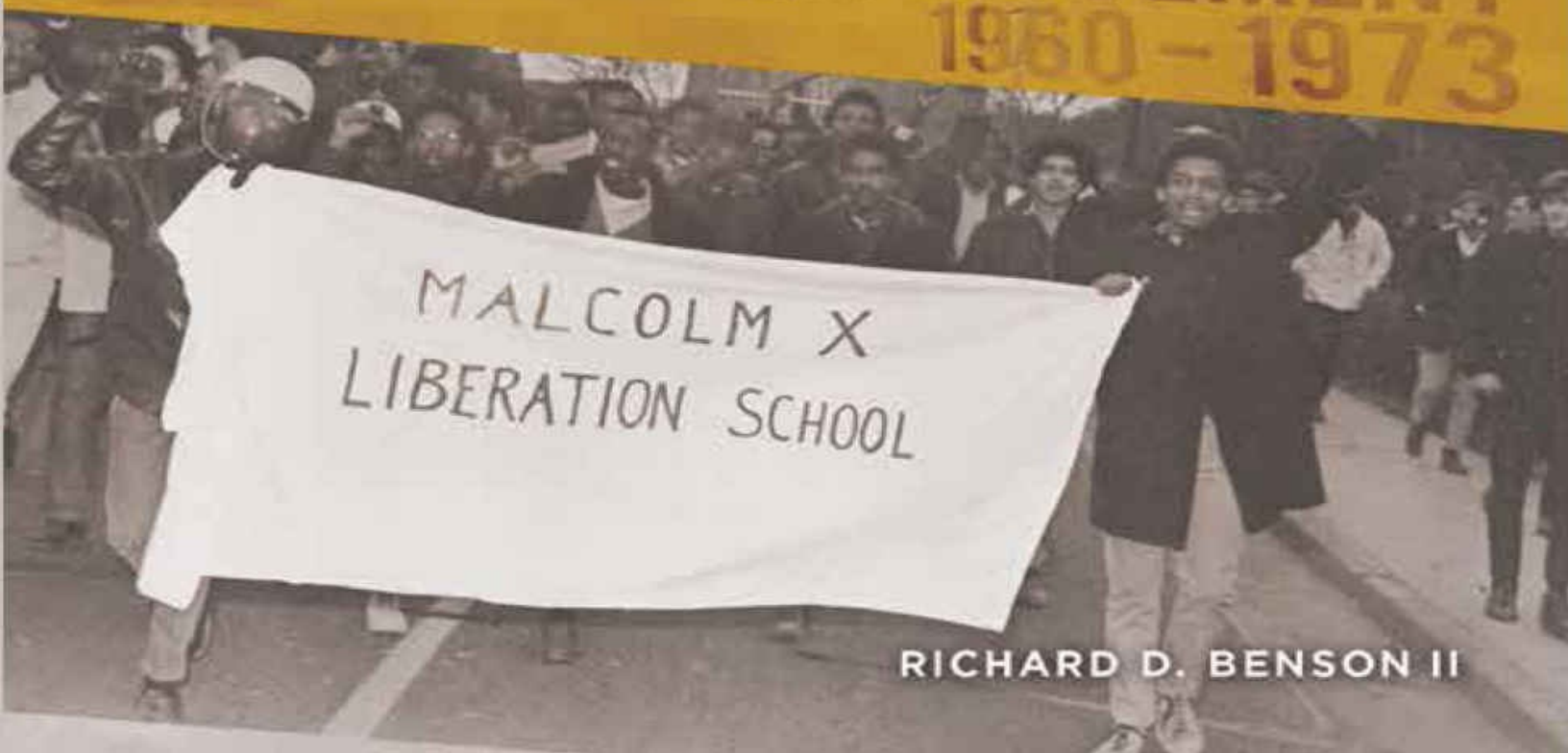
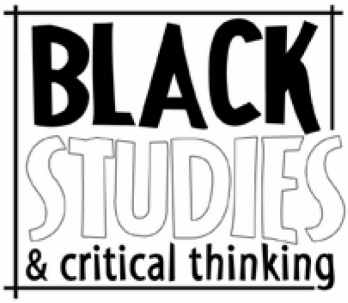
# FIGHTING FOR OUR PLACE IN THE SUN

## MALCOLM X AND THE RADICALIZATION OF THE BLACK STUDENT MOVEMENT 1960–1973




RICHARD D. BENSON II




Rochelle Brock and Richard Greggory Johnson III
*Executive Editors*

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# About the author

Scholar, author, advocate, **RICHARD D. BENSON II** earned a Ph.D. in educational policy studies from the University of Illinois-at Urbana Champaign. He travels frequently as a guest lecturer speaking on topics such as the black student movement, and school-community advocacy. Benson resides in Atlanta, Georgia, where he is Assistant Professor in the Education Studies Program at Spelman College.

# About the book

In *Fighting for Our Place in the Sun*, Richard D. Benson II examines the life of Malcolm X as not only a radical political figure, but also as a teacher and mentor. The book illuminates the untold tenets of Malcolm X's educational philosophy, and also traces a historical trajectory of Black activists that sought to create spaces of liberation and learning that are free from cultural and racial oppression. It explains a side of the Black student movement and shift in black power that develops as a result of the student protests in North Carolina and Duke University. From these acts of radicalism, Malcolm X Liberation University (MXLU), the Student Organization for Black Unity (SOBU/YOBU), and African Liberation Day (ALD) were produced to serve as catalysts to extend the tradition of Black activism in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Scholars, researchers, community organizers, and students of African-American studies, American studies, history of education, political science, Pan-African studies, and more will benefit from this provocative and enlightening text.

ADVANCE PRAISE FOR

# FIGHTING FOR OUR PLACE IN THE SUN

"Richard D. Benson II's *Fighting for Our Place in the Sun: Malcolm X and the Radicalization of the Black Student Movement 1960–1973* makes a major contribution to the evolving scholarship on the Civil Rights Movement, especially its underresearched Black Power phase, and both Black nationalism and Pan-Africanism. This meticulously researched book also contributes to our understanding of Malcolm X whose legacy has not garnered the scholarly attention it deserves beyond several important biographies. What distinguishes Benson's treatment of Malcolm X is the focus on his educational philosophy, his impact on SNCC and the broader student movement of the sixties, his evolving gender politics, and his profound influence on the development of Black independent educational institutions."

