argued about its Save Black Schools campaign,

...many of the Black colleges are havens of the backwards, misguided and apathetic values which have for so long been central to our oppression---the havens for irrelevant cotillion debutantes, indifferent party goers and just general social, cultural and political colonization. We can do without this, and any meaningful drive to “Save Black Schools” can see only part of its goal the mere survival of the school. More important is the re-directing of that school towards the liberation struggle. Implicit in this is a radical departure from the present norm and in its place a bold and straightforward meeting of the challenge of nationhood.<sup>52</sup>

As Black students in the State of North Carolina began to dialogue more around the issue of how to save Black higher education it became clear that a greater sense of urgency was needed to impact the impending ‘reorganization’ of education. SOBU developed an ancillary organization for the explicit purpose of addressing the needs of the ‘Save Black Schools’ campaign. That organization came to be known as the North Carolina Youth Organization for Black Unity (NC-YOBU or YOBU for the sake of this section). SOBU also organized a ‘Save Black Schools’ conference at Spelman College in

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<sup>51</sup> Reorganization Plans Would Phase Out Black Colleges, *SOBU Newsletter*, March 6, 1971, 1, 3.

<sup>52</sup> Save Black Schools Part II, *SOBU Newsletter*, March 6, 1971, 4.

Atlanta, Georgia and later organized with YOBU for a National 'Save Black Schools Day' in May of that year to spark momentum focused on political awareness of Black higher education in North Carolina.<sup>53</sup>

SOBU's concomitant organization, YOBU, gained a critical induction into addressing the needs of the 'Save Black Schools Campaign' through the sincere work of veteran SOBU members. YOBU developed a plan of intervention to address the schooling issues. Its meetings led to an eventual press conference at which YOBU declared that the organization would be spearheading a mass demonstration at the state capitol that the organization identified as "Black Monday." Much of the exigency to call state wide and even national attention to the plight of Black schools in the state was spurred on the consultation of Harold Johnson, the then student body president at the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore (formerly Maryland State University). Johnson was significant for his role in providing an experiential take that stemmed from a very similar "restructuring" that had taken place in the State of Maryland two years prior in which a formerly all Black post-secondary institution fell victim to almost identical circumstances. In Maryland, "at the formerly all-Black school, white enrollment had almost doubled, Black people had not only decreased there, but had not shown any shown any significant rise at the predominantly white institutions." Johnson also identified the socio-economic disparities that had been taken into account when admissions standards in his state were changed as a result of restructuring. This obviously became an obstacle,

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<sup>53</sup> Work for African Liberation with the Student Organization for Black Unity Information Pamphlet, 7. In author's possession; "Showdown on Black Schools," *The African World*, October 30, 1971 II, no. 2, 1, 12.; Please refer to Chapter VII section on SOBU's transition to the Youth Organization for Black Unity (YOBU) which gives in-depth detail on the ideological evolutions that occurred for this shift to take place. This, of course, differs from the organization of NCYOBU. For the sake of this section on NCYOBU, the auxiliary organization will be referred to as 'YOBU,' which is only an abbreviated version of the North Carolina Youth Organization for Black Unity (NCYOBU).

thus aiding in the prevention of Black students receiving a college education in the State of Maryland.<sup>54</sup>

On Monday, November 8, 1971, over five thousand students displayed a momentous show of solidarity in support of the 'Save Black Schools' campaign. Black students came from throughout the state of North Carolina from not only the five state supported predominantly Black educational institutions but also from high schools, private institutions and traditionally White colleges and universities in the state as well. Close to sixty chartered buses and caravans estimated the hundreds converged in show of protest of Governor Scott's legislation to inevitably phase out Black schools. The Black student representation of the rally came from a diverse array of Black communities from throughout North Carolina. Black students who were not able to attend provided a show of support through telegrams to support the actions of YOBU.

The Black Monday procession gathered at Shaw University and marched to the state capitol, passing through downtown Raleigh chanting songs and clapping as they marched. Once the convoy reached the state capitol, the YOBU chairman of Fayetteville State University, Maurice Carter, voiced a six-point platform that outlined the proposed restructuring should be operationalized for the overall benefit of Black schools in North Carolina. The mass demonstration, touted as the only event outside of the CIAA athletic conference to bring together Black students from such a wide variety of schools throughout the state, compelled the sympathy of church ministers and congregations who aided many of the demonstrators with financial support for travel to the event.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Showdown on Black Schools, *The African World*, October 30, 1971, II, no. 2, 1, 12.

<sup>55</sup> Black Monday in North Carolina: Day of Solidarity to Save Black Schools, *The African World: Special Section*, November 13, 1971, II, no. 3X, 1X-2X.; The North Carolina Youth Organization for Black Unity's purpose and program was built on a six point platform that focused on the improvement of

SOBU National Chairman Nelson Johnson brought explicit clarity to the question at hand concerning Black schools and higher education in North Carolina. He commented that,

We recognize...embodied in the language, embodied in the jargon, embodied in the confusion around reorganization, at this point is a fundamental threat to the existence of Black institutions in the this state. We do not say that Black institutions should be preserved merely to be preserved. But they represent the most logical potential at this point in our history to provide the educational process that is most relevant to the masses of Black people.<sup>56</sup>

Outside of Maurice Carter and Nelson Johnson, the day's speakers also included Sandra Neely, student body vice-president from Bennett College; John Mendez, student body president at Shaw; Frank Balance; Brenda Wagner; Terry Howard, student government president at Winston Salem State University; O. L. Dupree of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Warren Massenberg of Wake Forest University; Ben Chavis; Humphrey Cummings; William Alston, Fayetteville State University student body president; Darryl Morris, Ronald Ivey, North Carolina A&T State University student government president; YOBU Vice-Chairman from North Carolina A&T University; Harvey White of North Carolina Central University; attorney and activist Frank Balance and Owusu Sadaukai of Malcolm X Liberation University.

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Black youth in the state of North Carolina. The six point platform was fostered to I. Build a Stronger State Black Youth Organization, II. Set up a Save Black Schools Commission, III. Initiate statewide voter registration and voter education projects, IV. Help Develop an independent political structure through which Black people can gain maximum benefits from their latent electoral, economic and education powers, V. Develop closer and more positive relationships between the young and old, VI. Offer assistance to the needy and lend support to crisis situations involving gross social injustices. NCYOBUs platform was provided in the November 13, 1971 issue of *The African World* along with the proceedings of the mass 'Black Monday' demonstration in Raleigh, North Carolina. The NCYOBUs organizational purpose and program page presented in that issue of *The African World* provided readers with insight into the organization's efforts on the state level as long as their subsidiary affiliation with SOBU. The affiliate NCYOBUs which was originally established in Fayetteville in 1971, was a coalition mainly comprised of Black student governments, BSUs, high school groups, and non-student groups as well. For further detail on the six point platform as each tenet breaks down, please refer to "North Carolina Youth Organization For Black Unity: Purpose and Program," *The African World*, November 13, 1971, 4X.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 2X.

Sadaukai, who had just recently returned from his trip from Mozambique and riding on the high of his experiences with FRELIMO, provided stirring remarks for the 'Black Monday' gathering. He poignantly criticized the motives behind the State Government of North Carolina's decision to move toward the integration of post-secondary institutions in the state. Sadaukai was adamant in reminding the gathering of Black students and activists to think through the question of "Why is it in their interest to integrate now?"<sup>57</sup> The MXLU president also identified the potential threat to all Black educational institutions in the state that were needed provide the adequate psychological de-conditioning necessary around issues of imperialism and worldwide revolution. Sadaukai also spoke on a political movement in the State of North Carolina that would not only include the educational aspirations of Black peoples, but a movement that would also encompass the social, political and economic realms of the State's Black population as a whole.<sup>58</sup>

#### SOBU Pan-African Affairs 1970-1972

The Pan-African Affairs Department of SOBU performed as the international arm of the student organization. Charged with the responsibility of initiating and maintaining organizational relationships throughout the African Diaspora, the Pan-African Affairs Department was critical to the promotion of and conceptualization 'Africaness' to Black people in the U.S. Part of the responsibility of developing this facet of SOBU's operations was in the political education that the organization provided as reinforcement for transnational connections around struggle. To aid in increasing the consciousness of the African continent, the Pan-African Affairs Department orchestrated the organization's

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 3X.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.



'African Awareness Project' as an educational intervention for the development of positive perspectives about Africa. The project consisted of research gathered with the assistance of SOBU's informational wing, the *SOBU Newsletter*, later known as *The African World*. A mode of operations for the project focused on developing informational kits from the compiled research of the department for physical dissemination. Some of the information in the kits pertained to the various liberation movement taking place on the African continent, namely in South Africa. The information kits also provided facts and figures on the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the economic development in Africa, and other relatable resources. In addition to the work produced through the 'Africa Awareness Project,' the Pan-African Affairs Department also held panels and seminars "to promote further awareness about contemporary Africa and the liberation movements in Southern Africa."<sup>59</sup>

The political education aspects of SOBU were also furthered through the two-fold intentions of the organization's Pan-African Medical Program (PAMP). Its mission was 1) to inform and educate Black students about the liberation struggles taking place on the African continent and 2) to provide the critically necessary medical supplies, tools, finances and other resources for individuals and health centers in need both nationwide and internationally. A most important objective of the PAMP centered on creating opportunities for Black people in the U.S. to support the liberation struggles on the continent by providing financial support.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Work for African Liberation with the Student Organization for Black Unity Information Pamphlet, 11. In author's possession; Search for a Vanguard: A Series of Anthologies Covering The Black Liberation Movement in the 1970's, SOBU-YOBU-FFM 1969-1976 (Chicago, IL: People's College Press, 8.

<sup>60</sup> Search for a Vanguard, 9.

In order for Black student organizations around the nation to properly engage and assist the SOBU headquarters in the drive for a successful campaign, SOBU circulated pamphlets focused on the protocols of supporting the organization's PAMP. Campus BSUs and other Black student organizations were provided with a variety of possible measures to enact the medical drives by, for example, forming auxiliary committees for the coordination of programs that would target younger brothers and sisters with political education. SOBU set up collection points for the delivery of materials to the various campus sites. Campus activity and support for the PAMP was encouraged by organization's systematic approach of assisting a variety of Black student organizations to draw attention to the intended needs of the program. Black college students in the U.S. were encouraged to build alliances with brothers and sisters who were students from Africa at their respective universities to coalesce with the political education processes at both Black colleges and universities and predominantly White institutions. Black student campus and community activity for the PAMP also included letter writing campaigns and the distribution of information about the African liberation struggles through the various BSU newsletters and community newspapers. SOBU also encouraged students to partner with churches in Black communities near their respective campuses to inform their congregations and make use of church bulletins as a means to promote the program in the congregations. Program support also included the effective use of boycott activity and organized visits to the offices of Black congressmen in Washington, D.C. to urge divestment in South Africa and to further oppose the South Africa's sugar quotas, its satellite tracking station in South Africa, and military assistance to Portugal. One of the major points of information that SOBU stressed through PAMP was to inform students to

organize protests and demonstrations on their various campuses in opposition of Chase Manhattan, First National and Chemical Bank for their annual \$40 million revolving credit to South Africa.<sup>61</sup>

These campus and community organizational tactics proved successful for PAMP, and the medical drive organized collections on the dates of December 15, 1970 and March 21, 1971. Materials and support garnered provided the added momentum needed for SOBU to coordinate the efforts for the worldwide day of African solidarity on May 25, 1971. This day of Pan-African support was established by the Pan-African Secretariat of Guyana in June of 1970. The Secretariat, holding offices in Georgetown, Guyana as well as a branch in New York City, initialized the day of solidarity for the purposes of mobilizing concrete support from the “millions of African descendants and to turn these millions into an active reserve of the African liberation movement.”<sup>62</sup> With the support of the Pan-African community that included the Prime minister of Guyana, Forbes Burnham, as well as the presidents of Uganda, Tanzania, Guinea and Kenya, the worldwide campaign expected to garner financial donations, medical supplies and other resources from around the globe as a show of support for the African liberation struggles.

SOBU's involvement and support in the May 25 day of African solidarity exceeded demonstrations and Black student rallies. The Pan-African Affairs Department of SOBU actualized their involvement through the organizing efforts of the PAMP activities. Vice-Chairman and Coordinator for the Pan-African/International Affairs division of SOBU, Brother Tim Thomas, coordinated the efforts of PAMP for the

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<sup>61</sup> Search for a Vanguard: A Series of Anthologies Covering The Black Liberation Movement in the 1970's. SOBU-YOBU-FFM 1969-1976: Supportive Action for the SOBU Pan-African Medical Program, (Chicago, IL: People's College Press) 1-3.

<sup>62</sup> “Support the Armed Liberation Struggle: World-Wide African Solidarity Day—May 25,” *SOBU Newsletter*, I, no. 15, May 15, 1971.

solidarity day efforts of May 25, 1971. During an interview for the *SOBU Newsletter*, “Bro. Thomas explained that SOBU had already set aside May 25<sup>th</sup> the day of the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) as the collection date and Southern African Week for the Medical Program before being aware of the Secretariat’s decision.”<sup>63</sup> From this decision, SOBU moved to consolidate the collections received from their previous December and March collections with the resources expected from May 25 in preparation for the items to be distributed to the various members of the African liberation movement. SOBU maintained offices in Greensboro, North Carolina and Washington, D.C. as drop-off locations and processing sites for the medical supply collections.<sup>64</sup>

#### SOBU Informational Services 1970-1972

The Informational Services of SOBU were instated to provide a counter-narrative regarding the activity of Black people on domestic and transnational levels and to assist the Black community with the dissemination of services that existed for Blacks by Blacks. The news service functioned for the purpose of feeding information to the Black community and members in predominantly white organizations through a number of sources that included: community and college campus newspapers, magazines, local radio stations and other news media that could be used as a dissemination tool for the publication. Historically, SOBU maintained a news organ through which articles, editorials, photographs, cartoons, etc., were couched in national and international student activity and Black socio-political and historical issues. The SOBU news service also

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

generated the SOBU Speakers Bureau that featured a “panel of Black speakers, poets and other artists from Africa, the West Indies and the Americas.”<sup>65</sup>

The development of SOBU’s news organ began with the organization’s inception in 1969 when SOBU developed their initial Black student publication called *The Paper*, a bi-weekly journal published for national and international circulation with the organizational aim of defining issues and trends pertinent to Black people from a Pan-Africanist perspective. As an organization, SOBU eventually encountered ideological inconsistency as the Black student group expanded. To assist in addressing in these difficulties, SOBU produced *The Pan-African Worker* as an in-house news organ to aid in the eradication of ideological conflicts that became apparent during the summer of 1970.<sup>66</sup>

During the latter part of this period, SOBU changed the name of its news organ from *The Paper* to the *SOBU Newsletter*; this assisted the organization in increasing readership through more subscriptions for the newsletter. Ideological maturation of the organization required SOBU to evolve beyond the jurisdiction of only being identified as a student organization. This realization led to SOBU adopting the systematization of their efforts in building a revolutionary Pan-African youth movement in the United States (this will be explicated in the subsequent chapter). In the latter part of 1971, one of the initial steps taken by SOBU was to again change the name of the news organ from the *SOBU Newsletter* to *The African World*. Still a bi-weekly publication, the informational

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<sup>65</sup> Work for African Liberation with the Student Organization for Black Unity Information Pamphlet, 10.

<sup>66</sup> Student Organization For Black Unity Proposal, December 20, 1969, 12. Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 11 Folder 1, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.; Student Organization For Black Unity: Proposal for the Development of a Training Institute, 3. Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 11 Folder 2, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

increased its international prominence. Its consistent coverage and quality was touted by African embassies, well-known African figures and African liberation front groups. An example of the praiseworthy international attention received is exemplified by the comments of Amy Jacques Garvey (the widow of Marcus Garvey). Amy Jacques Garvey praised *The African World* for its transnational circulation and “high standard” of journalism. The complimentary recognition that the publication gained was due to the significant thrust of social and political accessibility within pages of the newspaper once SOBU shifted the organization’s activity to further politicize its readership.<sup>67</sup> By 1972, *The African World* provided more educational aspects in the publication and expanded from the original size of sixteen pages to twenty pages. As the organization evolved from SOBU to YOBUS, *The African World* reflected its political maturation with articles and columns on Black workers and a heavier emphasis on critical “class” consciousness. The Information Department also instituted a section in *The African World* called the “Political Cookbook” that included words and phrases such as “Nationalism,” “Imperialism” and “Pan-Africanism” so that readers would be provided with a more comprehensible context of the articles. This decision to include terms in the newspaper aided in the increase of SOBU/YOBUS’s ability to provide a form of informal education for the Black community through the publication.<sup>68</sup>

Aspects of the periodical that enabled SOBU to enhance Black student membership and increase the support of the Black community were *The African World’s*

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.; Words from Our Readers: A Message from Mrs. Garvey, *The African World*, October 16, 1971, 2.; Fanon Che Wilkins, “In the Belly of the Beast: Black Power, Anti-Imperialism and the African Liberation Solidarity Movement, 1968-1975,” (doctoral dissertation, New York University), 127.; Search for a Vanguard: A Series of Anthologies Covering The Black Liberation Movement in the 1970’s. SOBU-YOBUS-FFM 1969-1976, (Chicago, IL: People’s College Press), 8.