—BEVERLY GUY-SHEFTALL, Founding Director, Women's Research & Resource Center, and Anna Julia Cooper Professor of Women's Studies, Spelman College; Co-Author (with Johnnetta Betsch Cole), *Gender Talk: The Struggle for Women's Equality in African American Communities*

"Richard D. Benson II's book will ground oft-misguided declarations about the purpose and future of historically Black colleges and universities.… He connects the political and educational philosophies of Malcolm X, the Nation of Islam, SNCC, SOBU, YOBU, and a constellation of Black organizations to fashion a new interpretive lens.… This remarkable and long-awaited corrective by a teacher/scholar operate[es], as Brother Malcolm did, in Black pedagogical spaces where intergenerational and Pan-African internationalist intellectual work was and is undertaken for broader human transformation. Benson has done our ancestors and current generation proud."

—GREG CARR, Chair, Afro American Studies Department, Howard University

"Richard D. Benson II is passionate about his subject and it shows. His book is a part of the growing body of literature on students in the Black Power movement, their intellectual influences, and the complex political legacy of Malcolm X."

—BARBARA RANSBY, PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO; AUTHOR, *ELLA BAKER AND THE BLACK FREEDOM MOVEMENT*

"This is a valuable, well-written, and well-researched book that makes a significant contribution to various fields, including Pan-Africanism and the legacy of Malcolm X."

—GERALD HORNE, AUTHOR, *THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION OF 1776: SLAVE RESISTANCE AND THE ORIGINS OF THE USA*

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# Dedication

This book is dedicated 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).

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

To the Most High God, Yeshua/Jesus, through whom all things are made possible, thank you for the strength and fortitude that allowed me to endure the through the toughest of times. I am forever grateful.

# Contents

# Acknowledgments

This book extends from the many individuals who provided their selfless contributions to ensure its success. To the Most High God, Yeshua/Jesus, through whom all things are made possible, thank you for the strength and fortitude that allowed me to endure through the toughest of times. I am forever grateful.

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To my church home, The Israel of God (IOG) in Chicago, Atlanta, and all IOG camps 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. ← xii | xiii →

# Abbreviations Used in the Text

| | |
|---|---|
| AIS | African Information Service |
| ALD | African Liberation Day |
| ALDCC | African Liberation Day Coordinating Committee |
| ALSC | African Liberation Support Committee |
| AMM | American Muslim Mission |
| ASM | Afro-American Student Movement |
| BEDC | Black Economic Development Conference |
| BLF | Black Liberation Front |
| CAP | Congress of Afrikan People |
| CBC | Congressional Black Caucus |
| CBE | Center for Black Education |
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency |

| | |
|---|---|
| CIAA | Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association |
| CIBI | Council of Independent Black Institutions |
| COFO | Council of Federated Organizations |
| COINTELPRO | Counter Intelligence Program |
| CORE | Congress of Racial Equality |
| CSC | Central State College |
| FBI | Federal Bureau of Investigation ← xiii \| xiv → |
| FCD | Foundation for Community Development |
| FOI | Fruit of Islam |
| FRELIMO | Mozambique Liberation Front |
| GAPP | Greensboro Association of Poor People |
| GCSP | General Convention Special Program |
| GOP | Grand Old Party; Republican Party |
| HNIC | Head Nigger in Charge |
| IBW | Institute of the Black World |
| IFCO | Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization |
| LCFO | Lowndes County Freedom Organization |
| MFDP | Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party |
| MMI | Muslim Mosque Inc. |
| MXLU | Malcolm X Liberation University |
| NAAAE | National Association of African American Education |
| NAACP | National Association for the Advancement of Colored People |

| | |
|---|---|
| NAG | Non-Violent Action Group |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NCBC | National Committee of Black Churchmen |
| NCF | North Carolina Fund |
| NCYOBU | North Carolina Youth Organization for Black Unity |
| NOI | Nation of Islam |
| NSA | National Student Association |
| NSM | Northern Student Movement |
| OAAU | Organization of Afro-American Unity |
| OAU | Organization of African Unity |
| OBT | Operation Breakthrough |
| OEO | Office of Economic Opportunity |
| PAIGC | African Party for the Independence of Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands |
| PAMP | Pan-African Medical Program |
| PASOA | Pan-African Student Organization of the Americas |
| PASP | Pan-African Skills Project |
| PMI | Palmer Memorial Institute |
| RAM | Revolutionary Action Movement |
| SCLC | Southern Christian Leadership Conference |
| SDS | Students for a Democratic Society |
| SFSC | San Francisco State College |
| SGA | Student Government Associations |

← xiv | xv

→

| | |
|---|---|
| SNCC | Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee |
| SOBU | Student Organization for Black Unity |
| UCLA | University of California Los Angeles |
| UNIA | Universal Negro Improvement Association |
| UNITA | African Liberation Organization of FRELIMO (Angola) |
| UOCI | United Organizations for Community Improvement |
| UoI | University of Islam |
| YES | Youth Educational Services |
| YOBU | Youth Organization for Black Unity |
| YUBS | Youth for the Unity of Black Society |
| ZANU-ZAPU | African Liberation Organization of FRELIMO (Zimbabwe) ← xv \| xvi → |

# Abbreviations Used in Notes

**College and University Archives, Special Collections, Campus Periodicals, Community Periodicals, and Research Venues**

| | |
|---|---|
| ARC CCC | Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston |
| ABTC | Allen Building Takeover Collection, 1969–2002, Rubenstein Library Duke University Archives |
| AURCRWL | Atlanta University Research Center, Robert W. Woodruff Library |
| BB | *The Bennett Banner* |
| BPRO | Black Power and Revolutionary |

| | Organizations |
|---|---|
| CBE | Center for Black Education |
| CDD | *The Chicago Daily Defender* |
| CO | *The Charlotte Observer* |
| CSC | Cleveland Sellers Collection |
| CT | *The Chicago Tribune* |
| DC | *The Duke Chronicle* |
| DMH | *The Durham Morning Herald* ← xvii \| xviii → |
| DS | *The Durham Sun* |
| EOPII | Eyes on the Prize II: America at the Racial Crossroads, 1965 to 1985. Washington University Libraries, Film and Media Archive, Henry Hampton Collection |
| FCD | Foundation for Community Development |
| GDN | *The Greensboro Daily News* |
| GR | *The Greensboro Record* |
| IFCO RECORDS | Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization Records |
| JFP | James Forman Papers |
| JHCC | John Henrik Clarke Collection |
| MC | *The Milwaukee Courier* |
| MD LOC | Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. |
| MM | *The Milwaukee Magazine* |
| MS | Muhammad Speaks |

| | |
|---|---|
| MXLU | Malcolm X Liberation University |
| NCCCF UNC | North Carolina Collection Clipping File through 1975, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill |
| NCFR | North Carolina Fund Records, 1962–1971 |
| ND/BW | *Negro Digest/Black World* |
| NYAN | *The New York Amsterdam News* |
| NYT | *The New York Times* |
| PASOA | Pan African Students Organization of the Americas |
| PASP | Pan African Skills Project |
| PASPC | Pan African Skills Project Collection |
| RAM | Revolutionary Action Movement |
| SFV | Search for a Vanguard: A Series of Anthologies Covering the Black Liberation Movement in the 1970s, SOBU-YOBU-FFM 1969–1976 |
| SHC UNC | Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill |
| SNCC NL | *The SNCC Newsletter* |
| SNL | *The SOBU Newsletter* |
| SOBU | Student Organization for Black Unity |
| TAC | *The Asheville Citizen* |
| TAW | *The African Warrior* |
| TES | *The Evening Star* |

| | |
|---|---|
| TAFP | Thomas Augustus Fraser Papers ← xviii \| xix → |
| TNO | *The News and Observer* |
| TWP | *The Washington Post* |
| UNCG GVC | University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Item #1.10.575, GreensboroVOICES Collection |
| YOBU | Youth Organization for Black Unity ← xix \| xx → |

# Introduction

This work examines the history of the Pan-Africanist educational institution Malcolm X Liberation University as an extension of the educational and social philosophies of Malcolm X. This narrative centers on the period from 1960 to 1973 during the decline of the traditional Civil Rights Movement and the rise of Black Power activism. It also explores the educational influence of Malcolm X as a proponent of Black Nationalism and the ideological evolution of the Black Student Movement.

Malcolm X Liberation University (MXLU) was founded in Durham and Greensboro, North Carolina in the late 1960s as a by-product of the national Black Student Movement that had begun during the Civil Rights Movement.[1] During this same period, the Nation of Islam (NOI), a Black Nationalist organization whose activities extended the legacy of the Pan-Africanist movement led by Marcus Garvey in the 1920s, was making inroads in the urban North. The NOI, which was founded in 1930, would eventually produce a spokesman who would reinvigorate Black Nationalism and influence Black thought far beyond the organization's secular limits.[2] That person was Malcolm X.

For many, Malcolm represented the unspoken aspirations of millions of Black folks who wanted social, political, and economic empowerment as opposed to the social integration proffered by the Civil Rights Movement. As national spokesman ← 1 | 2 → for the Nation of Islam and later founder of the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), Malcolm was a decisive figure in the rise of Black Nationalism and the emergence of the Pan-Africanist movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Many historians

regard him as the spiritual architect and the intellectual foundation of the Black Nationalist revival.[3]

Although he is widely credited as a natural pedagogue with a gift for direct and effective instruction, Malcolm never provided an explicit philosophy of education. However, Malcolm's words and ideas, which have been preserved in countless texts, audio clips, and film documentaries, reveal that he crafted a precise and functional educational philosophy that grew and evolved from his childhood to his assassination on February 21, 1965. In the years that followed, Malcolm's pedagogic emphasis on Black interdependence and self-determination, Pan- Africanist effort and expression, spiritual self-awareness, and evolutionary-revolutionary ideation provided a theoretical framework for the Black Student Movement and the development of independent Black educational institutions.

This study explores how Malcolm's pedagogical influence helped shape the development of Malcolm X Liberation University and attempts to answer the following questions:

- 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 Malcolm X's philosophies and influence impact the Black student movement?
- What were the ideological shifts that took place in Black student organizations in the context of the Black Power and 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?

Finding answers to these questions and many others required an excavation of Malcolm's impact on the Black Student Movement and his position as a "profound external force for the radicalization of students within the crucible of the Black Struggle for human rights."[4] "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."[5] Malcolm's work with the NOI and later as chairman of the OAAU enabled him to engage a wide range of student audiences. He seemed to revel in his involvements with young people and exhibited a passion for self-education. This ← 2 | 3 → work provides a revisionist reading and historical analysis of Malcolm's legacy as a teacher by examining his impact on educational initiatives rooted in the Black Power era. In Sum, *Fighting for Our Place in the Sun*, aims to concretize Malcolm's often-underrated importance as a force for social pedagogy.

# Notes

1 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.

2 C. Eric Lincoln, *Black Muslims in America* (Boston: Beacon, 1973); Karl Evanzz, *The Messenger: The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1999).

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

4 Winston Grady-Willis, *Challenging U.S. Apartheid: Atlanta and Black Struggles for Human Rights 1960–1977* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

5 Ibid. ← 3 | 4 →

← 4 | 5 →

# 1

# Malcolm X and/as Social Pedagogy

## *A Critical Historical Analysis*

It had been ten months since his break with the Nation of Islam, nine since his pilgrimage to Mecca, and seven since he had announced the formation of the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU); clearly Malcolm X had much on his mind. And yet, on January 26, 1965, as he spoke into a microphone for a Dartmouth College radio station, Malcolm seemed unconstrained by the exigencies of the Black Nationalism he hoped to foster through the OAAU or by the doctrinal demands of the Islamic orthodoxy he had embraced during his journey to the Ka'aba. Instead, he spoke as Malcolm X the revolutionary educator, Malcolm X the populist pedagogue, Malcolm X *the teacher*.

"Education is first," he said during the Dartmouth interview. "Education is the first step towards solving any problem that exists anywhere on this Earth which involves people who are oppressed."[1]

Although Malcolm's public persona had been shaped—for good and ill—by his allegiance to Islam and his commitment to a radical revision of the means and methods of securing progress for African Americans, his actions reflected a professorial pre-occupation with a social pedagogy that had as its chief aim the expansion of knowledge throughout a global academy. Still, despite his stated belief in the power of education and his emergence as a forceful teacher with an international profile—during his 1964 trip to Africa, he had been greeted by thousands of young people during lectures in Nigeria and Ghana—Malcolm's ← 5 | 6 → importance to education remains obscured by competing, often erroneous, perceptions of his work.