<sup>68</sup> “Change, Motion & Development: Youth Organization for Black Unity,” *The African World*, February 5, 1972, 20.; “Political Cookbook Column,” *The African World*, September 2, 1972.

domestic and transnational content, issues that affected people of African descent and those who waged wars in the spirit of anti-imperialism. During the tenure of the publication, articles with a critical perspective of the effects hegemonic powers and the relationships fostered for the purpose of increased subjugation graced the pages of the newspaper. A major example of this was exemplified with the publication's exposition on the Ethiopian student demonstrations against the imperialist dictatorship under the rulership of Haile Selassie. Both high school and university students of Ethiopia and Eritrea formed an alliance to address a government that oppressed the poor and agricultural workers while the dictator revered himself as a deity under the auspices of Rastafarianism. *The African World's* exposé on the country of Ethiopia also included reports of how the country possessed an illiteracy rate of 95 to 98 percent, and also maintained the bulk of its nation's infrastructure with United States foreign aid and influence.<sup>69</sup>

In addition to providing a varied perspective on the government of Ethiopia, *The African World* also gave its readership insight into the alliance formed by the governments of Israel and the South African apartheid government for what the reports of the newspaper considered as "Europe's African Outposts." This governmental tie was reinforced by the South African Jewish population who provided a \$15,000,000.00 line of credit through the Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa, one of South Africa's largest companies that operated in heavy engineering, construction and foundry work. Organization, trade, and military intelligence was reciprocated for the benefit of

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<sup>69</sup> "Poverty Amidst a Façade of Richness Under Dictatorship in Ethiopia," *SOBU Newsletter*, April 3, 1971, 6.; "After O.A.U. Meeting Ends Ethiopian Student Demonstrations Jailed," *SOBU Newsletter*, July 24, 1971, 9.; "Haile Selassie-'Lion of Judah' and Friend of Imperialism," July 8, 1972, 8, 11.

maintaining their geo-political dominance and this was further assured by the Israeli-South African Trade Association that orchestrated many other governmental transactions as the aforementioned. Accounts such as these and others were provided during the tenure of SOBU/YOBU's as a Black student/youth organization. These and other insightful articles aided in *The African World* gaining readership in Canada, the Caribbean and throughout the United States.<sup>70</sup>

The local colleges and universities for SOBU had their own local newspapers and also fed newsworthy info to a variety of local Black publications. An example of this was the activity by the students in Denmark, South Carolina who established *The African Fire* in addition to publishing news releases written by their surrounding community and other campus newsletters. Members of SOBU's Informational Department also worked in conjunction with the students of MXLU's Communications Department on the production of *The African Warrior*, which was MXLU's school and community news organ for Durham and Greensboro, North Carolina. SOBU's collaborative work in the area of communications also extended north of the Mason-Dixon Line to include help to SOBU members in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin area who were collaborating with the *Milwaukee Courier* to publicize Black activity in the area.

Initially actualized as a vehicle that promoted the informational and economic activity of the organization, the SOBU Speakers Bureau aided as an outlet of political education for the enhancement of community information. The bureau consisted of poets,

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<sup>70</sup> "Europe's African Outposts—Pt. II: Israel and South Africa," *The African World*, April 15, 1972, Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 11 Folder 2, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.; Words from Our Readers: A Message from Mrs. Garvey, *The African World*, October 16, 1971, 2.; Fanon Che Wilkins, "In the Belly of the Beast: Black Power, Anti-Imperialism and the African Liberation Solidarity Movement, 1968-1975," (doctoral dissertation, New York University) 127.; Search for a Vanguard: A Series of Anthologies Covering The Black Liberation Movement in the 1970's. SOBU-YOBU-FFM 1969-1976, (Chicago, IL: People's College Press), 8.



musicians and a variety of organizational representatives from Black student groups and various political organizations that brought an extensive skills base reflected in the political activism of each artist and grassroots activist/organizer. Representing a diverse array of talent and insight through their craft, the SOBU's Speakers Bureau included the participation of poetess Jayne Cortez; Third World Press published poetess, Johari Amini; Distinguished author and scholar, John O. Killens of Brooklyn; Chairman of the PASOA Chicago Chapter, Ruwa Chiri; and Phil Cohran and the Chicago Heritage Ensemble, which provided a unique synthesis of ancient African techniques and Black Nationalist thought through the band's musical expressions. In addition, SOBU worked in tandem with Pan-African School Federation member institutions: the Center for Black Education (CBE) of Washington, D.C., and the Pan-African Education Center in Durham, North Carolina. SOBU was also able to obtain the services of J. Mwaanga, the ambassador to the United Nations for the Republic of Zambia.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> "1970-'71 SOBU Speakers Bureau To Be Launched Soon," *SOBU Newsletter*, November 21, 1970, 12.

## CHAPTER 7

### A MOVEMENT OF THE PEOPLE...AFRICAN PEOPLE: AFRICAN LIBERATION DAY (ALD), THE DECLINE OF MXLU & LEFT PAN-AFRICANISM OF YOBU 1972-1973

*Afrikan People Everywhere  
Afrikan People all over the World  
Evolving because of & in spite of ourselves  
Afrikan People all over the world, trying to make Revolution  
The world must be changed, split open & changed  
All poverty sickness ignorance racism must be eradicated  
Whoever pushes these plagues, them also must be eradicated...  
Oppressed people of the world change or die  
Afrikan People all over the world Rise  
& Shine, Shine, Shine  
Afrikan People all over the world, the future is ours  
We will create on our feet not our knees  
It is a future of Great works, and Freedom  
But we can not crawl through life drunk & unconscious...  
Be conscious. Black People, Negroes, Colored People, Afro Americans  
Be CONSCIOUS...  
Afrikans All over the world. Yes. Everywhere, Everywhere, Everywhere,  
We are Afrikans & going to make change  
Change or die  
Afrikans Change or die to the Whole world too  
we are Afrikans  
Love is our passport to the perfectibility of humanity  
Work and Study  
Struggle & Victory*

--Amiri Baraka, *Afrikan Revolution*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> William J. Harrisin collaboration with Amiri Baraka, ed. *The LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka Reader by Amiri Baraka* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1991), 243.; This work (taken in excerpts) by Amiri Baraka was created shortly after the death of Amilcar Cabral and resonated with the Pan-Africanist struggle and disposition of the early 1970s. The work, which is dated around the year of 1973, presupposes the period of the factionalism within the Black Liberation movement but is closer to the era of transition towards anti-monopoly capitalism and an adoption of Marxist-Leninism for an anti-imperialist stance that enveloped Black liberation organizations of the period. The involvement of Baraka in the Pan-Africanist movement of the early 1970s is not only critical to comprehending the impact of adoption of Black internationalism, but is as equally as important in engaging the implications of Amiri Baraka's decision as well as many other organizations to totally adopt the tenets of Marxist-Leninism as the Black Liberation Movement experienced ideological splits and differences that saw the declination of Black progressive action by 1975.

By 1972 the work for Black liberation had reached revolutionary growth, and a considerable expansion of Black Nationalism to include Black transnationalism was undertaken, espousing the ideology of Pan-Africanism in the traditions of Martin Delaney, W. E. B. Dubois, Marcus Garvey, George Padmore, and Malcolm X. Global identification with African peoples became synonymous with one's socio-cultural and historical understandings and was directly reflective of the politics of Black identity in the early 1970s. As various liberation struggles on the African continent found success, the Black world became exceedingly optimistic about the prospects of a more egalitarian society in which African peoples did not bear the brunt of oppression, marginalization, and sub-humanization as by-products of white supremacy.

The word for the beginning of the 1970s was Africa, and the alignment of worldwide solidarity was tantamount for the physical and psychological manumission of Africans at home and abroad. African Liberation Day of 1972 would be the beginning; however, this chapter explores the ideological differences that not only existed under the banner of an international Black united front but eventually became enough to partition aspects of the Black Liberation Movement to the point of movement ineffectiveness. As many Black youth, students and workers moved under the auspices of a variety of ideological shifts and splits, this chapter will identify those greatest affected by the sectionalism that occurred over which road to take for Black liberation. Critical to these outcomes for many Black youth and students were the final outcomes for Black educational institutions and organizations like Malcolm X Liberation University (MXLU) and the Student Organization for Black Unity (SOBU), which by 1972 had come to symbolize and actualize the hopes of many Black people that the struggle would

transcend the mere concepts of educational spaces and collectives for Black student refuge. The impact of Black self-actualization not only flourished in MXLU and SOBU but the price of dismantling those networks from either internal differences or external pressures signaled a direction in the Black liberation movement that went beyond the struggle of Black people in many cases.

Preparing for African Liberation Day (ALD '72):  
SOBU and MXLU Activities

On March 18, 1972 the coordinating committee for ALD met at Malcolm X Liberation University for an ALDCC planning meeting. A press conference, which evolved out of the meeting, was also held at MXLU by the ALDCC for the sole purpose of calling out to people around the world of African descent to issue a statement in support of the worldwide day of solidarity. With MXLU emerging as the headquarters in the South for the coordination of efforts, the ALDCC announced plans for a march of massive proportions for the date of Saturday May 27, 1972. The original May 25 founding day of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) had always been observed as the worldwide day of African solidarity; however, the ALDCC had chosen May 27 as the day for the ALD demonstration because it was a Saturday and it was expected more participants would be able to participate on the weekend versus a week day. The ALD press conference at MXLU was capitalized on as a critical opportunity that the ALDCC could seize to convey the intentions of the committee. "Calling out to people of African descent around the world, including the 30 million in the United States, 10 million in the Caribbean, 50-60 million in South and Central America, one million in Canada, one

million in Pacifica and 400 million on the continent a plea for world-wide African Unity was made.”<sup>2</sup>

The press conference, which was covered by SOBU’s press organ, *The African World*, provided coverage and an in-depth article on the ALDCC gathering at MXLU. The meeting, which brought together a diverse membership to collate the ALD activities, included activist personalities from a wide range of Black organizations. At MXLU for the ALD press conference were Lucius Walker of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Development (IFCO); Sophia LaRusso from the Coalition of Concerned Black Americans; Doug Moore of the Washington, D.C. Black United Front; Kwadlo Olu Akpan of the Pan-Africanist Congress, USA; Jasper Hill of Washington, D.C.; Joe Waller, from Junta of Militant Organizations; Tanya Russel of Berkeley, CA.; Ron Daniels of the Mid-West Regional Coalition; Inez Reid of the Black Women’s Foundation; Rosie Douglas of Montréal, Canada; Erica Huggins of the Black Panther Party; Nelson Johnson of SOBU and Owusu Sadaukai of MXLU in Greensboro. Sadaukai, the MXLU head and ALDCC chairman who founded and spearheaded leadership of the ALD event commented that,

We are here today...on behalf of a new breed of concerned Africans ‘pledge this in memory of Martin Delaney, Alexander Crummel, Chaka Zulu, Nat Turner, Sojourner Truth, Sundiata, Martin Luther King Jr., Harriet Tubman, Dingana, Denmark Vesey, Marcus Garvey, Matabele and Malcolm X: That in solidarity with the African Liberation Freedom Fighters, we will work and struggle, learn and teach, preach and fight—until Mother Africa once again belongs to the Africans—at home and abroad.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> “May 27 Solidarity Observances: African Liberation Day Set,” *The African World*, April 1, 1972.; James Garrett, “A Historical Sketch: The Sixth Pan-African Congress,” *Black Scholar* (March, 1975).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

In the Washington, D.C. ALDCC offices for the ALD, the efforts for mobilizing were not short of the activity that took place in Greensboro. Coming off of a two-day conference on the activities and relationship of the United States and South Africa, the momentum and awareness of the African Liberation Struggles was increasing its public appeal amongst stateside Black folks. The D.C. conference, which attracted more than three-hundred participants, explored the potential avenues of engagement available for “ways in which concerned persons and groups in this country could provide support of various kinds of African Liberation Movements.”<sup>4</sup> Days afterward, the Washington, D.C. staff of the ALDCC congregated at the Church Center for United Nations for a press conference where Amiri Baraka announced plans for the ALD demonstration in D.C. At the press conference, Baraka ensured the press that the demonstrations of the ALD gathering would place its targeted emphasis on the disdain that Black people had for America’s imperialist foreign policy toward African states.<sup>5</sup>

The coordination efforts of the Congress of Afrikan People (CAP) were made largely possible because of the relationship forged by MXLU and SOBU, who were instrumental in contacting CAP leaders early in those talks. Because of these efforts, the major Pan-Africanist organizations agreed to give African Liberation Day (ALD) 1972 the full backing needed to guarantee the event’s success. The enlistment of CAP aided greatly in helping to solidify support of many amongst Black elected officials. In addition to the relationship forged with CAP for the ALD mobilization efforts, IFCO

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<sup>4</sup> Blacks Mobilize for African Liberation, *The Washington Post*, April 1, 1972, B5.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

continued to provide the much needed financial assistance necessary to guarantee that the efforts of the ALDCC came to fruition.<sup>6</sup>

As a Black student/youth organization, SOBU's participation in the ALD mass mobilization efforts was vital for the politicization of Black college youth. The ability of SOBU to mobilize Black student support became a critical attribute due to the broad organizing potential of the Black student organization. With SOBU's expanded membership that operated from the national base down to the effective managerial effectiveness of the state and local chapters, it became more than essential for the fraternal coalition of MXLU and SOBU to become the forerunner of mobilization efforts for the intended success of ALD. The apparent organizational improvement of SOBU was even more noticeable only a month shy of the planned ALD event as the organization converged for an important SOBU meeting in the spring of '72.

On April 19, 1972, SOBU held its first National Assembly, a first of its kind for the sole purpose of the national core of the organization converging for furtherance of the organization's political ideology. Those SOBU members in attendance at the assembly were the more seasoned veterans of the organization who had worked in either a regional or state component of the organization. "The relatively high level of political development of the group combined with a general clarity of purpose enabled sound and serious discussion and planning from beginning to end."<sup>7</sup> The assembly was also an opportunity for SOBU's national officials to receive regional reports on the activities related to food-buying clubs, community service centers and the Pan-African Medical

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<sup>6</sup> Komozi Woodard, *A Nation Within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones) & Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 175.

<sup>7</sup> "SOBU Holds First National Assembly," *The African World*, May 9, 1972, 1.

Programs that were taking place. The conference also provided an opportunity to further the structural efficiency of administrative work taking place by amending the national governing board by establishing a Central Committee. SOBU's Central Committee would be responsible for meeting "once monthly to evaluate the overall development of SOBU, do the necessary planning and make necessary decisions between the quarterly meetings of the Governing Council."<sup>8</sup> The conference was critical for SOBU's improving its organizational structure that later become an important facet in the impending mobilization efforts needed for African Liberation Day 1972. The SOBU national configuration provided the necessary campus and community infrastructure and networking capabilities needed to inform SOBU's national student membership. In addition, the promotion of the mass event aided as a political education tool for those Black students who were on the fringes of participating in the domestic Pan-Africanist movement.

SOBU further displayed the organization's show of solidarity for ALD through the Black student group's agreement to make the ALD demonstration a tribute to Dr. Kwame Nkrumah who had just recently died on April 27, just a little over a week after the SOBU National Assembly Conference. SOBU "joined with the ALDCC and sent out a nationwide appeal for Black people in the Western Hemisphere to make African Liberation Day a successful tribute to Dr. Nkrumah."<sup>9</sup> Nkrumah, who was largely acknowledged for his major influences throughout the Pan-Africanist world and as an ideologue of both MXLU and SOBU was a figurehead of Pan-Africanism throughout the Black Diaspora as he became the first president of the Republic of Ghana. Prior to the

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>9</sup> "SOBU Joins to Make ALD Tribute to Nkrumah", *The African World*. May 9, 1972. 14.



ideological evolution of the 1960s Black Power Movement into Pan-Africanism, Dr. Nkrumah's writings on Black Power and the Black Liberation Movement became synonymous in student-activist circles along with the recordings and writings of Malcolm X, Robert F. Williams, Frantz Fanon, Julius Nyejere, and Amilcar Cabral. Regarding the emerging post-1966 Black Power movement, Dr. Nkrumah posited in his 1968 seminal work *The Spectre of Black Power*,

What is Black Power? I see it in the United States as part of the vanguard of world revolution against capitalism, imperialism and neo colonialism which have enslaved, exploited and oppressed peoples everywhere, and against which the masses of the world are now revolting. Black Power is part of the world rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor, of the exploiter against the exploiter. It operates throughout the African continent, in North and South America, the Caribbean, wherever Africans and people of African descent live. It is linked with Pan African struggle for unity on the African continent, and with all those who strive to establish a socialist society.<sup>10</sup>

As a proponent of the tenets of Black Power, Nkrumah aided in internationalizing the concepts of Black Power for an expression that transcended the boundaries of U.S. domesticity to align the struggles of American Black folks with the plight of imperialism that all peoples of African descent were forced to struggle against. Nkrumah, who dedicated the aforementioned seminal work to the memories of Ernesto Che Guevara, Ben Barka, and Malcolm X, was well aware of the reciprocal influences of Pan-Africanism between the African continent and the United States.<sup>11</sup> Much of the revolutionary fervor around the impact of Nkrumah extended from the pride of Ghana receiving its independence in 1957 and displaying the revolutionary potential inherent in the African peoples throughout the Diaspora.

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<sup>10</sup> Kwame Nkrumah, *The Spectre of Black Power* (London: Panaf Books Limited, 1968), 10-11.

<sup>11</sup> Yuri Smertin, *Kwame Nkrumah* (New York: International Publishers, 1987), 156-158.

Equally if not more important than Nkrumah's aforementioned position on the ideology of Black Power as a vehicle for political and social change was his influence as a historic catalyst for the impending 1972 ALD demonstration to be held in Washington, D.C. The legacy of the 1972 ALD was born from the liberation struggle of the newly independent Ghana over which Nkrumah became head of state in 1958. "As early as April of 1958, Nkrumah had organized the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference of Independent African States, attended by representatives from Egypt, Ghana, Sudan, Libya, Tunisia, Liberia, Morocco, and Ethiopia."<sup>12</sup> While at the conference, these eight independent African countries had pledged to work towards liberating the entire continent of Africa. From the conference, the delegates declared on the day of the pledge, April 15 to be identified as "African Freedom Day," in commemoration each year of the progression "of the liberation movement, and to symbolize the determination of the people of Africa to free themselves from foreign domination and exploitation."<sup>13</sup> This day became an observed public holiday in Ghana through Nkrumah's work and furthered the continental motivations for liberation. Nkrumah's prediction of the potential of Pan-Africanism was later manifested through the increase of liberated African countries between the years of 1958 and 1963 and the founding to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 to symbolize the potential impact that African solidarity could have on Black students on both the African continent and in the U.S.<sup>14</sup>

This potential became evident in the work produced by Black youth and students in the United States by student groups such as SOBU and the institution of MXLU.

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<sup>12</sup> Eric S. Packham, *Africa in War and Peace* (New York: Nova Publishers, 2004), 171-172.

<sup>13</sup> "50 Years of African Liberation Day!: A Victory for the People," *African Liberation Day '08: Presented by the All-African People's Revolutionary Party*, 1, 11.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.; Packham, *Africa in War and Peace*.