In life and in death, Malcolm has been variously interpreted as the spirit of a revitalized Black Nationalist tradition, as the embodiment of a Black urban psyche that

roared with aggression and pain, and as the preeminent champion of Black militancy in opposition to the social assimilation, integration, and passive action often attributed to the Civil Rights Movement. He has been cast as a "firebrand" and an apostle of hate not only toward White America but toward an old guard Civil Rights leadership that seemed more concerned with securing a place for African Americans in the house of the American establishment than with confronting the racism that is the cornerstone of that establishment. And for those who had grown dissatisfied with marching, singing, and only pseudo-gain for a small segment of the African American masses, Malcolm had been the defining figure in the fight for Black liberation, the high commander and unquestioned leader in an ongoing struggle by those seeking freedom—*by any means necessary*.

These competing visions of Malcolm have yielded decades of social, political, and historical cross-talk that has fueled extensive critical scholarship. Scholars who have examined Malcolm's life and legacy and found it a viable commentary on the American scene have been countered by scholars who concluded that Malcolm's affirmative efforts had either been overstated or were somehow void and meritless. For example, Manning Marable's unflattering depiction of the Civil Rights leader in *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (2011) has been challenged by a plethora of pro-Malcolmist scholars, including Jared Ball and Todd Steven Burroughs, editors of *A Lie of Reinvention: Correcting Manning Marable's Malcolm X* (2012).

Academic tit-for-tat aside, for countless scholars, Malcolm's life and work have served as a master class on Advanced Black Nationalism, an intellectual catalyst for their critiques of the American system, and as an impetus to their personal pedagogies. Dr. John Henrik Clarke, a writer, historian, and professor widely credited with the propagation of the Africana Studies movement, suggested that Malcolm helped him see the connection between classroom instruction and the Black Nationalist ethic. Even after his assassination in 1965, Malcolm continued to exert a powerful influence over Clarke's approach to teaching.

"The whole year after his death I always got the feeling that we were having our usual conversation and I would always end it 'What can I do?'" said Clarke, during an interview for the documentary *A Great and Mighty Walk*. "And finally I got the feeling that he had said, 'Do your best work.' I was a good teacher before that. I was a better teacher and better human being after that."[2] Conversely, some scholars have contended that Malcolm is a quixotic nonstarter unworthy as either a role model or ← 6 | 7 → as a topic of serious scholarship. Dr. Adolph Reed, a political scientist and professor at the University of Pennsylvania, argues as much in his book, *Stirrings in the Jug: Black Politics in the Post-Segregation Era* (1999). "Because Malcolm has no agency at all, he is now even more a hologram of social forces than he was for my generation," writes Reed. "The inchoate, often apparently inconsistent trajectory of his thought makes him

an especially plastic symbol in the present context."[3]

Reed and others who have made a veritable pastime of attacking Malcolm's legacy are engaged in a form of scholarship that conveniently understates or ignores Malcolm's critical role in guiding the Civil Rights Movement toward the era of Black Power and in establishing a pedagogical foundation for that Movement. Other scholars have avoided this pitfall and assessed Malcolm's unparalleled importance in establishing the ideological motivation for this critical segment of the Black Freedom Struggle. "More than any other person, Malcolm X was responsible for the new militancy that entered the movement in 1965," wrote Frederick D. Harper in his 1971 article "The Influence of Malcolm X on Black Militancy."[4]

This "new militancy" was a direct outgrowth of specific efforts reflecting Malcolm's educational philosophy, notably the establishment of pedagogically centered organizations intended to revitalize traditional Black Nationalism based on Malcolm's powerful influence on educational and nationalist institutions. As a result, Malcolm's emergence during the Civil Rights Movement represented much more than the idle catch phrases and context-devoid sound bites too often associated with the Civil Rights leader. It marked a quantum shift in the way young African American learners viewed themselves and the oppressive conditions around them.

Critics may contend that Malcolm was an elusive try-do-well whose efforts produced little real progress, pedagogically or otherwise, but the facts belie that argument. Malcolm, the revolutionary educator, Malcolm, the populist pedagogue, Malcolm, the teacher, changed forever the nature of education by effectuating a call for a national elevation of consciousness and self- reliance that was actualized in the Black Student Movement, through Black Studies programs, and in the growth of a Black Nationalist cultural aesthetic in the postsecondary arena.

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

The story is well known, but it is worth repeating.

In the late 1930s, Malcolm Little, an intelligent, thoughtful African American child, propels himself to the top of his junior high school class. The ambitious ← 7 | 8 → young man opens his heart to a trusted teacher, a Mr. Ostrowski, revealing that one day he'd like to become a lawyer. The teacher, who is white, tells the child that the law "is no realistic goal for a nigger."[5] Shattered, young Malcolm forsakes school and eventually turns to crime.

Some years later, when the child had become an adult, he noted that his lack of formal education had not precluded him from attaining other important personal

qualities. “I am not educated, nor am I an expert in any particular field—but I am sincere, and my sincerity is my credentials,”[6] said Malcolm X during a 1964 press conference.

To fully understand the ideological underpinnings of Malcolm’s philosophy of education, it is important to critically examine how his views of himself and of formal pedagogy evolved between his departure from that Michigan junior high school and his death in 1965. It has been suggested that Malcolm’s sense of self (and his concomitant view of education) developed along a clear and identifiable path defined by a series of critical life events.

In *The Transformational Leadership of Malcolm X*, Dr. Najee E. Muhammad of Ohio University posits that “Malcolm X manifested five stages in the development of his transformational legacy.” According to Muhammad, the stages were as follows:

Stage 1: *School leader (1932–1940)*

Malcolm excels in school, is voted class president, and has a tragic and life-altering encounter with his grade school teacher, Mr. Ostrowski.

Stage 2: *Street leader (1940–1948)*

Malcolm becomes a hustler and develops the savvy and ability to “code switch,” which will enhance his future leadership skills and his appeal to the masses.

Stage 3: *Prison leader (1948–1952)*

Malcolm is reinvigorated as an intellectual and scholar in prison. He hones his oratorical skills as a prison debate team member.

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. His high-profile position in the NOI affords him a social and political platform that earns him national prominence and allows Malcolm to exert himself as an eminent educational influence over an emerging Black Power Movement. ← 8 | 9 →

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

Malcolm establishes two organizations, both with pedagogical components: the Muslim Mosque Inc. (MMI) and the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU). Malcolm’s domestic and international appeal enables him to have a transformative impact on a global audience.[7]

Muhammad’s model is an effective basis for understanding Malcolm’s educational philosophy. However, a complete analysis demands that each stage of development be fully correlated to bona fide pedagogical outcomes. In other words, a dynamic process

of critical investigation, including an in-depth analysis of Malcolm's speeches, video documentation, and archival data found in text form is necessary to show not only that Malcolm subscribed to a specific educational philosophy but also that it yielded tangible programs, organizations, and institutions.