Furthering the spirit of the impending ALD demonstration, SOBU members Mark Smith and Florence Tate provided an outlook that reflected the sentiment of many Black people who had begun to adopt an unapologetic temperament around their new cultural awareness and freedom. Stating in a very 'matter of fact' tone for the press activities around the impending ALD '72, Smith and Tate noted, "Just as Israel has a constituency here (among American Jews), so does southern Africa (among American Blacks)."<sup>15</sup> Smith and Tate added that the drive of the African Liberation Day efforts were to aid in heightening the awareness of U.S. Black people to the atrocities and exploitation taking place in Africa. According to SOBU officials, the information on Africa and the struggles on the continent were not as well received in terms of factual information needed for American Blacks to begin to construct a more mass-based following and assist with a variety of liberation organizations that existed. To rank and file Black people in the States, the liberation struggles may have existed in their minds because of mere surface level propagation; however, according to Smith and Tate, "they know little of the armed struggle against that hateful system. Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau are little more than exotic sounding names."<sup>16</sup>

Adding to its efforts to increase the political awareness on the activities surrounding the continent, the ALD demonstration also had the targeted objective of building a mass-based political block of Black people in the United States. The organizers of the ALD demonstration hoped that the results of the event would influence policy stateside and eventually carry the level of influence in Africa as the American Jew had done on the policy in the Middle East. Additional aims of the demonstration

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<sup>15</sup> "Awareness of Africa," *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, April 12, 1972, A19.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

included the continued protest of the importation of Rhodesian chrome, military shipments to South Africa and recrimination of U.S.' economic and political cooperation with the racist Apartheid regime of South Africa.<sup>17</sup> SOBU and the ALDCC's concerted efforts in Washington, D.C., converged to include K-12 schools citywide in the awareness of Pan-Africanism around the mass political gathering. Then Washington, D.C. School Board President, former SNCC chairman and local ALDCC committee member, Marion Barry asked "organizers of the May 27<sup>th</sup> demonstration be allowed to speak at assemblies and distribute literature in city schools."<sup>18</sup> This action caught obvious backlash due to a previous charge from several congressmen and the Nixon administration accusing Barry and the several school board members of using children of the D.C. area as "political pawns." On behalf of the ALDCC, Barry commented that, "the request of the Liberation Day organizers should not be interpreted as wanting to give a political point of view, but giving the facts of the situation."<sup>19</sup> At a planning meeting in Washington, D.C. for the ALD activities, SOBU representative Tim Thomas asked that the week be declared as "Southern Africa Week" and that K-12 teachers citywide use the time as an opportunity to educate students on the conditions of Africa plagued by colonialism and imperialism.<sup>20</sup> This request by the SOBU official was reflective of Black students efforts' to make ALD not only a success but also to begin the edification process of anti-imperialism that emanated from the phenomenon of Pan-Africanism.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> "Schools Asked to Aid African Liberation Day," *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, May 4, 1972, B6.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

As the mass demonstration drew closer, the ALDCC's anti-imperialist stance transcended the conjecture of the committee's position statements to become points of emphasis that the mass demonstration would address on May 27. The ALDCC expressed to the press that the South African and Portuguese Embassies and Rhodesian Information Office would be focal points for the ALD marches taking place that day. Publicity and support for ALD '72 increased from press coverage to a televised panel discussions with members of ALDCC. Owusu Sadaukai held interviews on the local Washington, D.C. television show 'Metro-View' in which he further discussed the projected impact of the upcoming ALD demonstration and how he and the ALDCC foresaw the event as a potential vehicle to further involve Black Americans in Africa's liberation struggles.<sup>21</sup>

As a show of domestic solidarity and progressive support of the ideological maturation of the movement, ALD was preceded by a two-day conference at Howard University called by the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). Named the African-American National Conference on Africa, the forum attracted approximately four hundred delegates to the Howard University Campus to identify some critical procedural outlooks on how Blacks in America could begin to engage the problems of the continent. The CBC mailed out some nine thousand invitations, and due to space restrictions, the organizers could only accept the first four hundred persons of various organizations and institutional affiliation. The organizers designed the conference workshops as planning meetings to address issues of Africa while hoping to yield tangible results through the strategy sessions. Workshop participation for the delegates included sessions on

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<sup>21</sup> "African Liberation Day Plans Set," *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, May 10, 1972, B3.; "TV Highlights," *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, May 21, 1972, G9.; "TV Highlights," *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, May 21, 1972, TC13.; "Television," *The Washington Post, Times Herald* May 24, 1972, C11.

legislative and judicial strategies on U.S. divestment in South Africa and a trade embargo on Portugal and South Africa. Another significant workshop aggressively called for a boycott of Gulf Oil, which had extensive profit-based operations in Angola. A substantial portion of Gulf Oil's profits went to the Portuguese government that at the time was fighting the insurrection efforts of the indigenous Angolan population.<sup>22</sup>

Congressman Charles Diggs, a democrat from Michigan and chairman of the conference, stated that the conference "represented an extension of the National Black Political Convention held in Gary, Indiana in March"<sup>23</sup> at which time some estimated six thousand Black people met to formulate a political agenda. Diggs also commented that, "...one of the immediate effects of the conference is to advance legislation he supports that repeals authorization for the United States importation of Rhodesian Chrome."<sup>24</sup> He insisted that "the conference represents the fruition of an 'uphill battle' to have the problems of Black Africans seriously addressed by Black Americans. A couple of years ago you wouldn't have had a conference like this that would have drawn flies."<sup>25</sup>

Also voicing vehement disdain for the imperialist involvement of the US in Africa's demise was Dr. Ralph Abernathy. While the CBC held the two-day conference in Washington, D.C. in support of ALD, Dr. Abernathy made his presence felt at a meeting of the United Nations on Racism and Apartheid in New York City. Abernathy,

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<sup>22</sup> "African Liberation Day Plans Set," *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, May 10, 1972, B3.; "Blacks Set Parley on Africa Aid," *The Washington Post, Times Herald* May 24, 1972, A29.; "Africans and Black Americans Open Conference in Washington," *New York Times*, May 26, 1972, 3.; "African Conference Asks Sanctions on White Rule," *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, May 27, 1972, A26.

<sup>23</sup> "African Conference Asks Sanctions on White Rule," *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, May 1972, A26.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

who held joint positions as both President of SCLC and also Chairman of the World Peace Council's on Racism, stated,

There is today a crisis in Southern Africa which should have the urgent attention of the United Nations, of all people and organizations seeking a world of peace with justice, and of the individual nations of the world. It is a crisis of racist oppression of the peoples of color in Southern Africa by the minority white governments of Rhodesia, South Africa and so called Portuguese colonies. It is a crisis of racist oppression openly aided and abetted by political, military and economic interests of some major world powers, including the United States. One hesitates to use the word 'blood bath' or 'race war', but one must face the reality that people cannot forever be subjected to such unspeakable brutality and oppression as exists in Southern Africa. Neither the people color in those lands nor their supporters in other countries can be expected to submit those conditions much longer.<sup>26</sup>

As a close confidante of the late Dr. King, and veteran leader and organizer of the Civil Rights Movement, Abernathy played a critical role in assisting in organizing and planning of the ALDCC. This support was further displayed by Abernathy's three critical propositions to the UN that included: 1) declare May 27 as African Liberation Day 2) condemn the weakening of the embargo on Rhodesia and 3) relate to liberated zones in Southern Africa as underdeveloped countries eligible for assistance from the UN's specialized agencies.<sup>27</sup>

African Liberation Day 1972:  
"WE ARE AN AFRICAN PEOPLE!!!"

The historical legacy of the imminent 1972 African Liberation Day had its roots in the work of Kwame Nkrumah as mentioned earlier. This trajectory was later brought to execution by the development of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) when the new organization comprised of thirty-one African heads renamed Nkrumah's African

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<sup>26</sup> "Abernathy Condemns Racism In Speech At United Nations," *Atlanta Daily World*, March 28, 1972.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

Freedom Day into “African Liberation Day” and also changed the commemoration day to May 25.<sup>28</sup> As the Civil Rights Movement progressed in the United States thus providing a transnational impetus for critical libratory action throughout the Pan-African world, many historical occurrences took place. In the years following the inception of the OAU’s establishment of the ALD, the world came to witness “the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X; The CIA-engineered overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah; the U.S. invasion of Cuba; U.S. efforts to crush liberation movements in Asia, Egypt, Syria, and Jordan; the overthrow of the Democratic Party of Guinea; the U.S. invasion of Grenada; the U.S. bombing of Libya, and the overthrow of Thomas Sankara in Burkina Faso.”<sup>29</sup> These happenings contributed largely to setbacks in the progression of Pan-Africanism’s momentum which in turn saw a lessened international awareness and participation in ALD activity than the OAU’s 1963 reconstitution of the libratory day began by Nkrumah.<sup>30</sup> However, by 1966 as Black Power seemingly replaced the Civil Rights Movement in America, the work, travel and organizing of student groups such as SNCC and PASOA aided in providing a more heightened awareness of Pan-Africanism as the next logical evolutionary phase for the ideological concept of Black Nationalism as a symbolic form of liberation for people of African descent worldwide. In addition, the revolutionary component of ‘study’ became a critical requirement for the reinforcement of African liberation on a theoretical and practical level. Black students and activists of various degrees of libratory cognition regarding the African struggle began to consume

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<sup>28</sup> “50 Years of African Liberation Day!: A Victory for the People,” *African Liberation Day '08: Presented by the All-African People’s Revolutionary Party*, 1, 11.; Jerry Gafio Watts, *Amiri Baraka: The Politics and Art of a Black Intellectual* (New York: NYU Press, 2001), 388.

<sup>29</sup> “50 Years of African Liberation Day!: A Victory for the People,” *African Liberation Day '08: Presented by the All-African People’s Revolutionary Party*, 1, 11.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.



the published works of: Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral, Julius K. Nyerere, Sekou Touré and Samora Michel. This translated into an aggressive undertaking of the tenets of Pan-Africanism which served as a backdrop for the work and actions of groups like MXLU, SOBU, CAP, and PASOA in the early 1970s that eventually led to the social and political intentions of ALD 1972.

On Saturday, May 27, 1972, the ALDCC's organizational efforts began to materialize as ALD demonstrators converged in the domestic and international cities/provinces of Washington D.C.; San Francisco, California; Toronto, Canada; Grenada, Dominica and Antigua, West (African) Indies. The event was highly touted by ALDCC chairman and MXLU head, Owusu Sadaukai, as the largest demonstration of African solidarity throughout the Diaspora since the activity of Marcus Garvey and the UNIA of the 1920s. In Washington, D.C. alone, the organizers predicted an estimated 25-35,000 people would attend the day's events with the majority of demonstrators traveling from the Midwest, Northeastern and Southern regions of the U.S. to participate in the march and other proceedings.

The initial line of the ALD march in D.C began assembling at 9:30am in Malcolm X Park (which had been named by the Black residents of the city just four years prior to the march) where convoys of buses, cars and walkers also continuously poured into the park to begin the historic day of activity. Leaving at approximately 11:30 a.m., the procession was led by the then seventy-four year old Queen Mother Moore, Owusu Sadaukai, Amiri Baraka and his expectant wife, Don Lee, and other ALD presenters and organizers. In orderly fashion, the march participants chanted throughout the march, "Power to the People, Black, Black Power to the African People," and repeated the phrase

throughout the demonstration. The march began with approximately 9,000 Black folks who walked a three-hour route “over concrete, grass and dirt to show their support for the liberation struggles in Southern Africa and to denounce U.S. complicity in the oppression of African people in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Angola, Mozambique, South Africa (Anzania) and Southwest Africa (Namibia).”<sup>31</sup> The route included a trek through one of the poorest neighborhoods in the city and then through Embassy Row where at the Portuguese Embassy the crowd began to shout the phrase, “Portuguese, Get Out of Africa!” The procession also made stops at the Rhodesian Information Center, the South African Embassy and the United States State Department “where protestors read aloud statements of indictment which variably condemned Western imperialist powers and illuminated their direct contributions of economic exploitation and political disenfranchisement throughout Africa.”<sup>32</sup>

At the Portuguese Embassy, prepared statements were read by Roy Innis of CORE and Ohio activist Ron Daniels of the Midwest Regional Black Coalition that charged Portugal with being a murderous and exploitive government state that continued to siphon material, natural and human resources from the indigenous population of Mozambique. Innis of CORE accused the Portuguese government with “crimes both historical and current, amounting to acts of war against Africa, including: slaughter of innocent people, in the states now known as Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau.”<sup>33</sup> As the marchers continued to wind through Embassy Row and levy indictments against the identified imperialist governments, the procession gained an increase in spirit and

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<sup>31</sup> “ALD March Orderly and Enthusiastic,” *The African World*, June 10, 1972.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.; “12,000 Blacks March to Support Africa,” *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, May 28, 1972.

<sup>33</sup> “ALD March Orderly and Enthusiastic,” *The African World*, June 10, 1972, 9.

momentum. Rev. Douglas Moore spoke vigorously to the crowd assembled at the South African Embassy.

Joined by Rev. Lucius Walker of IFCO, the two lambasted the South African government for its role in the genocide and mistreatment of Azanians through the continued subjection of slave wages and subhuman working conditions for the indigenous miners of the region. The working conditions forced on the Africans displaced many of the workers away from their homes and families for long periods of time. In most cases, the workers received harsh treatment while being forced to work under inhuman conditions for slave wages. Moore and Walker also spoke extensively on the role of the South African government during the 1960 Sharpeville massacre. The fervent words of Moore included the indictment of imperialist forces which had aided South Africa in its exploitation of the indigenous population including the actions of West Germany and the Israeli government, both of which had provided nuclear weapons to South Africa while the United States continued to trade with the country under the Nixon Administration.<sup>34</sup>

The diverse representation of Black Nationalist groups continued to march through Embassy Row to the beat of conga drums provided by a truck featuring the musicianship of conga players from the Friendship House in Southeast Washington, D.C. Arriving at the Rhodesian Information Center, Inez Reid of Washington, D.C. and Ruwa Chiri of Chicago's United Nations for One Motherland International provided scathing statements on the condemnation of the settler state. The two speakers stressed two critical points: 1) Rhodesia's decided use of bio-chemical warfare against the indigenous

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<sup>34</sup> Cedric Johnson, "From Anti-Imperialism to Sectarianism: The African Liberation Support Committee and Black Power Radicals," *New Political Science* 25, no. 4 (2003): 487-488.; "10,000 Protest on South Africa," *New York Times*, May 28, 1972, 3.

African population that had resisted the oppressive Rhodesian settler state with the intention and hopes of liberating their lands and 2) Rhodesia's inhumane treatment of Africans and their systematic use of concentration camps and unjust methods of incarceration of native Africans.<sup>35</sup>

At the U.S. State Department, "Les Campbell (Jitu Weusi) of the EAST cultural center in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn and Dowlu Gene Locke of Houston's Africans in America for Black Liberation outlined the extent of U.S. collusion with the white minority groups."<sup>36</sup> In following the spirit of the conference convened by the CBC at Howard, Weusi and Locke issued an indictment against the United States government for its importation of chrome into Rhodesia. Locke also stated that the U.S. was guilty of "filtering arms and chemical warfare agents to Portugal through NATO and private U.S. arms companies, that Portugal can continue its colonial wars against the people of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau."<sup>37</sup>

As the march progressed throughout the streets of Washington D.C and to the various embassies and information centers, the initial participation numbers (approximately 9,000 marchers) increased exponentially to around 15,000 people. One reason for this was due to the continuation of buses arriving at various locations of the march. The convoy finally arrived at the Sylvan Park Theater for the conclusion of the massive rally, which was in close proximity to the Washington Monument. Sylvan Theater was renamed Lumumba Square in the spirit of the assassinated African leader

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<sup>35</sup> "Blacks protest South Africa: 35,000 join rally," *Chicago Daily Defender*. May 30, 1972.

<sup>36</sup> Cedric Johnson, "From Anti-Imperialism to Sectarianism: The African Liberation Support Committee and Black Power Radicals," *New Political Science* 25, no. 4 (2003)

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.; "12,000 Blacks March to Support Africa", *The Washington Post, Times Herald*. May 28, 1972.; "ALD March Orderly and Enthusiastic," *The African World*, June 10, 1972.

Patrice Lumumba and in keeping with the establishment of the ALD's Pan-Africanist thrust of the day. Starting an hour off of schedule at 4:00 p.m., the stage and speakers platform was readied for the notable activists from a cross-section of socio-political ideologies but who all intersected fundamental Black Nationalism at some point of their ideation. The speakers provided the crowd with edifying words of liberation, an analysis of Africa's importance and their projected placement of what role that an 'African' ideation plays for the future of Blacks throughout the Diaspora.<sup>38</sup>

Elaine Brown of the Black Panther Party remarked during her stirring speech that, "I think that this is the most beautiful site that I have seen in my life" and "...the basis of our struggle is love."<sup>39</sup> Stokely Carmichael sent his speech to the ALD gathering to be read by Cleveland Sellers. Carmichael's speech affirmed that, "Our demonstration today is a very important one, because it is trying to establish a clear Pan-African climate in the U.S. It is thus imperative that our political thinking must be crystal clear. This is not a civil rights march. It is a Pan-African demonstration."<sup>40</sup> Imamu Amiri Baraka, chair of the Congress of African People (CAP) and ideologue of Unified New Ark, reminded the audience of the importance of political awareness and social mobility that could only be attained through the construction and implementation of a Black Political Party. Baraka instilled the need to move beyond rhetoric and conjecture toward the practicality of a sustainable political structure that would aid in the spiritual and tangible transformation of Black folks in the U.S. He insisted that the political vehicle must hold the capabilities

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<sup>38</sup> "ALD March Orderly and Enthusiastic," *The African World*, June 10, 1972, 9.

<sup>39</sup> *Black Unity: Breaking the Chains of Oppression (1972 ALD Documentary)*, DVD-ROM, (Produced, Directed and Written by Roy Campanella Jr. and Henry Johnson.) Film narrated by Fred Thomas, 1972, and is in author's possession. A copy of the ALD documentary was provided by Dr. Howard Fuller from his private collection.

<sup>40</sup> "African Liberation Day Speakers," *The African World*. June 10, 1972, 11.

of electing Black officials and be able to address the needs of housing, construction of schools as well as provide health and nutrition education. Most important, Baraka implored the people to work to bring their realities to fruition. In his speech, he emphatically reminded the crowd, “KAZI, KAZI, KAZI, KAZI (work)...which is the Blackest of all!”<sup>41</sup>

The closing speech of the day was provided by MXLU’s Owusu Sadaukai who was also the initiator and chair of the ALD demonstration. Sadaukai provided the audience with sentiments that expressed the angst and frustration of Black struggle in the 1970s since Blacks had been challenged with the cry of ‘Black Power’ in 1966. He informed the crowd of the general resistance that he received when he proposed the idea to hold a mass demonstration to bring awareness to the hearts and minds of Black folks about the plight of Africans throughout the Diaspora and what African Liberation struggles should and must mean to Black folks in the United States. Sadaukai mentioned that the resistance did not stem from the masses of Black folks but from their so-called “leadership”; the mere fact of the size of the demonstration spoke even greater volumes as to the temperament of Black people and their thoughts on African liberation.<sup>42</sup> A significant portion of Sadaukai’s speech to the audience went as follows:

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<sup>41</sup> *Black Unity: Breaking the Chains of Oppression (1972 ALD Documentary)*, DVD-ROM, (Produced, Directed and Written by Roy Campanella Jr. and Henry Johnson.) Film narrated by Fred Thomas, 1972, and is in author’s possession. A copy of the ALD documentary was provided by Dr. Howard Fuller from his private collection.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 50,000 Demonstrate Support: ALD International Success,” *The African World*, June 10, 1972, ii, no. 17, 11.