There are attendant challenges to such a critical investigation. Dr. Muhammad summed up the problem when he observed that "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."[8]

Although Malcolm spoke extensively at educational institutions around the world, leaving a trail of documentary and oratorical breadcrumbs for scholars to follow, an elucidation of Malcolm's educational philosophy has remained elusive. In historical works, such as William Sales' *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity* (1994) and Louis A. DeCaro's *On the Side of My People: A Religious Life of Malcolm X* (1996), the Civil Rights leader is discussed as a scholar and educator, but there are oversights regarding his educational philosophy. In addition, scholarship that examines the educational impact of Malcolm X is nearly non existent.

Even so, there have been valiant efforts to accurately convey Malcolm's profound importance to the development of a Black Nationalist ideal and a related educational philosophy. Scholar and activist Maulana Karenga ably tackles the subject in his [insightful/groundbreaking] article "*The Socio-Political Philosophy of Malcolm X*", which was published in the *Western Journal of Black Studies* in the winter of 1979. This work critically interprets the social and political aspects of Malcolm X's philosophy for Blacks throughout the African diaspora. Karenga analyzed four components of Malcolm's educational legacy:

1. Model Maulana/Model Master-Teacher
2. Model Student ← 9 | 10 →
3. Critical Thinker
4. Accent on Youth

While Karenga's analysis shows the great potential for a meaningful exploration of Malcolm's educational impact, it does not sufficiently outline an educational philosophy. Therefore, an analysis of Malcolm X's influence through his own educational and scholarly endeavors must be undertaken to consider Malcolm's educational influence beyond the Nation of Islam and into the larger frames of Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism. It also would counter the pervasive and wrong-headed view that Malcolm X did not articulate a set of educational beliefs that correlated 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."[9] Again, it is critical to assert that not only did Malcolm have a clear and identifiable educational philosophy but also that educational philosophy elevated Black consciousness on a domestic and international scale and continues to be a vibrant pedagogical force.

To fully understand Malcolm's educational genesis, it is important to consider the outcome of his profoundly negative encounter with the middle school teacher Mr. Ostrowski. The experience placed Malcolm on a downward trajectory that would lead to his incarceration in 1946. At age twenty, Malcolm was convicted on burglary charges and sent to Boston's Charleston State Prison.[10] There he would gain a reputation for his outspokenly atheistic sentiments. "I would pace for hours like a caged leopard, viciously cursing aloud to myself," Malcolm recalled. "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."[11]

Malcolm entered prison with a drug habit and while incarcerated continued to feed his addiction for narcotics, DeCaro writes: "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."[12]

However, after spending a little over two years incarcerated, Malcolm would begin a metaphysical transformation, eventually leading to his religious conversion to the Nation of Islam under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad. This transformation began with Malcolm's educational reincarnation. Investigative journalist and historian Karl Evanzz notes that "with nothing but time on his ← 10 | 11 → 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."[13]

In 1948, Malcolm's brother Philbert wrote him a letter in which he explained "he had discovered the natural religion for the black man." He had joined something called "the Nation of Islam,"[14] and asked Malcolm to pray to Allah for deliverance. Shortly after, Malcolm would receive a letter from another brother, Reginald. That letter included 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."[15] 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 soon discovered the sincerity of the information provided by his family and not long after converted to the Nation of Islam. 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.[16] 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."[17]

In 1951, Malcolm was denied parole because he sent letters to state officials condemning the domestic and international practices of the United States government, but he was released a year later. However, the man who had entered prison was not the man who earned parole. The social deviant Malcolm Little was gone. What remained was the young Nation of Islam minister, Malcolm X.[18]

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

In July 1952, a newly paroled Malcolm X left prison to reside with his brother Wilfred in Michigan. During this time, Malcolm took a job at a local factory and became a student minister in the Nation of Islam.

Relying heavily on his gift for oratory and a virtually limitless reservoir of personal charisma, Malcolm was able to move the Nation of Islam into the mainstream of Black urban life in Detroit and Chicago. By 1954, he had tripled the ← 11 | 12 → membership in the Detroit mosque. His success at "fishing" for converts led to his elevation to assistant minister at the Holy Temple of Islam, the NOI's Detroit mosque.

Malcolm's energy and determination were so apparent that Elijah Muhammad quickly appointed him to build temples and attract converts nationwide. Like a desert sirocco, Malcolm swept across the country, preaching, teaching, and building in Joliet, Illinois; Cleveland and Dayton, Ohio; and Camden, Patterson, and Jersey City, New Jersey. Within three years of his release from prison, Malcolm had established more than twenty-seven temples.[19] Karl Evanzz writes:

> 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.[20]

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 not only for the youth membership of the Nation but also would create a critical adult educational component for the effective reinforcement of NOI doctrine.

A key element of this effort would be the strengthening and propagation of the University of Islam (UoI). At the time, the UoI was a combined elementary and secondary school in Detroit that had been established as an extension of the early work of NOI founder Fard Muhammad and Elijah Muhammad. The aims and objectives of the school were to provide a curriculum for NOI members that focused on higher level mathematics, astronomy, and the "ending of the spook civilization."[21] It also included teachings specifically designed for women, writes theologian and sociologist C. Eric Lincoln: "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."[22]

The UoI (which eventually grew into a system of schools attached to local NOI mosques) became attractive to both members and nonmembers of the organization mainly because of the alternative education it provided. Lincoln's seminal 1961 work, *The Black Muslims in America*, documents the early history of the organization and includes a number of revealing interviews with NOI members. These interviews offer firsthand insight into the powerful appeal of the NOI's ← 12 | 13 → education efforts to a generation of African Americans who had often been denied both academic and cultural understanding. During an interview, a Chicago woman summed up the NOI's appeal when she was asked if she was sending her children to a Nation school:

> 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.[23]

The Nation of Islam's organizational structure, educational requirements, and financial and human resources enabled the organization's members to utilize racial and cultural pride as tools to increase consciousness and instill the motivation to learn. As for Malcolm, he was both a student of the NOI educational system and one of its chief proponents. His educational philosophy reflected the cultural, political, and spiritual concerns of the NOI. However, as Malcolm matured intellectually and personally, his own educational philosophy exceeded the limits of his early NOI training and became a distinct scholarly paradigm.

## Malcolm X: Scholar and Educational Philosophy

> "I finished the eighth 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."[24]
>
> —Malcolm X

> "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."[25]
>
> —Carter G. Woodson

The birth of Malcolm X as a scholar is often attributed to his aggressive approach for satisfying his own thirst for knowledge. Malcolm is often cited as an individual who read voraciously. Reading was the basis of his intellectual development, and Malcolm expected the same commitment to scholarship from his colleagues.[26] However, Malcolm's affinity for learning is often viewed as an innate quality rather than as an intentional conjunct of an educational philosophy. In the same way, Malcolm's repeated assertions about the importance of education are often ← 13 | 14 → viewed as part of a package of sociopolitical stances rather than what it was: a distinct educational viewpoint that could and did motivate subsequent generations of Black students. Therefore, it is important to examine Malcolm's maturation as a scholar and the evolution of his distinct educational philosophy.

During his imprisonment, Malcolm attributed the decline of his academic skills to the time that he had spent as a street hustler. Paradoxically, in the *Autobiography of Malcolm X as Told to Alex Haley*, Malcolm speaks extensively on how his time in prison had 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 intellectualism awoke an excitement in Malcolm that motivated 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 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.[27]

As mentioned earlier, Malcolm's academic regression resulted from 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."[28] According to other sources, Malcolm may not have given himself enough credit here, the implication being that he overemphasized the Nation of Islam's role in his education out of a sense of indebtedness to the organization. In fact, during his time behind bars, Malcolm's aptitude for learning had already been

confirmed.

> 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 …his abstract reasoning and his "range of information" skills were rated "superior."[29]

Malcolm's academic approach (notably his belief in and reliance on formal instruction) was also fully developed long before his departure from prison. Acting on the advice of his sister Hilda, Malcolm had spent part of his time in prison taking correspondence courses to improve his writing and had undertaken a study of how Latin influenced English vocabulary.[30] ← 14 | 15 →

Malcolm would also study and copy the entire dictionary as a tutorial reference for his scholastic advancement and to improve his reading comprehension, "I'd never realized so many words existed!" he recalled. "I didn't know *which* words I 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."[31]

Malcolm's love of language and reading would form the basis on which he would expand his oratorical style and learning aptitude. He claimed that "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 in my bunk."[32]

Malcolm's readings were extensive and varied and included Will Durant's *Story of Civilization*, H. G. Wells's *Outline of History*, W. E. B. Du Bois's *Souls of Black Folk*, Carter G. Woodson's *Negro History*, J. A. Rogers's three-volume *Sex and Race*, and Gregor Mendel's *Findings in Genetics*.[33] Malcolm made extensive use of the Norfolk Prison Colony library as well as the classes taught at the prison by instructors from Harvard and Boston University.

Malcolm's addiction to learning became so heightened that when the prison library was unable to quench his desire for new material, he would have his older sister Ella smuggle in books. Malcolm's nephew, Rodnell P. Collins, recounts in *Seventh Child: A Family Memoir of Malcolm X* that his mother would stuff books into his pants for his uncle Malcolm, who had taken a keen interest in studying law.[34]

Malcolm's love affair with books and reading would continue long past his days of incarceration. 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."[35]

The "homemade" prison education or unconventional training to which Malcolm 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 ← 15 | 16 → 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.[36]

Malcolm X's scholarly endeavors equate with an educational philosophy of self-reliance. As the prototype for that philosophy, Malcolm typified all the qualities he had learned as a graduate of "Books," including a dogged belief in the active transmission of acquired knowledge.

That quality was evident when, as a Nation of Islam leader, Malcolm developed a public-speaking class for younger ministers who aspired to head their own temples.[37] Benjamin Karim, a former Nation of Islam member and a founding member of the Organization of Afro-American Unity, described Malcolm's approach this way:

> 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.[38]

As always, Malcolm expected more of himself than he demanded of those around him. He required that his NOI ministers read the newspaper; he himself would create one. Citing a need for a news organ that could articulate the NOI message and desiring to extend his emerging pedagogic concerns in print, Malcolm took steps to create what would become the *Muhammad Speaks* newspaper. An eager student of the news business, Malcolm took an ad hoc apprenticeship at the *Los Angeles Herald Dispatch* in the late 1950s. He then turned his attention to New York where he made that city's Black-owned newspapers his classroom. Peniel Joseph writes, "Malcolm took note stalking the offices of the Amsterdam News and other publications determined to find a national organ to disseminate the NOI's world view."[39]

*Muhammad Speaks* was launched in 1960 just four years before Malcolm's split with the NOI. In that short time, the paper became a fixture in any city where the Nation had a mosque and members who could sell it on the street or distribute it through Black-owned retailers. Inevitably, Malcolm's departure from the Nation called into question each and every contribution he had made to the NOI, including his role in the founding

of *Muhammad Speaks*. Many in the Nation argue that Elijah Muhammad conceived the newspaper and that Malcolm ← 16 | 17 → merely handled the administrative details. However, Malcolm recalled the matter differently: "I am the founder of the paper, the originator of the paper. Few people realize it—I was the one who originated *Muhammad Speaks* newspaper. The initial editions were written entirely by me in my basement."[40]

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

For Malcolm, the critical study of history was a way to connect to contemporary phenomenon. He believed that "by studying the history of contemporary oppression … its origins would be exposed, contemporary problems diagnosed and solutions advanced."[41]

Malcolm would synergize a speaking style that related history to the current issues of the masses and use 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 mere sensationalism. For example, on January 24, 1965, Malcolm roused a gathering of the Organization of Afro-American Unity with the following observations:

> When you deal with the past, you're dealing with history, you're dealing actually with the 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.[42]

Malcolm excavated history for a better understanding of the conditions that Blacks faced because he understood that the conditions were not isolated from a larger societal context. His educational philosophy, which included the discipline of history, went beyond Malcolm's lectures to practice. As head of the Nation of Islam's Temple 7 in Harlem, Malcolm used his understanding of the traditional ways in which Black people communicate political attitudes to attract followers and turn informal encounters into future alliances or learning, teachable moments.[43]

Because Malcolm respected and understood the traditional methods of African American alliance building, he was able to move people. "Malcolm defined ← 17 | 18 → history not just as what was in books but also as that which could be validated by the collective experiences of Black people."[44]