Look around! Look around...and see brutalization! Look around and see that in spite of the beast we still stand! Look around and see the potential of the Black man. Look around and see that we represent the non-white world which is the majority on this earth. Look around and see that our people are here to tell the world that 'Everythang is gon be everythang for the Black man!' But let us be clear brothers and sisters that the road ahead will be difficult. We will not be free simply because one day we came to Washington D.C. This demonstration must be understood for what it is, one small tactic...one more thing that is going to heighten the level of our struggle. We are here today brothers and sisters to show our support and solidarity for our people who are engaged in armed struggle against our enemies in Southern Africa. We are here today to give witness to that struggle...to emphasize the legitimacy of that struggle. We are here today to say to those brothers and sisters, "Press on!" We are here today to say to the white ruling class of this country and the rest of the world, "Niggers ain't niggers anymore!" We are here to say that we will no longer engage in discussions about violence and non-violence. We are here to say that there is only one relevant discussion for the Black man in this world and that is a discussion about our complete liberation. So that as we move to and this day, it must be understood by all of us that this effort is just the beginning. We must see that the torch of struggle is now in our hands. We must see that our struggle must be fought with everything at our disposal- that in all cases, it must be fought collectively. So fight on FRELIMO. So fight on MPLA. Fight on PAIGC. Fight on ZAMU. Fight on ZAPU. Fight on FROLIZI. Fight on Black people of Columbus (Ohio). Fight on Black people of Wilmington, North Carolina. Fight on Black people of Cario, Illinois. Fight on Black people of Washington D.C. We remember you Rap! We have not forgotten you Rap! We remember you Rap! Fight on Brother Imari (Obadele)! Fight on you sisters in prison! Fight on Black people! Cause we are an African People! We are an African people! We are an African people! We are an African people! We are and African people!!!<sup>43</sup>

Sadaukai gave an invigorating rendition of famous segments of Frederick

Douglass' "Without Struggle/No Freedom" speech originally delivered in 1857 on the significance of freedom in the West Indies as a passionate expression that symbolized the seriousness and critical implications of ALD 1972.<sup>44</sup> After quoting the prominent

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Frederick Douglass, 1857 Source: Douglass, Frederick. [1857] (1985). "The Significance of Emancipation in the West Indies," Speech, Canandaigua, New York, August 3, 1857; collected in pamphlet by author. In *The Frederick Douglass Papers*. Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews. Volume 3: 1855-63. John W. Blassingame, ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 204.

historical figure, Sadaukai ended his speech with another call and response to the crowd now over 20,000, all of them chanting over and over, "We are an African People!"<sup>45</sup>

In California's Bay area of San Francisco, ALD took place at Raymond-Kimball Park which the Bay Area ALDCC renamed "Dubois Savannah" similar to their counterparts in Washington, D.C. whose event would take place two days later. On May 25, the West Coast organizers and participants conducted a rally at the Portuguese Consulate. Their culminating activities in San Francisco included a mass demonstration directed by California state assemblyman Willie Brown.<sup>46</sup> In addition, SOBU National Chairman, Nelson Johnson, activist and scholar, Walter Rodney, Bobby Seale of the Black Panther Party, activist-intellectual Angela Davis, Reverend Charles Koen and Gary, Indiana Mayor Richard G. Hatcher addressed a crowd of about 10,000 ALD supporters. Johnson spoke at length on the continued need for Black people to foster the already developing relationship with Africa. Johnson also provided the crowd with words of wisdom on the significance of ALD versus the potentially evident cooptation of a variety of aspects of the domestic Pan-Africanist movement of the 1970s. Speaking on the co-modification of revolutionary notions around Blackness, Johnson stated that, "it is important to understand that even those who are today espousing the freedom of Africa will end up pimping the question of Africa, for their own selfish bourgeois interest."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> 50,000 Demonstrate Support: ALD International Success," *The African World*, ii, no. 17., June 10, 1972; *Black Unity: Breaking the Chains of Oppression (1972 ALD Documentary)*, DVD-ROM, (Produced, Directed and Written by Roy Campanella Jr. and Henry Johnson.) Film narrated by Fred Thomas, 1972, and is in author's possession. A copy of the ALD documentary was provided by Dr. Howard Fuller from his private collection.

<sup>46</sup> Cedric Johnson, "From Anti-Imperialism to Sectarianism: The African Liberation Support Committee and Black Power Radicals," *New Political Science* 25, no. 4 (2003).

<sup>47</sup> "African Liberation Day Speakers," *The African World*, 10 (June 10, 1972), 11.; Signe Waller, *Love and Revolution a Political Memoir: People's History of the Greensboro Massacre Its Setting and Aftermath* (New York: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers Inc, 2002), 55.



Walter Rodney's speech to the ALD gatherers addressed the critical implications of ALD in the educational context that the historic gathering provided for those in attendance. Rodney spoke of how Blacks throughout the Diaspora suffered severely from a racial identity crisis and the mere fact that ALD had been pulled off successfully meant that Blacks throughout the Diaspora, especially in the West, had begun to reject assimilation and practices of acculturation that many groups who are 'othered' or marginalized in a Westernized context were forced to accept.<sup>48</sup> Rodney reminded the crowd that, "We are an African People," while he provided accounts of resistance by Africans in the areas of Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau. He also importantly stated that, "...I am not saying that identification is all, it is a process of struggle."<sup>49</sup> Bobby Seale of the Black Panther Party (BPP) spoke to the gathering on the history of the BPP's community involvement with the implementation of 'survival' programs and that if the racist actions of the police continued then the party would begin to institute a "free gun program to shoot for survival."<sup>50</sup>

In Toronto, ALD drew mass participation of an estimated three thousand Black people as a show of support for the transnational event. On Canadian soil, marchers of mostly West Indian heritage "marched past the French, British, Portuguese, US, South African, Israeli and Italian consulates in protest of colonialism and in solidarity of marchers elsewhere."<sup>51</sup> Toronto's ALD activities were held at Christie Park later

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<sup>48</sup> *Black Unity: Breaking the Chains of Oppression (1972 ALD Documentary)*, DVD-ROM, (Produced, Directed and Written by Roy Campanella Jr. and Henry Johnson.) Film narrated by Fred Thomas, 1972, and is in author's possession. A copy of the ALD documentary was provided by Dr. Howard Fuller from his private collection.

<sup>49</sup> "African Liberation Day Speakers," *The African World*, June 10, 1972, 11.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> <sup>51</sup> Cedric Johnson, "From Anti-Imperialism to Sectarianism: The African Liberation Support

renamed in the honor of the late Pan-Africanist, Marcus Garvey by the ALDCC of Toronto.<sup>52</sup> The Toronto ALDCC faction, which was coordinated largely by Rosie Douglas, included the participation and speeches of “Dr. Lew Sealy, Afro-Caribbean Movement, Leroy Butcher, Augustine Mogibe/ZANU, Hidippo, SWAPO; Joyce Squires, Director, Black Education Project (Toronto); Sonia Davis; Ed Brown (Rap’s Brother); Atsu Harley, Black Peoples Movement; Oliver Sampson, Afro-West Indian Organization; and Horace Campbell, Toronto ALD committee”<sup>53</sup>; former SNCC activist and lawyer Julian Bond and John Conyers. Reports from smaller demonstrations throughout the African/Caribbean Indies included demonstration sizes of approximately 8,000 in Antigua, 5,000 in Dominica and 2, 000 in Grenada.<sup>54</sup>

The aims and objectives of the 1972 ALD demonstration were exceedingly successful with regard to the service of education that was provided to the masses of Black people who pondered their potential role in Pan-Africanism from a U.S. perspective. More important was the concentrated efforts that were expended by post-secondary Black college students in the organizing efforts to bring the mass demonstration to fruition. Many of the student organizers were able to use the demonstration as not only a means of becoming politicized, but also as a point of departure to transport political education back to their respective campuses. Black students who were members of CAP, SOBU or affiliates of various BSUs nationwide were in the process of establishing chapters of the aforementioned organizations or

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Committee and Black Power Radicals,” *New Political Science* 25, 4 (2003).

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> “50,000 Demonstrate Support: ALD International Success,” *The African World*, June 10, 1972, ii, 17, 1.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

beginning the process of founding chapters of the ALD's newly established organization the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC), which emerged from the organizational structure and efforts of the ALDCC.<sup>55</sup>

Riding the ALD Wave of Momentum: MXLU,  
SOBU and the Founding of the  
African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC)

As the organizing efforts for ALD '72 increased in support and socio-political awareness, the funding efforts and controversy around MXLU persisted. During the early summer months of 1972, the Federation of Pan-African Educational Institutions head-quartered in Newark, New Jersey originally submitted a grant application to the General Convention Special Program (GCSP) of the Episcopal Church for \$862,000.00 to support four of the educational institutions of the Federation and the overall administration. Given critical consideration, the GCSP made a significant reduction of the Federation's original monetary request to \$299,398.00 to be divided and distributed in the following manner: \$75,000.00, MXLU; \$127,000, Chad School, Newark, New Jersey; \$45,000.00 Marcus Garvey School, Youngstown, Ohio; and \$53,800 for administrative use. GCSP staff also made the decision that the Federation's school in Monrovia, Liberia not be considered in the funding proposal.<sup>56</sup>

Due to MXLU's former funding issues with the Episcopal Church, the Newark, New Jersey diocese requested the consultation and information of Bishop Thomas A. Fraser on the activity and operations of MXLU. Fraser, who had remained at the

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<sup>55</sup> Search for a Vanguard: A Series of Anthologies Covering The Black Liberation Movement in the 1970's. SOBU-YOBU-FFM 1969-1976: Supportive Action for the SOBU Pan-African Medical Program, (Chicago, IL: People's College Press) 1-3.; Black Liberation Movement Since 1969, Unpublished Paper, 52-53, Dr. Abdul Alkalimat's private collection.

<sup>56</sup> "Malcolm X Asks \$75,000," *Greensboro Record*, June 20, 1972.; "Malcolm X Seeks \$75,000 Grant", *Carolina Peacemaker*, June 24, 1972.

epicenter of MXLU's previous 1969 funding controversy with the Episcopal Church, was well aware that the final decision for the new funding request originated from and would be made from Newark. However, due to the turmoil generated by the church membership over funding the independent Black University, the diocese took a proactive stance on the evaluations requested of Bishop Fraser. Because of the subjective atmosphere surrounding the assessment of MXLU, it was clear by press reports that Bishop Fraser's yet to be submitted review of MXLU would largely depend on the findings amassed by a local committee of Greensboro churchmen said to be the advisory body to Frazier and that had previously held an anti-MXLU sentiment stance on the 1969 funding issue. Bishop Fraser, who was anticipating a response by the MXLU family on the funding issue at hand, commented on MXLU's previous three years of campus existence and surrounding community involvement by implying that, "The only question facing us now is whether it (Malcolm X) has helped the poor and disadvantaged."<sup>57</sup>

In the week following, the Newark diocese received correspondence from Bishop Fraser on his findings that were accumulated by his advising task force on the matter. Fraser provided Bishop Stark, of the Newark, New Jersey diocese with a scathing report that provided the much needed influence and appropriation by the diocese in order to halt MXLU's funding drive in conjunction with the Federation of Pan-African Schools. According to Bishop Fraser's report, "We recognize that we were only asked for comments and observations; but if we had a veto, we would strongly exercise it against the Malcolm X request."<sup>58</sup> Fraser was sure to include in his report to Newark the unanimous decision of the Greensboro, North Carolina committee to oppose any funding

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> "Church May Refuse MXLU \$75,000 Plea," *Greensboro Record*, June 27, 1972.

to MXLU. His report also wrongly stated that MXLU had not developed any viable programs. One of Fraser's most deciding facets of his report was his identification of MXLU as being unaccommodating to whites. He cited how Howard Fuller (Owusu Sadaukai) had exclaimed that whites were not welcome on the MXLU campus and that the school's operations were clandestine. Because of this, further outward disdain towards MXLU was confirmed by the GCSP's final decision to award the requested funding to the other membership institutions of the Federation of Pan-African Educational Institutions who were included in the grant application with MXLU.<sup>59</sup>

In light of the Newark Episcopal diocese's decision against awarding funds to MXLU, Owusu Sadaukai and the MXLU family were unwavering in their responses to the accusations brought about by the bishops and other members of the Episcopal Church. Hence, MXLU dropped their bid in the Federation's general funding request to the GCSP. Sadaukai informed the press and other sources that "any continued effort to get funds would compromise the school's political beliefs, mainly that of working exclusively through Black –either individual or institutional—funding sources."<sup>60</sup> In addition, the MXLU family decided that it would be best to withdraw their funding bid to make sure that the other schools of the Federation received funding since the GCSP seemed adamant about their decision to only make MXLU suffer financially. However, the comments of Bishop Fraser and those who colluded in the opposition efforts did not

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.; "Church Delays Decision On MXLU Fund Request," *Greensboro Record*, June 30, 1972.; The MXLU funding issue caused enough controversy to attract the attention of the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, Rev. John E. Hines who called an informal meeting in New York on the funding request to the Federation of Pan-African Educational Institutions. Bishop later affirmed that the funding requests of the Chad School in Newark and the Marcus Garvey in Youngstown, Ohio, which were included in the grant application would not be affected by the dissenting opinion of North Carolina Screening Committee towards funding MXLU.

<sup>60</sup> "MXLU Ends Funding Bid," *Greensboro Record*, July 3, 1972.

go unaddressed. Sadaukai responded to comments regarding the MXLU's supposed lack of community involvement and charges of refusing to let whites have access to MXLU by saying that the statements were "probably the best example of arrogance and deceit of white people."<sup>61</sup> In an address directed to the charges levied by Bishop Fraser and others in conjunction as well as to the denial of funds, Owusu Sadaukai responded,

Did you talk with the mothers and fathers of the 19 children who for two years have been attending our Early Education Center free of charge? Did you talk with the young brothers who have been part of the Young African Warriors group? Did you talk with the people who buy eggs that come from the (Malcolm X) farm at saving of 75 cents to the dollar? Did you talk with the blind workers who have been coming to our community feast on New Years Eve where people bring their whole families instead of going out and getting drunk as the American tradition dictates? Did you talk with those people who have volunteered their time to help us because they believe in what we are doing? The bishop contends we are not dealing with the real problems of race and poverty. We contend that we are. It is our contention that the white controlled institutions, the white controlled courts, the white controlled corporations are the real problems for Black people. It is our position that only by developing alternative institutions can we truly begin to deal with real problems.<sup>62</sup>

Sadaukai admittedly said that MXLU was not doing enough; however, he asked the press, "but who is?" Because of the ordeal, the MXLU family geared up for creating funding opportunities and increasing the institution's efforts of raising its own financial support. The Episcopal Church funding ordeal prompted MXLU administration to go on a nationwide funding campaign to support the institution. According to Sadaukai, the school's projected funding ventures would begin with the formulation of local committee support and also an intended benefit for the school led by some prominent entertainers."<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.; "MXLU Withdraws Request For Episcopal Church Grant," *Greensboro Daily News*, July 4, 1972.

<sup>62</sup> "MXLU Ends Funding Bid," *Greensboro Record*, July 3, 1972.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

### Establishing the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC)

Even though the funding controversies of MXLU became an immediate order of business, the issue did not eclipse the organizing activity and inspirations of ALD. The efforts and organizational impact of the ALDCC became central in conversations amongst the Black activist community. The Black Nationalist coalitions brought together for the May 27 mass demonstration came under consideration for the establishment an organization that maintained the influence and collective respect of the masses of Black people. With the continuance of an organization like ALDCC came the hopes to carry on mass mobilization and socio-political libratory practices on a domestic and transnational level. For many of the ALD organizers, this was a natural progression even though the original plan was to disband after ALD. However, upon further dialogue with the ALDCC constituency, the general consensus was to capitalize on the ALD momentum and to begin to operationalize the obvious organizing potential to address the needs of Southern African struggles while working with existing organizations to address domestic needs. This apparent realization came about as ALDCC members at various national sites came more and more in contact with everyday working class Black folks who were suffering exploitation and degradation in the United States. These same Black folks that were adamant about assisting with the Pan-Africanist struggles were asking ALDCC organizers, "What about the problems here? Why Africa?"<sup>64</sup> These blatant queries added to the impending meeting on constructing such an organization to address these needs on a national and transnational level. Another serious issue that arose in the ALDCC was letting go of what many of them considered to be 'dead weight.' Many of

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<sup>64</sup> "ALD Committee Continues to Work," *The African World*, August 19, 1972, 14

the rank and file ALDCC organizers felt that those who were involved in the ALDCC who were politicians, “stars,” and Black Power celebrities did no actual productive ongoing work throughout the mobilizing process for ALD 1972.<sup>65</sup>

Within this understanding, a seven-person planning group convened in Chicago, Illinois on July 6, 1972 to call a meeting for the purpose of constructing an organization of the aforementioned proportions.<sup>66</sup> A few weeks later on July 26, 1972 a meeting took place at Malcolm X Liberation University that called together the “Nationalists and Pan-Africanists who served as the core group for organizing and demonstration plus some new people (students and community activists) who had been active at the local levels in bringing people to the demonstration.”<sup>67</sup> The meeting was chaired by Owusu Sadaukai of MXLU and consisted of nationwide attendance “by some forty-five invited representatives of local African Liberation Day Coordinating Committees in Berkeley, Chicago, Dayton and Columbus, Ohio, Memphis, Boston, New York, Newark, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Richmond, Greensboro, Durham, Atlanta, Gainesville, Florida, Houston and other areas.”<sup>68</sup>

The collective formerly known as the African Liberation Day Coordinating Committee (ALDCC) took on the name the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC) and used the meeting as an opportunity to benefit from the energy of communal operation. These acts signaled that many of these staunch activists were able to put

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.; “ALSC and the Black Liberation Movement by Revolutionary Workers League,” *The Black Power Movement*, 27. Amiri Baraka from Black Arts to Black Radicalism. Reel 4 No. 00991, microfilm.

<sup>66</sup> “ALD Committee Continues to Work,” *The African World*, August 19, 1972, 14.

<sup>67</sup> “ALD Committee Continues to Work,” *The African World*, August 19, 1972, 14; “ALSC and the Black Liberation Movement by Revolutionary Workers League,” *The Black Power Movement*, 27. Amiri Baraka from Black Arts to Black Radicalism. Reel 4 No. 00991. microfilm.

<sup>68</sup> “ALD Committee Continues to Work,” *The African World*, August 19, 1972, 14.



certain ideological differences aside (if only for that one meeting) for the sake of bringing the ALSC to fruition. From this, the organization began the process of constructing a comprehensive political statement as well as a set of governing principles to direct the aims and objectives of ALSC's activity. From the initial meeting, the committee adopted the following five governing principles:

1. To provide the financial, material and moral support to the Liberation Struggles now being fought on the African Continent against the remaining European colonial governments.
2. To inform our brothers and sisters in the U.S., Canada, and the Caribbean of the nature and the importance of the Liberation Struggles and to emphasize our relationship to the overall struggles of African people against racism and imperialism.
3. To inform our brothers and sisters on the African Continent about our position on the nature of the struggles in the Western Hemisphere with a view toward cultivating a reciprocal relationship
4. To work for the removal of the military, economic, and political support of white minority ruled governments in Southern Africa.
5. To provide the public support and encouragement for all African governments which aid the Southern African Liberation Movements.<sup>69</sup>

The ALSC meeting also addressed the completed ALD film, "Breaking the Chains of Oppression," and the upcoming August 2 trip to Africa for Owusu Sadaukai and Kwadwo Akpan of the Pan-African Congress. The objectives of Sadaukai and Akpan's trip were to take the official ALD film to the countries of Tanzania, Zambia, Kenya, and Guinea to bring a visual representation and further explicate the activity and empathy amongst Black people in the U.S. around issues in Africa. The official state visits by the pair would place Sadaukai and Akpan in dialogue with the Nyerere of Tanzania and Kuanda

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<sup>69</sup> "ALSC and the Black Liberation Movement by Revolutionary Workers League," The Black Power Movement, 27-28. Amiri Baraka from Black Arts to Black Radicalism. Reel 4 No. 00991, microfilm.

of Zambia, two prominent African heads of state. During the month long trip, Sadaukai aimed at gaining further insight into the “various roles and forms that finance capital assumes in Africa, e.g., the role that the church and other institutions play in the reactionary struggle against African liberation.”<sup>70</sup> Slated to return from the African tour by September 1, Sadaukai was expected to provide a general report and presentation to the second Congress of African People (CAP)’s San Diego meeting in late August/early September on his and Akpan’s findings. Of even greater importance was the greater critical insight that Sadaukai stood to gain from his trip that had the potential to aid him and the MXLU staff and student as MXLU prepared for the fourth year of operation.<sup>71</sup>

MXLU, YOBU & ALSC Operations and Activity:  
University Decline and Ideological Shifts 1972-1973

The opportunity to usher in the ALSC as an organization represented not only the advancements and ideological progressions of Pan-Africanism, but it was also signified by the ideological shifts that were rapidly taking place in the movement as well. An organizational exemplification of ideological shifts of Pan-Africanism that symbolized a complete acceptance of Marxism and Socialist ideation was applied by the Student Organization for Black Unity (SOBU). SOBU undertook some critical shifts that lead to new ideational evolutions demonstrated by the national group’s official name change the Spring of 1972.

By April 19, 1972, some organization members considered that it was SOBU’s first and last ‘SOBU’ National Assembly. At the national meeting the decision was made to change the organizational name to YOBU to embody a myriad of factors that stemmed

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<sup>70</sup> “ALD Committee Continues to Work,” *The African World*, August 19, 1972, 14.; “Sadaukai Confers With African Presidents,” *The African World*, August 19, 1972, 14.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

from the identifications of the movement that had broken off from the earlier principles, concepts and practices of the Black Student Movement at the close of the 1960s.

Paramount to the organizational decision was the outward identification of only student concentrated efforts and programming as an extension of the Black community. The historical progressions of the Black liberation movement made it apparent that students were only a fraction of the community and also of Black youth forces. SOBU staff recognized that the organization's work transcended "the world of building takeovers and Black Studies programs. The composition of the organization itself began to reflect this expanded work agenda as non-students began to be recruited into the organization."<sup>72</sup>

Thus, it became essential that the group represent this realization in theory and practice, and the decision to change to 'YOBU' was of significant importance. At the national assembly in April it was also decided that the name Youth Organization for Black Unity (YOBU) would take effect on August 1, 1972. A few weeks later this was commemorated with a festive occasion to actualize the transition.<sup>73</sup>

### SOBU Becomes YOBU

On Saturday August 19, 1972 approximately two hundred people comprised of a variety of Black and Pan-Africanist student organizations and community folks came out to take part in activities for the official name change ceremony of the Student Organization for Black Unity (SOBU) to the Youth Organization for Black Unity

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<sup>72</sup> "Change, Motion, and Development: Youth Organization for Black Unity," *The African World*, 19, August 1972, 20.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.; This section of the African world became a prominent fixture of SOBU's/YOBU's informational arm, *The African World*. The informational's back page consistently ran the "Change, Motion, and Development" piece and a standard for publication as a reminder to readers of the evolving ideology of the organization. Much of this became even more apparent in the content of the publication that concentrated on not only providing an African-centered perspective on the domestic and transnational news but also political education components of the organ that extended SOBU's/YOBU's perspectives of education and study as a revolutionary and libratory act.

(YOBU). The event, which took place at the newly named YOBU headquarters, involved the participation and speeches of YOBU, NC. YOBU, PASOA and GAPP members. Jerry Walker of YOBU began the day's ceremony by informing the crowd that, "just a little over three years ago the Student Organization for Black Unity was born on the campus of [North Carolina] A&T St. University. We have since grown into a national organization with members and chapters in states throughout the nation."<sup>74</sup> Much of the emphasis in the speeches given on the "YOBU" commemoration was on the initial ideological line of the organization at its inception in 1969. As reminded by Jerry Walker, "SOBU has always stated as its objective the development of a revolutionary Pan-African youth movement not a revolutionary Pan-African student movement. The attempt now is to bring the name of the Organization into harmony with objective and focus of our activities."<sup>75</sup> The day's events were dedicated to the struggle and hard work of the likes of Samoray Toure, Patrice Lumumba, Felix Moumie, Albert Luthuli, Kwame Nkrumah, Dubois, Garvey, and Malcolm X. The day's events were opened up by Musa Kamara of the Greensboro chapter of PASOA, who began to the name-change/dedication ceremony with water and branches to symbolize peace, unity, continuity, growth and development.

National Chairman of YOBU, Nelson Johnson, who was the keynote speaker for the day, provided the crowd with the historical beginnings and trajectory of the organization which included the factors and activities that had led to the decision to change the name to YOBU. Johnson admitted that the beginning stages of the organization were not as clear as the members would have liked. Much of the early

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<sup>74</sup> "SOBU Becomes YOBU," *The African World*, September 2, 1972.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

activity of SOBU had been immersed in the dedication, hard work and sound-principles, but the social forces and influences of the “Vietnam War and the killing of Black men, the invasion attempt upon the Republic of Guinea, the overthrow of Obote in Uganda” and the death of Kwame Nkrumah were major happenings that had led to ideological shifts and reconsiderations as to what ideological positions should be assumed in the Black liberation struggle. Johnson and other YOBU members also used the day’s events to pay tribute to Alvin X, who was a field secretary and one of the founders of SOBU/YOBU. Alvin X and six other Black men were serving two-year sentences for their activist roles at Voorhees College in 1970. The occasion also highlighted the work of YOBU’s “Blacklash Program” that was designed by YOBU members of Greensboro for the purpose of constructively engaging Greensboro’s black youth in Pan-Africanist activity involving both educational and physical activity. The ceremony for YOBU was capped off by the Blacklash Program’s youth members participating in a two-hour program of gymnastics, African dancing, a dramatic skit with a powerful message pertaining to education, and a final performance by the Blacklash band, The Chocolate Funk, who had provided entertainment throughout the day.<sup>76</sup>

From an ideological and activist perspective, the intentions of YOBU versus that of SOBU were to supply a greater concentration of energy to the plight of the working class than SOBU had in the past. This would be achieved through addressing the needs of non-student youth with an increased adoption of an anti-imperialist, capitalist critique of overall American society. YOBU had accepted that capitalism was the critical factor

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.; During the summer months of 1972, the “Black lash” program utilized the skills and instruction of MXLU students who were members of the school’s judo program. The same members were not only able to provide demonstrations of the martial art to Greensboro Black youth, but they were also able to instruct the various techniques of the art form. As a result, many of the Black youth of Greensboro signed up for further instruction for a variety of skill areas through the program.

as to why more members of the Black bourgeoisie and petite bourgeoisie were produced from post-secondary institutions. These principles became fundamental to the increased class-consciousness and identification of oppression on a domestic and transnational scale for YOBUS. Much of this ideological evolution came from YOBUS's study of dialectical and historical materialism and political economy, which by the year of 1972 aided in YOBUS's deconstruction and comprehensions of capitalism and domestic oppression. With this increased study of Marxist-Leninism, YOBUS began an insistent push towards building the Black student organization as a cadre organization focused on Black youth, workers and students.<sup>77</sup>

A significant aspect of the evolved YOBUS ideological line rested on the identification of the Black student group's past participation and development that existed as a major by-product of SNCC's disbandment during the latter 1960s. Student organizing for SOBU came primarily from the older SNCC veterans who were pivotal in helping to mold and influence the direction of the emergent SOBU as a Black student group. However, as SOBU developed into YOBUS the identification of on-campus activity around Pan-Africanism that existed in the organizational objectives became deficient as an organizing tool. Now as YOBUS, the emphasis for the organization shifted the focus of Black students as the vanguard of the movement (which was thought of as one-sided) to students as critical allies of the working class. This analysis, which was steeped heavily in a Marxist theoretical framework of the 'proletariat,' shifted YOBUS's attention to cadre development for the explicit purpose of organizing workers into

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<sup>77</sup> Vivien Morris for the Nationalities Commission of Freedom Road Socialist Organization, ed. *Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Us Around: The Birth and Development of the Black Student Movement 1960-1990* (Red Sun Press: 1991), 24-25.; Search for a Vanguard: A Series of Anthologies Covering The Black Liberation Movement in the 1970's. SOBU-YOBUS-FFM 1969-1976.: "Black Liberation Movement Since 1969." Unpublished Paper (Chicago, IL: People's College Press) , 42.

political enclaves. Post-1972 ALD and YOBUs ideological evolutions also led to the development of a central committee from which the core members of the committee identified heavily with the aspects of “science” and communism as the most relevant solutions to address the problems of Black people in America.

YOBUs adoption of the Marxist principles as part of its analysis and intentions was initially covert. After 1972, however, YOBUs propaganda was extremely forthright in claiming the newfound communist aims of the organization. Provided in the documents of the “The Historical Evolution of YOBUs Line” is YOBUs analysis of what type of organization YOBUs would be versus the former SOBU.

We are seeking to develop YOBUs into an intermediate anti-imperialist student organization. That is, YOBUs lies between a mass student formation that would be the youth wing of a communist organization. We would seek to recruit the most advanced Black students...YOBUs would be the training ground for such students in the theory and practice of student organizing from a Marxist-Leninist perspective. Thus the people that we would recruit would not be Marxist-Leninist when they first come into the organization but our task would be to imbue them with both the theoretical and practical skills so that they could become members of a communist organization...such an organization would include a broad array of people and programmatic work areas from campus to community, and workers support. The closest student formation fitting this description was SDS from 1966-1969.<sup>78</sup>

Though YOBUs was intentional about making the dramatic shift towards communism, rank and file members and even sympathizers of YOBUs still held on to their initial identifications of the organization as being Pan-African with a class critique.<sup>79</sup>

As the new academic year of MXLU progressed in 1972, YOBUs and MXLU entered into joint command. Many of the ideological undercurrents that had been matters

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<sup>78</sup> Search for a Vanguard: A Series of Anthologies Covering The Black Liberation Movement in the 1970's. SOBU-YOBUs-FFM 1969-1976. “Black Liberation Movement Since 1969,” Unpublished Paper, (Chicago, IL: Peoples College Press), 42.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

of concern for MXLU in the early years of the University steadily surfaced as Marxism came to supplant the tenets of nationalism within the infrastructure of the independent educational institution. MXLU was again facing a myriad of worries, the most evident of which was how the financial future of the institution would fare. In addition to these issues, MXLU was now faced with a continuation of 'in-house' ideological factionalism, with the concepts of race and class remaining at the center of the controversy.<sup>80</sup>

#### MXLU & YOBU Activity 1972-1973: Institution Completion and New Directions

On October 2, 1972, MXLU entered into the educational institution's fourth year of existence as an "independent ideological and technical institute for the education of African people."<sup>81</sup> The University began the start of the '72-'73 academic year with the unveiling of the language department's innovative 'Floating Swahili' program. The program, which offered Kiswahili language instruction through mail correspondence, developed a 'MXLU without borders' concept from which Black people could benefit even if they were not in physical attendance at the school. MXLU officials hoped that the new program would be of great benefit to Black people incarcerated in the U.S. penal system who became largely aware of MXLU through reading the *SOBU Newsletter* later renamed, *The African World*. In the SOBU/YOBU publication, MXLU not only advertised the university's classes but also announced the inception of the new program with a cut-out application form of post card size accessible to the readership.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Search for a Vanguard: A Series of Anthologies Covering The Black Liberation Movement in the 1970's. SOBU-YOBU-FFM 1969-1976. (Chicago, IL: People's College Press) ii ; The Historical Development of YOBU's Line, 1-4, Dr. Abdul Alkalimat's private collection.

<sup>81</sup> "Malcolm X Liberation Univ. Begins 4<sup>th</sup> Year: Continues Serious Struggle," *The African World*, September 2, 1972.

<sup>82</sup> "Malcolm X Liberation University Announces... The 'Floating' Swahili Program—program



In the tradition of the institution, MXLU's opening day ceremonies saw a congregation of about fifty MXLU personnel and affiliates. Comprised of resource staff, continuing and new students, those gathered listened attentively to Owusu Sadaukai as he welcomed the new students and thoroughly explained the history of Malcolm X Liberation University (MXLU), its ideology, and the role which students were expected to fill. Sadaukai also stressed the continued need for students to develop the elements of character that would aid the total efforts of the African liberation struggle. He reminded them of the magnitude of implementing the traits of discipline, perseverance, honesty and devotion. For Sadaukai, these attributes supplemented the much-needed undertaking of politically addressing the needs of the physical needs of the people. MXLU's fourth year opening day presentations were also given by National Chairman of YOBU, Nelson Johnson, and Barbara Kamara, the head of the board of Directors of Greensboro Association of Poor People.<sup>83</sup>

#### Reporting to the Motherland: ALD's Response in Nigeria and Tanzania

The international work and acclaim of MXLU activities once again reached the African continent because of yet another visit by Owusu Sadaukai. Accompanied by Kwadwo Akpan of the Pan-African Congress U.S.A, the two Black Americans went to Tanzania and Nigeria as representatives of not only MXLU and YOBU, but also as newly established officers of the ALSC as well. Just under a month from having established the

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announcement and application form," *The African World*, September 16, 1972.; "MXLU Initiates Project: 'Floating Swahili', *The African World*, September 30, 1972.; The entrance fee for the mail correspondence language program for MXLU was \$10.00 in 1972 and promised to offer a tutorial for the benefit of engaging the East African language of Ki-Swahili. For a much more detailed and in-depth description of the 'Floating Swahili' language program of MXLU, please see Chapter five which provides aspects of the curriculum of the program and also the variety of Swahili and other language courses offered by MXLU during the schools tenure.

<sup>83</sup> "MXLU Opens 4<sup>th</sup> Year," *The African World*, October 14, 1972.

organizational principles of the ALSC as the natural outgrowth of the African Liberation Day activities, Sadaukai and Akpan met with government officials and representatives of the various liberation movements. The two men were also able to set up an ALSC office while in Dar es Salaam. A major priority of the trip to the continent was to show the African Liberation day film to representatives of the various countries and liberation movements. The film, "Breaking the Chains of Oppression thru African Unity," a forty minute color documentary of the May 27, 1972 demonstration provided visual coverage of the San Francisco rally but mainly the Washington, D.C area which had begun its day with a march.<sup>84</sup>

Sadaukai and Akpan's showing of the film with an English version and a Swahili version went over well on the continent and was shown an estimated twenty-five times to thousands of African people, according to Sadaukai. The ALD film was also shown to the "Minister of Information of the (African Liberation Day Speakers 1972) Tanzanian Government, the Foreign Minister and his entire staff, the TANU Youth League, the editor of the Swahili newspaper 'Uhuru,' some writers for the 'Daily News,' the English paper, representatives of all the liberation movements with representatives in Dar es Salaam, and several thousand other Tanzania citizens."<sup>85</sup> The ALD film was even nationally televised in the country of Nigeria. With visible displays of Pan-Africanism in the United States, responses to the film were nothing less than that of amazement. However, one of the most important viewings of the ALD film was not to any of the

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<sup>84</sup> "ALD Film in Africa", *The African World*, November 25, 1972, 4.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

African dignitaries or African freedom fighters but to African youth, namely to Tanzanian students in a small railway town called Tabora.<sup>86</sup>

The film showing to the African youth took place at the Tabora Girls' Secondary School and Tabora Boys' Secondary School, which both had both a military and political education outlook. The affair was reported by Adisa Douglas, a Black woman teaching in Tanzania as a part of the exchange program established with the Tanzanian Government and Blacks in the United States as participants in Nation Building.<sup>87</sup> Douglas provided an account of the film showing from the perspective of a Black American working on the continent for an article to the YOBU newspaper, *The African World*. Some of Adisa Douglas' remarks about the Tanzanian student's experience were as follows:

Indeed I felt the showing of the film here was an historical occasion and a tremendous step towards bridging the gap that exists between us. Our experiences may be different but our struggles are the same. All of us felt the very moving and powerful ending to the film as Owusu and the brothers and sisters in America proclaimed: "We are an African people!" We began chanting it too, as the film flashed from Washington D.C. to Africa. And it all didn't end there;

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.; "Tanzanian Youth View ALD Film," *The African World*, November 25, 1972, 4.; Proposal of the Pan African Skills Project, n.d., 3 Pan African Skills Project Collection, Box 1 Folder 13; In the Pan African Skills Project (PASP) administered by Irving Davis at the International Office in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Davis noted in a PASP memorandum that, "When Owusu was here he got a chance to see all the people that he needed to see. The Foreign Minister got a chance to see the film." Davis also noted in the PASP memorandum that "the film has been showing at the University, T.Y.L., T.A.N.U., Army, National Service, Secondary Schools, and one large public showing at the Adult Education Centre last week. Now we are sending it out to all the schools in the country." Davis made note of the instrumental role of the PASP in the formation of the ALSC chapter in Dar es Salaam. While working in conjunction to provide Black American resource, people on the African continent with the central hub existing in Dar es Salaam, Davis considered the PASP network as an organization that could aid the newly formed Tanzania ALSC chapter by providing the organization with information on how the African Liberation Movements were developing and all other pertinent information.