To keep himself abreast of the ever-changing nature of that experience, Malcolm

often consulted with what John Henrik Clarke describes as a "shadow cabinet." This ad hoc collection of scholars, activists, and artists was based in Harlem and included Clarke, Lewis Michaux, Adam Clayton Powell Jr., Ossie Davis, Queen Mother Moore, Ella Collins, Vicki Garvin, and Shirley Graham Du Bois. While all the members of the cabinet were clearly attracted by Malcolm's message, most were also drawn by something else: Malcolm's embracing charisma and his powerful ability to speak directly to an individual's heart.[45]

## Malcolm X's Philosophy of Education: Personal Appeal

Malcolm X became significant to many African Americans because of his ability to relate to the Black community, not as a vague political utility but as a collection of individuals with highly personalized needs. He understood the language of a people on the social periphery and who, in many cases, like him, aggressively opposed the cultural assimilation that was central to the integration ethic of the Civil Rights Movement. More importantly, Black folks needed an individual who could voice the frustrations of the masses in a language and style that was relatable. Historian John Henrik Clarke argues that Malcolm's style of speech—which was rooted in an intensive understanding of how the great mass of Black folks view themselves and their history—made it possible for many African Americans to not only hear Malcolm's teachings but to internalize them. This distinction becomes especially clear when Clarke juxtaposes Malcolm's speaking style with that of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.:

> When in 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.[46]

According to Benjamin Karim, Malcolm "had the ability to hold the minds of thousands of people … even in the rain I have seen thousands of people stand in the rain and listen to Malcolm and nobody would leave."[47] Writer Sonia Sanchez ← 18 | 19 → suggested that Malcolm understood audience dynamics and capably managed the expectations of those who gathered to hear him:

> The joy of Malcolm is that he could have an audience of college professors, school teachers, nurses, doctors, musicians, artists, poets and sisters, ah who were housewives, sisters who worked for people in their houses, brothers who, ah were just hanging on the streets, whatever, or were waiting outside the temple to get inside. The point is that I've never seen anyone appeal to such a broad audience, and the reason why he could do that is because he understood the bottom line is that if you tell people the truth, then it will appeal to everyone.[48]

Malcolm knew that the way a person speaks defines how he or she is perceived and

that the way a teacher instructs defines what his or her students understand. "I had learned early one thing … and that was to always teach in terms that people could understand."[49] While other leaders and teachers at the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement taught an integrationist reality that seemed increasingly detached from the mass's fundamental hopes for economic justice and self-determination, Malcolm weaved a narrative that Black people could retain for future reference. He informed his audience in a way that motivated and edified. 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."[50]

Like a historian who had excavated the key to some long misunderstood language, Malcolm relied on his own experiences to connect to Black people in the ghetto and to inform those outside it. He observed that "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."[51]

Malcolm's deep understanding of "ghetto Negroes"—especially those at the margins—was the bedrock of his social narrative and the foundation of his educational approach:

> I knew that the ghetto people knew that I never left the ghetto in spirit, and I never left it 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.[52] ← 19 | 20 →

That Malcolm's educational philosophy was not only beneficial but also comprehensible is apparent from the national demand for Malcolm to give college lectures. In fact, Malcolm would develop a preference for speaking on college campuses: "The college sessions never failed to be exhilarating. They never failed in helping me to further my own education."[53]

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 and universities across the country:

> 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.[54]

According to Harry Edwards in his work *Black Students*, "Malcolm X's message to Black students was clear, concise and unmistakably explicit."[55] He encouraged students

to focus on the Black community and the control and maintenance of its resources and institutions; to reject any effort to restrict their academic and intellectual liberty; to develop an ethic (Malcolm proposed Black Nationalism) that would unify the Black community and make it immune to outside control; to connect with Black people in Africa and other parts of the world; and to 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.[56]

These directives would have a profound effect on untold numbers of students and would eventually ignite the Black Student Movement. They would also prove an immediate and compelling influence on individuals who met Malcolm and were impressed by the directness of his ideas and the uncluttered persuasiveness of his instruction. Poet Sonia Sanchez states:

> The reason why Malcolm was so effective was because the moment that he came into an audience, he told them exactly what he intended to do with them. He began to tell us and explain to us in a very historical fashion just what our enslavement was about. The moment he did that, he always had some new information for you.[57]

While some were swayed by Malcolm's ability to absorb detailed scholarly information and repackage it as ground-level instruction, others were taken by his ← 20 | 21 → professorial knack for presenting the unvarnished realities of Black urban life as a type of humanistic classwork. Malcolm's long-time friend and associate Peter Bailey recalls how Malcolm's every word seemed to contain pedagogic import:

> We began to listen and every time he would mention an article, magazine, or book, we would go and try to find that article and magazine and book to read … In every sense of the word for me, it was a University of the Streets. You know that term is overused but I think literally, ah, it was a University of the Streets … It was a learning experience in the absolute, most, ah most, the best sense of that term learning. And for about five or six Saturdays I felt as though I learned how, ah the system worked in this country than I had learned in all the years, you know, prior to that, just listening to his analysis. So to me it was ah, it was the beginning of my higher education though I had already had two years of college by the time this happened.[58]

## Malcolm X: An Expansive Educational Philosophy

The quest for knowledge can lead to the opportunity to inform others of information that one has encountered. Absolutely crucial to this search for truth is the ability to be self-critical. 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 viewed as immutable. 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 cultural, political, and even racial differences.[59] 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.[60]

A critical example of Malcolm X's expansive self-educational experience correlates to the evolution of his disposition regarding white people. 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 ← 21 | 22 → just see things on a broader scale.'" Later in the same statement, he referred to the white man as "the snake."[61]

For many, that statement is irrefutable proof that Malcolm X never abandoned his negative view of whites. However, a more thorough reading of his comment suggests that Malcolm was not as narrow as some believe him to be. The fact is that much of Malcolm's rhetoric is not contextualized in a larger discourse that would allow a full evaluation of his stance on certain subjects.

An example of Malcolm's amended attitude toward whites comes from a moment that Malcolm recalled during his interviews with Alex Haley for his autobiography. Malcolm spoke candidly regarding his reassessment of white America and the social and political forces that constructed the dynamics of racialized thought in all Americans. For a long time Malcolm had reasoned that if a white person assisted him, that person had selfish motives, so his instinct was to thoroughly investigate the reasons and tendencies of that individual. However, this attitude was challenged during Malcolm's religious pilgrimage to Mecca. Malcolm's accommodations while abroad were provided by a cadre of individuals who invested their hope for the Black masses in Malcolm. Among those who aided Malcolm during his journey was Dr. Abd-Al-Rahman Azzam who, according to Malcolm, would have been considered white in America.[62]

Malcolm would speak extensively of Dr. Azzam's hospitality and note that the physician had nothing to gain and possibly everything to 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 media's 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 began a dramatic reassessment:

> 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.[63]

Throughout Malcolm's post-Hajj conversations regarding the state of American racial conditions, he continued to evaluate the stance he had taken regarding white America in his previous comments and speeches. Because of his broadened ← 22 | 23 → insight, he was able to gain a panoramic view of race that included an international perspective.