<sup>87</sup> "Pan African Skills", n.d., Pan African Skills Project Collection, Box 1 Folder 13, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; "Pan African Skills Project: Employment Opportunities for Peoples of African Descent in the Motherland Pamphlet," Pan African Skill Project Collection, Box 1 Folder 1, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.; Adisa Douglas and many other Black Americans gravitated toward the efforts of the PASP in the early 1970s to act in the capacity as human resources for African countries in need of teachers, physicians, carpenters, nutritionists, etc. For further information on the PASP, please refer to Chapter 4.

the next day I walked into the classroom and on the board written in big bold letters were the words WE ARE AN AFRICAN PEOPLE.<sup>88</sup>

### Phasing Down Operations: MXLU's Decline

The efforts of Sadaukai and Akpan with regards to the promotion of ALD and also establishing an ALSC chapter in Tanzania gained accolades on the African continent. However, back in the U.S., the financial conditions and outside antagonism that had worn on MXLU since the school's inception had finally come to a head in December of 1972. MXLU's administration was beginning the 'in-house' process of restructuring the school's programming and curriculum to scale down operations due to the financial constraints that the school was steadily succumbing to. On December 20, 1972, Sadaukai outlined a three-page proposal to be circulated to the members of MXLU's Political Committee and Joint Command. The document outlined the rationale and proposed procedures to be taken in order to begin the process of "phasing down" MXLU. The MXLU administration identified the need to face a reality that had been haunting the operations since at least the second year of the institution. And that truism was the fact that the school could not continue operations on a full time basis with the funding issues that continued to plague the school. An aspect that was critical to the document circulated by Owusu Sadaukai was that the proposed re-organization was a necessary administrative decision if MXLU hoped to reopen on September 3, 1973, which would be the start of school's fifth year. Sadaukai, the Political Committee and Joint Command worked in a concerted effort on established benchmark dates to decide the fate of MXLU. The document circulated by Sadaukai to the members of the Political Committee and Joint Command recommended strongly that the information in the

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<sup>88</sup> "Tanzanian Youth View ALD Film," *The African World*, November 25, 1972, 4.

document should not be leaked. Sadaukai felt that the information should be made public by MXLU officials at the appropriate time as it might help the future financial cause of MXLU as far as fund raising was concerned.<sup>89</sup>

A little over two weeks after Sadaukai initiated the task of phasing down operations, MXLU made the decision public in *The African World*. On January 5., 1972, it was announced that MXLU had made final the decision to “phase down the operations at the institution in order to undergo a period of extensive re-organization and re-evaluation.”<sup>90</sup> The process of scaling down the operations for MXLU meant that the institution would discontinue the full school day schedule. Personnel and students would obtain full time jobs in the Greensboro area utilizing the skills that they had acquired while at MXLU. The class schedules were re-organized so that the school’s courses were only taught during the evenings and on the weekends. After coming to a consensus decision to phase down the operations of MXLU, it was agreed that the judgment to do so had the potential to aid the school in two very important developments. MXLU officials felt that, “first it allows MXLU personnel to better root themselves in the Black community and see the practical usefulness of the skills taught at the university. Secondly, it eases the tremendous financial strain the school is constantly faced with.”<sup>91</sup> As part of the re-organization plans, the personnel and students of MXLU agreed that they would support themselves and also contribute finances to a common MXLU fund.

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<sup>89</sup> MXLU Document to the Members of the Political Committee and Joint Command—From Owusu—Regarding Phasing Down MXLU Operations December 20, 1972. IFCO Records, Box 30 Folder 38, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>90</sup> “Malcolm X Liberation University Begins Reorganization,” *The African World*, February 3, 1973.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

These acts would aid in defraying future costs of running MXLU to enable the school to open on a full time basis during the next academic year.<sup>92</sup>

Though the school's class and operational schedules were readjusted to meet the needs of the reorganization plans, many of MXLU's departments remained unaffected by the decision to scale down the operations of the University. The departments and activities of The African Children's Educational Center, the Floating Swahili Program, The Community Seminar & Educational Outreach, and the school's thirty-two-acre farm remained unaltered in terms of operations and day-to-day activity.

A significant aspect of MXLU's departmental success was the ability to capitalize on the skills of the MXLU students and resource people to provide much needed services in the areas of food production, electrical and mechanical engineering. An example of this was the University's licensed electronic service center; many of the mechanical engineering students of MXLU had acquired a great reputation in the Greensboro area as auto mechanics. In addition, two students of the agricultural department would continue to provide their services and learn the "new livestock breeding techniques at the Federation of Southern Co-ops Center in Epps, Alabama."<sup>93</sup> All of these services not only permitted the students and personnel with an opportunity to assist in providing revenue to aid MXLU, but it kept the school's activity and community affiliations pertinent as the MXLU Political Committee made the necessary adjustments to prepare for full operations for the next calendar year. To reinforce MXLU's intentions, Sadaukai informed the *African World* that, "The school has not stopped operation, or fallen, or

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.: MXLU Document to the Members of the Political Committee and Joint Command—From Owusu—Regarding Phasing Down MXLU Operations December 20, 1972. IFCO Records, Box 30 Folder 38, Schomburg Research Center for Research in Black Culture.

anything like that. Instead we have gone on an austere footing in order to effect a major re-organization.”<sup>94</sup>

This attempt to regain “austere footing” as Sadaukai referred to the university’s plans allowed for the school’s officials to painfully examine the intended financial avenues needed to meet the needs of the institution’s annual \$250,000.00 budget. MXLU’s past financial expenditures had been met by more than the grants of the Episcopal Church but also from the speaking engagements by Sadaukai, foundation grants and small individual donations. However, the increasing reality for MXLU was that these methods were not enough to sustain the school’s operations and the Political Committee needed to effectively collaborate to investigate all the possible options to garner funding the declining Black institution.<sup>95</sup> Much of the increased difficulty in supporting MXLU came from the amplified notoriety the school received from its social and political activity that had positioned the school as a hot bed for Black Nationalist activity and the major epicenter of socio-political organizing in much of the South. The fraternal relationship MXLU shared with the now Marxist Black Student organization YOBU did not assist matters in the area of obtaining adequate funding. And in fact, the association between MXLU and YOBU actually heightened due to the continued activity of YOBU regarding the ‘Save Black Schools Project.’

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.; For information on the operations and activity of MXLU’s various departments, please refer to the previous Chapter V that provides detailed outlines of the school’s departmental operations. The operations of MXLU are explicated from the inception of the university through the various changes that the university faced to include the re-organizational phase on the university of late 1972, early 1973.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

## The Struggle Continues: YOBU and the Save Black Schools Campaign

A week after MXLU publicly announced plans to re-organize the school's operations, representatives from fourteen Black colleges and universities identified by YOBU met from January 13 to 14, 1973 with YOBU representatives on the campus of North Carolina A & T in Greensboro to discuss their role in relation to the dilemma that Black schools faced in the state of North Carolina and across the country. As an organization, YOBU held steadfast to the beliefs that "Black Studies" departments at predominately white universities were not adequately equipped to service the unique needs of Black students or the community from which these students came from. For YOBU, this responsibility to address the aforementioned needs of Black students and community was the responsibility of Black post-secondary institutions. YOBU took the perspective that Black post-secondary institutions were able to satisfactorily perform those duties; however, funding for Black schools still remained an issue. This dilemma for YOBU meant a continuance of the organizational activity that had spawned "Black Monday" in the fall of 1971 during the initial 'Save Black Schools' campaign in North Carolina. However, Black people statewide were disappointed that critical amendments had passed recently in the North Carolina legislature that conveniently omitted many of the demands made by Black students. Yet, YOBU did not consider the action a victory, but only a stall tactic. Given the circumstances surrounding the state of Black post-secondary institutions in the state of North Carolina, YOBU felt it imperative to develop a national follow-up plan of action.

Still in 1973, the critical problem facing the Black College and University was still the issue of funding deficiencies "in the areas and amounts necessary to aid in the



development of the services, facilities, and faculty that is required by modern relevant education.”<sup>96</sup> Due to the student’s recognition of a dire need for qualitative adjustments in dealing with Black colleges and universities, it was established at the January meeting that the national coordinating efforts would have to involve all support sectors of the Black community in the campaign to ‘Save Black Schools.’<sup>97</sup>

Momentum for the January 1973 meeting began with the identification and selection of initial key campuses totaling fourteen major Black colleges and universities. The schools selected were identified mainly because of their national prestige and leadership tendencies amongst other Black colleges. YOBU aimed at attaining the support of one major Black college in each state or in states where predominately Black post-secondary institutions may have been represented. Out of the fourteen Black colleges identified, YOBU representatives were only able to travel to seven after the meeting due to budget constraints. While on the recruitment visits, YOBU personnel centered the discussion on two critical points. First, the representatives pushed the idea of a well-planned national Save Black Schools movement, and second, the first step towards that end would be planning conferences on Black colleges. YOBU’s selection and visitation process lasted from November 1, 1972 and stretched to January 10, 1973. This pre-planning strategy made possible the meeting of January 13-14 of 1973 and also provided the representatives with continual updates on the planning strategies that had initially begun when YOBU representatives visited the various campuses the previous fall of 1972.

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<sup>96</sup> “Students Mount Movement To Save Black Schools,” *The African World*, January 20, 1973.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

At the January 13-14 meeting, the 'Save Black Schools' National Steering Committee was formulated. Included in the steering committee were John Crenshaw of Arkansas AM&N College, Sandra Neely of Bennett College, Isaac Suggs of Bowie State College, Melvin Cage Jr. of Central State University, Debra Boddie of Clark College, Al McLain of Florida A&M University, Charles Hall of Howard University, Kenneth Hamilton of Jackson State College, Kevin Patterson of Lincoln University in Louisiana, Rhyann of Mississippi Industrial College, Larry Hinton of North Carolina A&T State University, Ricky Clark of South Carolina State College, Earl Picard of Southern University of New Orleans, Barbara Robinson of Spelman College, Carl Thomas of Texas Southern University, Joseph Towley and Jeannette Outlaw of Virginia State College and YOBU National Chairman, Nelson Johnson, who was also the Steering Committee Chairman. The collective decided to mobilize representatives from the one hundred and twenty-one Black post-secondary institutions across the country in order to organize a workshop and planning session to address the following issues: 1) Define what the Black student collective terms to be a "quality" education for Black people; and 2) to effectively discuss and formulate a national strategy that would address the needs of Black colleges and universities. A date for the national workshop/ planning session was finalized for March 16 -18 1973.<sup>98</sup>

From the conference, the delegates of the national steering committee disseminated the intentions and programmatic outlines of the 'Save Black Schools' project at their respective campuses. The next phase of YOBU and the resurgent

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.; "A Proposal to Develop a Concerted Effort to Save Black Schools: Submitted by the Youth Organization for black Unity", Search for a Vanguard: A series of Anthologies Covering The Black Liberation Movement in the 1970's. SOBU – YOBU – FFM (1969-1976), Taken from private Collection of Dr. Abdul Alkalimat. Document is in author's possession.

campaign for Black post-secondary institutions was to increase local awareness around the aims and objectives of the national project while continuing YOBUs push to develop a communist Black student cadre aimed at student and worker organizing. Planning for the conference involved implementation of mobilization strategies and promotion of YOBUs ideology as an evolving Pan-Africanist student organization. The initial March 16 -18 planning dates for the national conference were pushed back to the following month of April 6 –8, and in doing so, the planning committee for the conference provided the stage for an event of momentous proportions that exceeded their initial planning expectations.

On April 6, 1973, over three hundred and twenty Black students from sixty-five Black colleges and universities converged at North Carolina A&T State University to plan out a critically intensive national strategy and campaign to ‘Save Black Schools.’ Conference planners initially expected only two hundred delegates from fifty schools; however, many of the conference participants began arriving the morning before the conference registration as early as 4:00 a.m. Not only did the Black student representatives exceed the participant numbers, but also most of the schools brought materials that were meticulously researched in preparation for the conference workshops and planning sessions. There were no pessimistic dispositions and defeatist conversations of “there’s nothing we can do,” in regards to identifying the relevant and practical strategies needed to overcome the challenges that faced Black post-secondary institutions across the nation.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> “67 Black Colleges Meet in Greensboro: National Black College Conference Maps Out ‘Survival Strategy’”, Special Section – *The African World*, April 28, 1973.

“The discussions and planning sessions were enriched by speeches from Dr. Herman Branson, president of Lincoln Univ., Dr. L.C. Dowdy, president of A& T; and Owusu Sadaukai, president of Malcolm X Liberation University.”<sup>100</sup> The entire event received the media coverage of YOBU’s news organ, *The African World*, which later provided a special section of the event in the publication. The entire three-day event was also covered by the “Black Journal” television cameras that filmed the proceedings to be shown in the fall of that year, which would coincide with many of the activities planned on campuses and in communities around the ‘Save Black Schools’ campaign.

Participants who had been historically known to critique the inactivity and perceived bourgeoisie mentality of many Historically Black Colleges and Universities acquiesced to the greater call for Black educational solidarity. Sadaukai, who was a major proponent of the transformation of the curriculum, social and political objectives of HBCUs, was fruitful in his analysis of the ‘Save Black Schools’ campaign. He stated that, “Admittedly Black colleges have fallen short of their potential and in many ways seek to duplicate the same processes and value systems as their white counterparts. However, they represent the best potential that Black people have for an education in this society.”<sup>101</sup> Bennett College SGA President Sandra Neely, who had worked extensively with MXLU, YOBU and in the efforts of ALD throughout North Carolina, commented that, “Academic debates over whether or not Black schools are worth saving are of little value. It seems clear that the Black community – workers, welfare mothers, etc.- should be the ones to make that decision. But if we don’t build a massive, powerful movement to preserve

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

these institutions involving all segments of the community, then there will soon be nothing left to debate.”<sup>102</sup>

The conference’s centralized three-day focus was to construct a national strategy that the participants could take back to their respective campuses nation-wide. Though the ‘Save Black Schools’ national steering committee was well aware of difficulties presented by many of the Student Government Associations (SGA) on various campuses. The steering committee representatives and delegates who attended the April 6 National Conference aggressively insisted that on campuses where organizing was not supported by the SGAs those SGAs should be pushed to respond to the call for action around the campaign. If this tactic was unsuccessful, then those Black students who were willing to campaign for ‘Save Black Schools’ initiatives should continue to organize and work for the national campaign in spite of any uncooperative SGA at the respective colleges and universities. With this comprehensive understanding, each campus delegate to the national conference was charged with the responsibility of Black student mobilizations for a ‘Save Black Schools Day of Solidarity.’ The day of solidarity was engineered by the steering committee to organize students on campuses nationwide for a day of rallies and workshops.

#### Expansion of A Mass Movement: African Liberation Day (ALD) 1973

Brother from the west  
(How can we explain that you are our brother?)  
the world does not end at the threshold of your house  
nor at the stream which marks the border of your country  
nor in the sea  
in whose vastness you sometimes think  
that you have discovered the meaning of infinite.  
Beyond your threshold, beyond the sea

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

the great struggle continues.  
 Men with warm eyes and hands hard as the earth  
 at night embrace their children  
 and depart before the dawn.  
 Many will not return.  
 What does it matter?  
 We are men tired of shackles. For us  
 freedom is worth more than life.  
 From you, brother, we expect  
 and to you we offer  
 not the hand of charity  
 which misleads and humiliates  
 but the hand of comradeship  
 committed, conscious.  
 How can you refuse, brother from the west?  
 --FRELIMO<sup>103</sup>

By the end of 1972, the work of the ALSC continued to gain political sophistication as the newly founded organization readied mobilization efforts that would surpass the achievements of ALD 1972. A major concern for the Pan-Africanist organization was the mass perception that the ALSC existed for the sole purpose of ALD mobilization efforts during the month of May. To extinguish this potential view, the ALSC central committee made the decision to form sub-committees to broaden the ALSC's mobilization capabilities and to provide the local chapters with a separate organizational framework to address the needs of ALD while local chapters were consumed with the planning for the event. The decision to emphasize the organizing of local sub-committees further evolved at the ALSC's fourth national meeting held in Washington, D.C. on December 23, 1972.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> "How Can You Refuse, Brother From the West?", Special Section *The African World*, May 19, 1973.

<sup>104</sup> Modibo M. Kadalie, *Internationalism, Pan-Africanism And The Struggle of Social Classes: Raw Writings from the Notebook of An Early Nineteen Seventies African American Radical Activist* (Savannah, Georgia: One Quest Press, 2000), 230-235.

The collective organizational decision was to shift the previous year's focus of ALD that had highlighted demonstrations at a smaller number of locations to focusing on a mass-based effort that would include twenty-five or more demonstration sites nationally and internationally and be combined with a fund raising initiative. The ALSC hierarchy felt that ALD '73's significance would be the "fund raising activities in areas where there was a committee strong enough to mobilize a significant number of people and was in a position to raise a significant amount of money."<sup>105</sup> The ALSC central committee decided that the local chapters needed to raise a minimum of \$2000.00 with a total minimum goal of \$50,000.00. For persons who were willing to provide funding for ALD 1973 but were living in cities where there were no ALSC sub-committees or where no demonstration was planned, the ALSC set up the United African Appeal as a funding network and collection apparatus out of Greensboro. By meeting the funding goals, the ALSC hoped to give eighty percent of the funds raised in the efforts of ALD '73 to the African Liberation Organizations of FRELIMO (Mozambique), PAIGC (Guinea-Bissau), UNITA (Angola), and ZANU-ZAPU (Zimbabwe). The remaining twenty percent of funds raised would be set aside by the ALSC to support other liberation groups once the research committee of the ALSC identified other groups in need of assistance.<sup>106</sup>

The ALSC's intentions for the impending 1973 ALD demonstration were to increase the educational consciousness of Black people by highlighting the interconnected significance of Africans struggling on the continent. The general theme

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<sup>105</sup> "African Liberation Day Focus: A Common Enemy, Common Struggle" Special Section *The African World*, May 19, 1973, 7, 10.; "Support United African Appeal," *The African World*, May 19, 1973, 9.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.; Modibo M. Kadalie, *Internationalism, Pan-Africanism And The Struggle of Social Classes: Raw Writings from the Notebook of An Early Nineteen Seventies African American Radical Activist* (Savannah, Georgia: One Quest Press, 2000), 230-235.

that the ALSC set for the 1973 mass demonstration efforts was, “THERE IS NO PEACE FOR African People—Africa is at war.” This slogan and continuous anti-imperialist activity of the ALSC was largely stimulated by the inactivity of the Nixon administration who had claimed peace in Southeast Asia while overtly disregarding the African conflict in the areas of Mozambique, Angola, Namibia and Azania. Furthering the demonstration and protest efforts against the immobility of the United States government, the ALSC “announced a drive to boycott products of U.S. corporations operating in Southern Africa.”<sup>107</sup>

Exceeding the planned expectations for demonstration participation, on May 26, 1973, the ALD mass mobilizations were held in over thirty cities in the U.S., Canada, Caribbean islands and the African Continent. Between seventy-five and eighty-five thousand Black people participated in the mass mobilization efforts and raised the monetary goal of fifty thousand dollars to provide financial support to the African liberation efforts. ALD 1973 did not boast as many prominent Black political figures as speakers for the day’s events as had the ALD ‘72. YOBU National Chairman Nelson Johnson may have expressed it best in his 1973 ALD speech delivered in Raleigh, North Carolina when he stated, “We should not be in the business of creating actors to give bogus performances to our people. Neither are we in need of pretty-boy celebrities and movement heroes...we can do without those who seek to grab the going issue and ride it to new levels of personal gain.”<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> “African Liberation Day Focus: A Common Enemy, Common Struggle”, Special Section *The African World*, May 19, 1973, 7, 10.; “ALD Demonstrations A Month Away: African Support Building,” *The African World*, April 28, 1973.

<sup>108</sup> “We Cannot Be For African People Without Being Against The Enemy of African People: Speech Delivered At African Liberation Day. Raleigh, N.C.,” *The African World*, June 16, 1973, 4, 5.



The nationwide demonstration efforts were a definite reflection of the grassroots organizing efforts of ALSC local chapters, many of which began to emerge on college and university campuses as a result of ALD '72. In addition, the concentrated attempts to educate the masses of the ills of imperialism came to fruition as many march participants showed their disapproval for global oppression and transnational corporate oppression by marching with picket signs that read, "GET ON THE CASE FOR THE RACE," "BOYCOTT GULF OIL," "SUPPORT ZAPU," and "AMILCAR CABRAL: YOU DID NOT DIE FOR NOTHING!" An example of this was in Houston where march participants made a planned stop at the executive headquarters of Gulf Oil and read a three page indictment denouncing its activity that had aided Portugal's imperialist actions on the African continent. This included monetary provisions of forty-five million dollars to the Portuguese government out of which fifty percent of those monies went to the military budget that fought and oppressed the Angolan people.<sup>109</sup>

Much of the publicity for ALD 1973 was conducted in a similar vein as the efforts for the previous year with the local ALSC organizing committees using Black newspapers, "a few concerned Black radio 'Dee Jays', leaflets, posters and oral tradition to bring people out."<sup>110</sup> As the demonstrations were given little to no media coverage before or after May 26<sup>th</sup> date, the drive to announce the importance of the event rested solely in the motivations and energy of grassroots organizing by Black people. Owusu Sadaukai, National Chairman for the ALSC, set the tone for the ideological and physical

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.; "80,000 Demonstrated: ALD Success Reveals Growth in Black Political Understanding", *The African World*, June 16, 1973, 1, 3.; Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals turn to Lenin Mao and Che*. (London and New York: Verso, 2006 ), 84.

<sup>110</sup>

expansion of the ALD activities in 1972 commented on growth of the 1973 national demonstrations by stating:

By expanding the demonstrations to more locations, we were able to increase the number of people who either planned, organized, or otherwise participated in this year's demonstrations. This is tremendously important as it expands the base of people who now have some understanding and some commitment to the international struggle our people.<sup>111</sup>

The success of ALD 1973 maintained the national and international appeal of Pan-Africanism in the early 1970s. The gradual adoption of a brand of Pan-Africanism that maintained a stance of anti-colonial and imperialism became the ideological epicenter of the ALSC as the influences of Marxist-Leninism slowly exemplified the ideological vehicle for Pan-Africanism by the organization. With the ALSC displaying the potential influence of a mass-based Pan-Africanist organization, the early 1970s began to develop as a time that produced radical systemic change in which the ALSC acted as a conduit to the liberation fronts on the African continent.

However, the most pertinent post-ALD 1973 issue for many Black students and activists in the Southeast became the fate of MXLU in the context of a seemingly successful display of Pan-Africanism. The role of MXLU in the phenomenon was not peripheral, but rather critically pivotal as the University had aided greatly in the shift of radical Black movement activity to the South. Owusu Sadaukai and the family of MXLU had worked tirelessly for the past four years in the efforts to politicize the Southeastern seaboard and much of the North and now needed to address some critical questions as it related to the fate of MXLU. Would there remain an educational institution in MXLU to perpetuate the tenets and operation of grassroots work and Pan-

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<sup>111</sup> "80,000 Demonstrated: ALD Success Reveals Growth in Black Political Understanding," *The African World*, June 16, 1973, 3.

Africanist thought seeing that the success of ALD and the ALSC materialized momentous results? And if so, how would the struggling university maintain operations as funding sources continued to ostracize the nationalist university as each year of the school's progressed? Most important, were the ever-increasing ideological tensions that began to pervade the movement effecting MXLU and if so would the conflict be enough to aid in closing operations of the university? In the subsequent month following ALD '73, these inquiries were brought to conclusion as the MXLU family announced that the school would be finalizing operations for the independent Black University.

#### The Closing of MXLU: Lessons Learned & New Directions

On Wednesday June 27, 1973, Malcolm X Liberation University held a press conference to officially announce the closing of the independent institution. After four years of operation, approximately one hundred and twenty-five students coming from some thirty-two states had passed through the Pan-Africanist/Black Nationalist institution. Not to mention the countless political gatherings and symposiums that had aided in the shift of Black consciousness heading to the Southeast seaboard. But now, the educational institution which was largely responsible for birthing African Liberation Day during the era of the 1970s was about to end the journey that began as a protest of the socio-political college campus landscape in the United States during the latter part of the 1960s.

Joined by members of IFCO and YOBU, MXLU personnel and Owusu Sadaukai provided commentary to the press and community on the circumstances that led up to the decision to close MXLU. Sadaukai, who had increased in stature amongst the Pan-Africanist and Black Nationalist circles leading into the 1970s, maintained the position of

head Mwalimu of MXLU and was largely responsible for the ideological directions that MXLU embarked upon during the tenure of the university. Through outside agitation, financial resistance, and government surveillance, Sadaukai was able to provide the present community and members of the press with a tri-part explanation of why MXLU's mission as an educational institution came to fruition after four years of providing a space for a model self-reliant curriculum couched in Pan-Africanism. Sadaukai cited that the reasons MXLU closed was due to the following accumulating deficiencies:

1. The over-emphasis on Africa as the epicenter and determining catalyst of the future of working class Black people in America. This error led to the MXLU's second deficiency.
2. Sadaukai and the MXLU family felt that MXLU showed a major weakness in the area of practice due to over-emphasis on the African continent. This caused MXLU to gain a greater tendency to alienate the local Black community, which eventually led to a eventual loss of contact with the surrounding Black community. Though MXLU students took part in the Skillcraft Workers Strike and a people's trial addressing the issue of police brutality in the Greensboro area, many felt that much more of Black people's issues in Greensboro could have been addressed by the MXLU operating structure.
3. The third weakness of MXLU was the obvious matter of the university's financial situation, which had plagued the school since its 1969 inception. Sadaukai felt that even though the school's financial situation was a major part of the decision to close, it was not the determining factor in deciding to close the school.<sup>112</sup>

In spite of Sadaukai's ability to trim the school's budget by \$418,000.000 in its first year, yet the school's financial position remained precarious. In addition, much of MXLU's mounting financial pressure was compounded over the tenure of the university due to pressures that ensued from the Episcopal Church grant controversy. Episcopal Church

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<sup>112</sup> "Significant Lessons Learned: Malcolm X Liberation Univ. Closed," *The African World*, July 14, 1973, 1, 3. Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 18 Folder 6, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

members were angered to the point that one hundred and thirty-eight parishes in the North Carolina Diocese purposely failed to meet their financial quotas in protest of MXLU receiving the 1969 financial award.

In addition to the aforementioned explanation provided by Sadaukai for the university's closing, school affiliates and members of the MXLU family felt that there may have been other critical issues that were essential to the close of MXLU. During the four years of the school's operation, some felt that many of the problems that the school faced were a direct result of the enmity toward Owusu Sadaukai who on many occasions was perceived as being the most hated or 'angry Black man' in the State of North Carolina during the late 1960s going into the 1970s. Some felt that the school was never able to break away from the stigma that was largely constructed through the propaganda of the press and demonization tactics of many North Carolina newspapers.

At the press conference, Sadaukai provided those present with an overview of shifts in the movement but assured them that MXLU had not changed its tactics. Sadaukai commented that, "the institution was merely a vehicle for the struggle. It is necessary to change the vehicle from time to time, but that does not mean that the struggle will end." Though the time of MXLU had come to an end, Sadaukai and the MXLU family felt that MXLU was highly successful on two fronts: 1) in the teaching of the history, culture, and legacies of Black people on a domestic and international scale and 2) in providing the much needed technical training to Black people.

Another product of MXLU's success materialized in the University being able to send Black American students to the African continent to provide their physical and intellectual talents to resource poor areas in great need of assistance. Though the school

was closing, the MXLU administration made the decision that the school's farm near Sedalia and the children's early education centers would both remain open.

In Sadaukai's closing remarks to the press, he took on the complexion of one who had begun to embrace a more 'all encompassing' perspective on social change and social justice. Sadaukai suggested that there needed be a concerted effort to fight against racism, exploitation of peoples based on class or sex. He also stressed that more needed to be done around inequality and privileges in the tax structure, and 'totalitarianism' in American government that he referred to as an oppressive structure continues to oppress Black people. Continuing to advance in his political and activist undertakings with the North Carolina Black Assembly and the ALSC, Sadaukai encouraged Blacks in the state to increase their political awareness and join either of the organizations and continue in the struggle for the liberation of Black people.<sup>113</sup>

Sadaukai's encouragement to Black people to join the ALSC was more than just informational filler for the press. As the Pan-Africanist center of developments shifted away from the now defunct MXLU, the ALSC geared itself for a changing of the organizational guard. The next day after the MXLU administration held a press conference to announce the closing of the Black institution, the ALSC met in Frogmore, South Carolina on June 28, 1973 to concretize the principles and objectives of the organization as since the Pan-Africanist collective had experienced its second successful ALD demonstration. The ALSC began to assume the responsibilities of a vanguard

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.; "Malcolm X University Closes Doors", *Durham Morning Herald*, June 28, 1973.; "Black Separatist University Closes," *The News and Observer*, June 28, 1973.; "Malcolm X University Is Closed," *Greensboro Daily News*, June 28, 1973. *University of North Carolina Collection Clipping File Through 1975, UNC Library, Chapel Hill*; "School's Day Were Stormy," *Greensboro Record*, 27 June 1973.; "MXLU Halts Operations," *Greensboro Record*. 27 June 1973.; "Malcolm X Meets Goals And Closes," *Greensboro Daily News*, June 28, 1973.

organization that possessed the capabilities of increasing transnational participation in educational efforts geared toward the global awareness of imperialism affecting the African continent.

The Frogmore meeting which was the largest steering committee meeting of the ALSC up until that time brought together eighty delegates and observers from twenty-six local committees to begin the process of constructing a route for Black liberation that existed in the legacy of Malcolm X and the O.A.A.U. At the meeting, the ALSC unanimously decided that the organization's existence needed to assume the role of a united front for the significant purpose of operationalizing all segments of the Black community. The Frogmore meeting also meant the need to make amendments to the ALSC's existing principles and guidelines for purposes that aligned with the meeting's newly founded organizational objectives.<sup>114</sup>

The new role of the ALSC would prove to be pivotal in the transnational struggles that ensued for Blacks in America. Existing as potential force of support for transnational struggle, the ALSC continued to gain momentum from the success of supporting the freedom struggles on the continent. Sadaukai, whose evolution as an activist with the ALSC took on a new role with the organization, relinquished his position as National Chairman of the ALSC for placement on the executive committee of the ALSC. Now under the helm of Dawolu Gene Locke, the ALSC was geared to further the potential of the organization so that the ALSC would build upon the Pan-Africanist work of Marcus Garvey and the U.N.I.A. before it. For the latter part of 1973, the ALSC

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<sup>114</sup> "ALSC: New Officers, Structure, Principles," *The African World*, July 14, 1973. Cleveland Sellers Collection, Box 18 Folder 6, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

strengthened its alliances with African liberation groups by sending a delegation consisting of Sadaukai, Locke and the ALSC National Secretary, Brenda Paris.

The ALSC delegation made an important trip to the continent for a three-fold purpose 1) To deliver \$33,000.00 of the \$42,000.00 that was raised from the recent ALD demonstrations 2) To hold meetings with government officials in the countries of Tanzania, Zambia and Guinea and also with representatives of African liberation organizations for the purpose of strengthening relationships on the African continent for the furtherance of international ties and to 3) Talk with the various representatives of the liberation groups about the activities of the ALSC in the greater context of the African liberation struggles. The work of the ALSC became paramount as the Pan-Africanist organization quickly assumed the role of a vanguard umbrella organization for activity through the mid 1970s.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> “ALSC Delegation Hosted in Africa”, *The African World*, September 22, 1973.; Though the larger focus of this work explores the activity of MXLU, the greater political significance of the ALSC in its developmental stages as an organization is not discounted. With the closure of MXLU, the ideological sectarianism that began to emerge prior to the close of MXLU was fully exacerbated in the ALSC by the close of 1973 going into 1974. The most pronounced displays of this shift took place at the organization’s historic 1974 Frogmore Conference in South Carolina. As the ALSC firmly established the organization’s objectives in Marxism, the struggles to maintain ideological lines of “class” versus “nationalism” became clearly demarcated thus producing a split in the ALSC and the larger Pan-Africanist/Black Liberation movement during the period of the mid 1970s. For a more in-depth historical and political analysis of the ALSC’s ideological evolution that led to the eventual ‘split’ please see the following sources for further clarity and information: Cedric Johnson, “From Anti-Imperialism to Sectarianism: The African Liberation Support Committee and Black Power Radicals,” *New Political Science* 25, no. 4 (2003).; Cedric Johnson. *Revolutionaries to Race Leaders: Black Power and the Making of African American Politics*. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press).; Modibo M. Kadalie, *Internationalism, Pan-Africanism And The Struggle of Social Classes: Raw Writings from the Notebook of An Early Nineteen Seventies African American Radical Activist*, (Savannah, Georgia: One Quest Press, 2000).; Fanon Che Wilkins, “In the Belly of the Beast: Black Power, Anti-Imperialism and the African Liberation Solidarity Movement, 1968-1975,” (doctoral dissertation, New York University).; Ronald W. Walters, *Pan Africanism in the African Diaspora: An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Political Movements* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993); Manning Marable, *Race Reform and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond Black America 1945-2006*, 3rd ed. (University Press of Mississippi, 2007).



## CHAPTER 8

### EPILOGUE

#### SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS: EXAMINING THE IDEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL THREADS

This chapter will present a discussion of the ideological and historical threads that have been pervasive throughout this work. Through this chapter an analysis of the failures and effective strategies of various arms of the Black Student Movement will be provided as well. Most importantly, this analysis will tease out the educational values, oversights and omissions in relation to a Malcolm X educational philosophy, and Malcolm X as social pedagogy; the ideological shifts and reconsiderations of an emerging Black Student Movement; and the impact of the historical activity of SOBU/YOBU and MXLU on the Black Student Movement and the overall Black freedom struggle through the mid-1970s. Finally, the epilogue investigates a number of significant themes that permeate this historical study.

#### Complexities of Leadership & Historical Continuity

Explicating a Malcolm X philosophy of education as it relates to the expansion and overall development of the Black Student Movement was an anticipatory process. However, the task of engaging a historical figure of Malcolm X's magnitude initially brought about apprehension because of the complexity of this man who only lived to the age of thirty-nine. And those thirty-nine years comprise not only Malcolm the man, but also the effects of each life that touched by this man on a national and international level. In life, those individuals who benefited from having personal contact with the persona that arguably became the catalyst for the era commonly referred to as the Black Power era have gone on to not only tell a portion of his story but to continue in his legacy of

struggling for Black freedom worldwide. For those freedom fighters that only heard his recorded speeches or read from his autobiography, their relationship is in no way deficient to those graced by him in life. Many scholars argue that his impact on the Black world intensified when he became a martyr for generations looking for a symbol to reinforce their militancy and impatience. However, in taking this journey through the pedagogical lens of Malcolm X, one thing remains clear...so many were affected by at least a portion of the living figure if not the whole. And in realizing how Malcolm effectively inspired ideological shifts in the movement, it also becomes clear that those who attempted to continue his struggles even benefited from the fluidity in his tradition as he matured until his untimely death.

Much of his influence is apparent in the factionalism of organizations seeking to advance their interpreted versions of “a Malcolm X brand” of Black Nationalism even though the era of Black Power meant concrete programs and not just new constructions of a Black aesthetic. William L. Van Deburg notes,

Thus it was noted by the most perceptive of his contemporaries, during the Black Power era there was a Malcolm for virtually every persuasion. According to his friend and lawyer, Percy Sutton, the situation could be likened to the ancient fable of the blind man and the elephant: One feels the ear, one feels the trunk, one feels the tail and so on, and each of them thinks he can describe the whole animal. The Black Power movement was like that. Friend and foe alike claimed to have privileged information regarding its nature and ultimate purpose. Mirroring the multiple predispositions, the movement itself took on a diversity and richness of character that too often has been obscured by impassioned rhetoric and shallow historical analysis. If Malcolm X had not been available, the head of Janus could have been emblazoned on the militant’s coat of arms.<sup>1</sup>

The influence of Malcolm X on Black student groups such as RAM was testament to Malcolm’s foreseeable need of a Black student movement that would mirror the structure

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<sup>1</sup> William L. Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press), 4.

of the organization that he helped to build and nurture. His influence also signified the interconnectedness and intergenerational links of progress that persisted as individuals continued to learn and develop theory as well as practice. The work of RAM and that of Donald Freeman, Max Stanford and Ronald Snellings in shifting the ideological premise of SNCC, the movement's vanguard, spoke to the currents of revolutionary Black Nationalism that were ever present in the maturation of the movement's politics and development of students as society changed all around them.

SNCC as an organization has reaped the overall historical recognition for the call of Black Power; however, the influence of the Nation of Islam and Malcolm X qualify the historical beginnings of this legacy in that NOI and Malcolm X, through tireless efforts, made Black youth and the masses aware that the American infrastructure built on stratifications of race, class, gender, ability and social capital needed to be critiqued and reconsidered. From the time of 1964, RAM, SNCC, and the ASM questioned the marginalization and oppressions of a capitalist system and the need for questions around ending White supremacy and class subordination. Because of reoccurring happenings around organizations such as the aforementioned, it can be seen that the 1966 Black Power slogan was given birth under the conditions of both hard labor and a stirring momentum. To isolate that moment as spontaneous and sporadic is not only incorrect it is negligent to the greater social dynamics that reinforce the principles of historical phenomena.

### The Revolution Will Not be Funded

In considering the post-1966 era and the forerunners of the Black Student Movement, SNCC, it becomes evident that the fight for Black Liberation existed on

many levels because of the financial avenues made available to those who fought for revolution by in alignment with the rules of those who held the purse strings. The organizing efforts and triumphs of an organization such as SNCC can never be undermined. Not enough credit and investigation has been allotted to the relationships that exist between philanthropists and those who benefit from that funding while waging a so-called war against the political machine built on those same financial principles. SNCC as an organization faced their most critical points of decline after criticisms of the Vietnam War and the State of Israel in 1967. However, at what costs did SNCC suffer for taking stands on social justice issues that the organizations of the Urban League, SCLC, the NAACP, and Randolph Institute claimed to have founded their organizational guidelines on as well? And how can groups who claim to hold the interests of the masses be held accountable for such gross negligence and contradictions between their actions and organizational principles?

From the outset, MXLU was established for the benefits of independent Black education and to weld the activities and issues of the Black community. However, knowing the circumstances in which MXLU acquired its first grant, one can only surmise how independent the inception of the institution truly was, given that each move made by the institution in respect to Black people was most assuredly monitored to fulfill the wishes of the philanthropists who made it possible to open the school. MXLU's fate in many respects was directly aligned with its ability to maintain a relationship with White financial institutions and to prove its credibility amongst other Black organizations for really being "independent." When MXLU failed to secure its second grant from the Episcopal Church by the beginning of 1972, Sadaukai remarked how the personnel

understood the contradictions of MXLU's aims and objectives versus their actions (there it was not only accepting White funding but also overtly seeking funding from White organizations). Given this understanding, it makes sense to ask how your revolution can be funded from those who you claim oppress you? This issue is not only raised in relation to MXLU but all organizations who maintained an anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, and in many cases an anti-White stance as their organizational line but were able to put their socio-political convictions aside to accept financial assistance to operate their "revolution."<sup>2</sup>

### Ideological Allure: Importing and Exporting Revolution

The fate of SNCC brought about the second wave of the Black Power era and took the form of Pan-Africanism, or what Stokely Carmichael referred to as the natural evolution of Black Power.<sup>3</sup> This evolution brought forth SNCC veterans who were not only seeking political refuge from the clandestine activity of the F.B.I.'s COINTELPRO, but veterans who were also seeking to revive and reproduce their organizing activity in the traditions of Black Nationalism, now Black Internationalism. With their mentorship

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<sup>2</sup> For further investigation of funding issues and activism, please see "Incite, Women Of Color Against Violence," *The Revolution Will Not be Fund: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2007). This work addressed the relationship between the non-profit sector, government and those who identify themselves as activists in the non-profit sector. However, the controversy arises in cases where non-profits become accountable to government mandates while trying to remain as political agitators and also support themselves through the funding of the organizations. In many cases, the non-profit eventually reflects the very philanthropic and government agencies that they aimed at attacking in the first place. If these organizations choose not to play the games of compromising to the requests of those who provide their funding their alternatives go back to the relying on the people they claim to serve or seeking funding sources on an international level. If the assistance is international, the rules in many cases will still apply as they would have if the monies came from domestic sources.

<sup>3</sup> Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture), *Stokely Speaks: From Black Power to Pan-Africanism*. (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2007); Peniel E. Joseph, *Waiting Til The Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006), 342-343.; Joseph refers to the proliferation of organizations such as MXLU, SOBU/YOBU, Congress of Afrikan People (CAP), CBE, and the ALSC as "Second Wave" Black Power organizations. Joseph credits the emergence of these organizations as coming out of the organizing tradition of SNCC since many of the members acted as mentors to the upstart organizations that revolved around mobilization activity along the eastern sea board with emphasis of efforts in Washington, D.C., and in North Carolina.

came the experiences of organizing throughout the South as well as the scars of ideological conflicts that had pervaded the organization and the movement as a whole. The issues of race versus class, an age old argument that plagued them in the 1930s, pervaded through the early 1970s and became a part of the ideological infrastructure of SOBU and MXLU; however, the issue as to what route to take went unresolved, consuming the founders of both the student organization and the educational institution representing as they did the culmination of the many phases of the 1960s: a manifestation of Black Nationalism—autonomy and self-determination of one’s educational future.<sup>4</sup>

As an independent educational institution and Black student organization, the fraternal work and activity of MXLU and SOBU was critical in the shift of radicalism becoming re-centered in the South. The decision of MXLU and SOBU/YOBU to combine efforts by late 1971 solidified the efforts of student movement activity, although due to in-fighting over ideology, the solidarity that had been worked for through the institution and the mass based activity of the organization was compromised.

The constant interaction of MXLU and SOBU/YOBU members meant increased study of international movements that connected to the struggles taking place in the U.S. Thus, the overwhelming conclusion to address the next phases of the movement was an anti-imperialist stance for Black students. This perspective of a colorless oppressor led to a Marxist-Leninist analysis as a way to address the foreseen need of Black people with a particular emphasis to be placed on workers in the United States. SOBU, now YOBU by 1973, signaled the gradual evolution of the core leadership of the entire organization.

As YOBU increased its study of Marxism-Leninism it made that classical error of attempting to transform an organization composed of students into a democratic

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centralist organization without changing its base from students to workers. Because of the selective recruitment of YOBU and the high level of discipline it demanded of students, the organization became increasingly isolated from the masses of students on campus. By the fall of 1973 and after struggle about the principle task of the Black student movement, the organization made self-criticism about its form style of organization and began to work towards building a mass imperialist student movement.<sup>5</sup>

In the case of MXLU, the objectives of the institution had been to provide the Black Nationalist platform not only to students but also to the larger community of both Durham and Greensboro, North Carolina. But, as certain members and personnel of MXLU became more politicized through interactions with African revolutionaries whose struggles strongly resembled those in the U.S., conflicts emerged within the institution's leadership, and factions were developed as a result. On one side of MXLU there were the traditional Pan-Africanists that evolved out of the Black Nationalism of the 1960s, and on the other were those who had begun to fully embrace Marxism. They were split in that "the infrastructure and personnel of the institution did not reflect a total shift toward the full acceptance of embracing Marxism."<sup>6</sup> Since MXLU as an institution had begun fundamentally as a Black Nationalist/Pan-Africanist educational institution, the shift in

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<sup>5</sup> Search for a Vanguard: A Series of Anthologies Covering The Black Liberation Movement in the 1970's. SOBU-YOBU-FFM 1969-1976. Black Liberation Movement Since 1969. Unpublished Paper (Chicago, IL: People's College Press), ii, 42, Dr. Abdul Alkalimat private collection.; On August 16-18, 1974, a delegation of Black students from the United States traveled to Cuba to experience aspects of the Cuban revolution. A major objective of the trip was to learn lessons of the Cuban revolution from the perspective of direct application on battling against forces of imperialism. Known as the Progressive Student Delegation, the student collective was made up of anti-imperialist Black students from the Northeastern, Southern, Midwestern, and Western regions of the United States. The students represented the National Save and Change Black Schools Project, YOBU, the Black Student Collective at Harvard University, the Harambee Organization in New Jersey and the Peoples College in Tennessee. Upon their return to the United States, the students continued their collective efforts and formulated the February First Movement (FFM) named after those Greensboro students of North Carolina A&T who sat in the Woolworths on February 1, 1960. In January of 1975, FFM organized conferences to begin efforts of a Black student organization with aims of furthering an anti-imperialism and communist Black student movement. The following information was taken from *Viva Cuba: Down With U.S. Imperialism*, published by the Progressive Student Delegation, November 1974. Pamphlet provided courtesy of Dr. Abdul Alkalimat's private collection in author's possession.; See also "New National Black Student Organization Formed: February 1<sup>st</sup> Movement," *The African World*, February 1975, 1, 16.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

late 1972/early 1973 met a considerable amount of resistance. Roz Pells, then Roz Bailey, worked with MXLU up to its close in 1973 and recalls the general sentiment of those continuing in the Black Power movement as many shifted to Marxism and the 1960s came to close. She recounts,

There was a point...when all the people from the African Liberation period became Marxists. They all went to Frogmore for a conference and came back Marxists, so it seemed. We were shocked. We didn't know what they were doing. I remember I felt betrayed by that. We'd all been so into Black Nationalism together. I spent two years wearing African clothes.<sup>7</sup>

The feelings of Pells echo those of MXLU staff who remained resistant to the ideological shifts taking place in the school. In addition to the factions emerging was the continued difficulty of funding that MXLU faced as result of ongoing opposition from the Episcopal Church. The funding for MXLU sparked the greatest controversy because of the contradiction of receiving money from Whites but creating an educational environment that they were not allowed to enter.<sup>8</sup> This issue drove a bigger wedge into aspects of the movement because of the espousals of self-reliance and self-determination versus the actual practice of receiving monies even from the call for Churches and synagogues to pay reparations.<sup>9</sup> Under these conditions, MXLU was sure to implode,

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<sup>7</sup> Signe Waller, *Love and Revolution: A Political Memoir: People's History of the Greensboro Massacre, Its Setting and Aftermath*. (New York & Oxford: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2002), 56.

<sup>8</sup> "Who is Howard Fuller and What Does He Want," *Milwaukee Magazine*, July 1988, 39-40, 57-62, Box 12 Folder 10 Box 12, Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston.

<sup>9</sup> The founders of IFCO sought to develop lines of communication between Black and White constituencies of church congregations that experienced divisiveness due to the James Forman's *Black Manifesto*. Forman presented the document in Detroit, Michigan, at the National Black Economic Development Conference. Forman's manifesto demanded that White Christian churches and Jewish synagogues begin to pay reparations to Black people in the United States. The manifesto called for the amount of \$500,000,000.00 which Forman calculated to \$15.00 per Black person. The manifesto consisted of ten demands of which one was for the construction of an all Black university to be located in the South and the last demand was for the unused funding to be allocated by IFCO to assist in meeting the remaining demands of the manifesto.



and the most damaging effects that the ideological feuds produced was sure to be leveled on Black youth remaining at MXLU who either took sides during the factionalism or simply became frustrated with the divergent tide. Some of these youth chose to remove themselves from the movement all together.

Much of the conflict that arose between SOBU/YOBU and MXLU came from their engagement with the struggle on the African continent. Through the travels of those like Owusu Sadaukai and his encounters with FRELIMO in Mozambique, and Senora Michel's interactions with Amilcar Cabral and the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau, ideological perspectives quickly became aligned with the struggles taking place in other provinces thousands of miles away. The advantage of experiencing another face of struggle through the lens of those in Africa was priceless. However, the danger of adopting the fundamental positions of those whose experiences were shaped from differing social, political, and cultural dynamics brought about an analysis that overlooked or negated the socio-political factors that shaped its local struggles, be they work conditions, the effects of racial and/or class discrimination or the abusive political philosophy of a government on a people.

The 1967 SNCC chairman, H. Rap Brown, made reference to this action as the importation and exportation of revolution. Referencing the work of French intellectual and journalist, Regis Debray, Brown commented that,

We cannot limit ourselves to just one concept or ideology that was relevant in some other revolution. As Debray points out, and correctly so, in his book *Revolution Within the Revolution*: 'Revolutions cannot be imported nor exported.' Certain changes have made some of the most advanced ideologies obsolete. For example, socialism as it exists today *ideologically* may be impractical for certain oppressed peoples. But the political principles of socialism certainly have validity. This is why in Cuba and other liberated countries the principles of socialism are being incorporated into the ideologies of these

countries. This again goes back to Fanon's observation that we must extend the Marxian analysis when we view colonialism. It is the political principles that make the ideology; as these principles that make the ideology; as these principles are refined through struggle an ideology is created.<sup>10</sup>

### Suffering the Costs: Losing Sight of Local Struggle

In the cases of both MXLU and SOBU/YOBU there was an essential truism that accompanied the actions of both the educational institution and the Black student group. Because of the allure of ideology and the in fighting and sectarianism both within the institution and the organization, as well as because of dwindling assistance from the Black people in the community, the two lost sight of issues that were in their own back yard of Durham and Greensboro, North Carolina. In the MXLU press conference that announced the closing of the school after four years of operation, Sadaukai cited the school's alienation from the larger Black community as a significant factor for ending operations. YOBU National Chairman, Nelson Johnson, provided a retrospective analysis on the actions of the two organizations' practice of Pan-Africanism and YOBU's eventual transformation into a full communist organization. Now Reverend Nelson Johnson in Greensboro, North Carolina, Johnson is cited in Signe Waller's work, *Love and Revolution*, as explaining,

Pan-Africanism got quickly sorted into two wings. One was an escape from reality and from the necessity of struggling in this country. Its litany might go: 'We are an African people. We need to reclaim our roots. It's a waste of time to try to build something in the United States. What we need to do is support liberation movements in Africa.' We recognized and rejected it at the time. The other one was—'we are an African people, and we have to build fraternal ties and support each other everywhere we are. We also must struggle everywhere we are, including in this country.'...Even among those of us who felt we had to do what

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<sup>10</sup> H. Rap Brown, *Die Nigger Die!: The Political Autobiography of Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin*. (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2002), 128-129.; See also the work of French scholar, Regis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution: Armed Struggle and Political Struggle in Latin America*. (Monthly Review Press, 1967).

we could do here, the pull of Pan-Africanism had some detrimental influence. The local struggle became secondary,' Nelson attested.<sup>11</sup>

Because MXLU and SOBU/YOBU lost sight of the local, they also lost their local base of support, that being the North Carolina community who had resonated so much with the school and its students. This negligence on the part of both organizations meant that regaining support from those critical to the success of Black youth would necessitate a return to an ideology that was inclusive and relevant to everyday working or non-working Black folks, still in wait and in need of basic issues to be addressed: food, clothing, shelter and a way to pay for them.

Both MXLU and SOBU/YOBU perceived that the route for liberation for Black struggle was through Marxism, and if this ideological stance was the most effective route to address the issues of those marginalized from social and economic opportunity, then their programs should reflect the type of improvement for the people. The point of contention for many Black Nationalists was Marxist ideology didn't center on race but rather class. While a valid point of contention, another area that begs to be considered is the initial modes of success of MXLU and SOBU/YOBU—and organizations like them--around nationalism. After experiencing success in mobilizing Black youth and those in the community, why did the vanguard choose to undertake a political philosophy that initially was only defined as an additional tool for identifying other forms of oppression, not an answer to discriminatory actions around race?

A Marxist theorist, former leader of the October revolution second only to Lenin, and former head of the Fourth International, Leon Trotsky provided commentary on the

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<sup>11</sup> Signe Waller, *Love and Revolution: A Political Memoir: People's History of the Greensboro Massacre, Its Setting and Aftermath* (New York & Oxford: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2002), 54.

Black Liberation struggle as Malcolm X gained international prominence before his assassination. Trotsky's work, *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism & Self-Determination* produced during the latter half of the 1960s, provided an interesting analysis of the struggle of Blacks in America as juxtaposed to White workers and the overall possibility of coalescing around issues of revolution on the basis of race and class. Trotsky argued,

It is unrealistic...to expect the Negro to reach 'a class point of view' ahead of the White worker; that can happen 'only when the White worker is educated' (class-consciousness and anti-capitalist), and understands his duty to his Black brother. Despite that, the oppression of the Negroes is such that they can become revolutionary ahead of White workers, furnish the vanguard of the revolution, and fight better for a new society than the White workers. But, he added, for that to happen, the revolutionary party must carry on 'an uncompromising merciless struggle not against the supposed national prepossessions [Black Nationalism] of the Negroes but against the colossal prejudices of the White workers and makes no concession to them whatever.'<sup>12</sup>

In essence, Leon Trotsky, who understood that he was not fully informed to comprehend all the attributing dynamics of American racism relating to White supremacy, was reflexive enough to see the factors of oppression related to plight of Blacks in America. With this identified, Trotsky was able to provide an addendum to his earlier constructions of a vanguard party and, in this case, he saw that success would have to come through self-determinative measures stemming from ethnic and racial identity. After this point, White workers, or anyone else for that matter, had the opportunity to form a united front around the success of the vanguard.

By the mid-1970s, the ALSC was positioning itself to become that vanguard organization. Coming off of the successes of ALD, the ALSC saw its own effectiveness and ability to mobilize a mass and diverse range of the Black community. However,

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<sup>12</sup> Leon Trotsky, *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism & Self-Determination*. (New York & London: Pathfinder, 1978), 18.

those community people that the Black students and youth came in contact with in their mobilization efforts were asking the basic questions of how were those promoting African solidarity going to combine their message of international struggle with the everyday and readily accessible problems in the slums of major cities and rural areas of the South. In spite of the above summary, it would be criminal to think that the issue of concentrating more on the social ills for Blacks in America was not given more critical engagement prior to mobilization efforts for struggles on a different continent.

In closing, the divisions caused over ideology and practice amongst MXLU and SOBU/YOBU lay the groundwork for a variety of shifts in the movement in the 1970s and into the early 1980s. As the organizations faced a crisis of decline, then complete stoppage of all activity, one thing remained clear in the midst of all the conflict and differing directions of the students: Simply put...an institution that serviced the needs of Black youth and the community had closed. And nothing was being done to either replace the educational institution or its programming, which had become relevant for Black youth, college-aged and younger, as well as for working adults in Greensboro and Durham. Sadaukai commented at the press conference of MXLU's closing that MXLU had fulfilled the needs of the movement for that time. What this investigation has proven that the educational institution became the epicenter for all major educational, political and social activity as the second wave of the Black Power movement shifted to the South. MXLU provided a location for which theorists, activists and students could come and either learn or sharpen their steel for the benefits of not only scholarship but also for the use of application in the community. No matter the season, an educational institution that fills a void in the community should never have to close even in the turmoil of

ideological contention. If anything, such conflict should spur on the greater need and hope for investigation, teasing out the benefits and deficits of such an endeavor; and at that point, Black students stood to gain the greatest benefits. Malcolm X Liberation University, for all its deficiencies, was still such a place where those hopes should have continued to come to fruition.

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