Malcolm's willingness to reassess his own ideas marked him as a "Master Teacher" according to Peter Bailey, who recognized Malcolm's ability to apply an interpretative analysis to society.[64] This analysis was ongoing and led Malcolm to constantly evaluate and reevaluate the world around him and to find a way to convey what he had learned to other people.

Malcolm's need to instruct was expansive and included a desire to educate all people. During the writing of his autobiography, Malcolm reflected on a regrettable moment that occurred while his self-educational experiences were still maturing. A white woman from New England had flown down to New York and had sought Malcolm out to ask what a sincere white person could do to help him. Malcolm's reply: "Nothing."[65] Malcolm later regretted his handling of the situation, noting that all Americans have a role to play in confronting the nation's racism:

> 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.[66]

Malcolm's expansive self-education wasn't limited to a reassessment of white people. It included a broad reconsideration of the very nature of truth, and how it is disseminated: "I've had enough of someone else's propaganda … I'm for truth, no matter who 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*."[67]

Malcolm's expanding and changing educational philosophy included an early, if not entirely perfected, attack on the 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 Nation of Islam. And by no

means did Malcolm's gender politics render him a saint; however, 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 ← 23 | 24 → to error is valuable because through error one can make the personal amendments necessary for future progress. A letter that Malcolm X wrote to his cousin-in-law on the eve of his death in 1965 illustrates this principle:

> 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 probably 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.[68]

Publicly, Malcolm didactically and audaciously attacked the American media—including segments of the Black press—for fostering images and ideals that denigrated Black women and their physical attributes. In so doing, Malcolm was again elucidating an element of the Black narrative that had been ignored or undermined by the Black elites and the mainstream Black media. The problem that Malcolm confronted was clearly identified by scholar Farah Jasmin Griffin who notes, "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, Dorthy Dandridge, and Eartha Kitt."[69]

As Malcolm began to condemn Eurocentric hierarchies of beauty imposed on African American women, he gained admiration for addressing and attacking issues that Black women faced on a continual basis. In the 1970s, Malcolm's critique of the Eurocentric standard would lead to a heightened appreciation of "darker beauties like Abbey Lincoln, Cicely Tyson, and Nina Simone."[70]

Even if Malcolm had not articulated a more sensitized view of women, his affinity for the wisdom, insight, intelligence, and courage of the opposite sex was evidenced through his reliance on the help and counsel of the women in his shadow cabinet, including his sister Ella Collins, Queen Mother Moore, Vicki Garvin, Fannie Lou Hamer, Yuri Kochiyama, Sonia Sanchez, Gloria Richardson, Vicki Garvin, and Shirley Graham Du Bois, to name a few.

Like his ideas on race, Malcolm's expanding attitude toward women would also progress due to his travels, his involvement with the Pan-African Movement, and his engagement with other African people throughout the diaspora. This is substantiated by a statement Malcolm made during an interview in Paris in November 1964. The statement is presented here in its entirety: ← 24 | 25 →

> 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 the 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.[71]

Clearly, Malcolm's philosophy of education must be regarded not only as historically centered, intellectually expansive, and self-reliance based, it also must be viewed as inclusive and open to all who seek social change. This philosophy of a "non-formal community education"[72] is not centered on race or gender but is based on a belief in nationalism, community development, and the securing and protection of the rights of all people.

## Malcolm X: Education as a "Call to Work": Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU)

Upon his split from the Nation of Islam, Malcolm established Muslim Mosque Inc. (MMI) 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 nonsecular organization for individuals who were eager to aid him in the Black Freedom Struggle but who were not committed to his religious beliefs. While the OAAU would not mature to its full potential due to Malcolm's assassination, its influence is definite and far reaching.

Malcolm's educational philosophy was deeply imbedded in the aims and objectives of the OAAU platform. The goal of the educational prospectus of the organization was to work for more parental inclusion and aggressively demand that major amendments be made to school curricula nationwide.[73] The educational component also stressed "the need for adult education and for job training programs that will emphasize a changing society in which automation plays a key role."[74] Malcolm X and the OAAU foresaw education as a liberating tool that could be used to elevate ← 25 | 26 → "people to an unprecedented level of excellence and self-respect through their own efforts."[75]

The OAAU established a school as the practical educational component of the organization. Modeled after the freedom schools that had sprung up in the South at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, the OAAU Liberation School provided a curriculum in African and African American history, political education, and consumer information. The school also administered adult education classes in which the average

age of the students was thirty-five.[76]

The OAAU's internationalist aims, its expression of Malcolm's expansive outlook, and its eventual influence on the nascent Black Student Movement might be better understood through the experience of Yuri Kochiyama. Often under-acknowledged or omitted from Malcolm X scholarship, Kochiyama was the OAAU's lone Asian member. A Harlem resident and Malcolm's close friend, Kochiyama, who is of Japanese descent, was one of the few individuals that Malcolm wrote to while on his travels abroad. Attracted to Malcolm's anti- imperialist teachings, Kochiyama joined the OAAU after Malcolm's first African tour in 1964. She attended OAAU meetings regularly and was also a fixture at the OAAU's Liberation School. Kochiyama's exposure to the OAAU's diverse teachings, which ranged "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," shattered Kochiyama's early belief in nonviolent direct action and assimilationist thinking. She began to internalize lessons on self-determination, anticapitalism, and prosocialism culled from required OAAU readings, including Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1965), Kwame Nkrumah's *Consciencism* (1965), and Herbert Aptheker's *American Negro Slave Revolts* (1943). Kochiyama became thoroughly inculcated with the history of Black people and also the importance of reconsidering her earlier positions based on the effects of the policies of the United States on her native land and other Asian peoples.[77]

Yuri Kochiyama's experience exemplifies how Malcolm and the OAAU were able to exert a powerful and formative influence on young minds—even those with little vested interest in the Black Nationalist cause. Further, Malcolm was able to directly address the growing disenchantment of young people that gave rise to the Black Student Movement. 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."[78] ← 26 | 27 →

## Malcolm X and the Black Student Movement

> "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[79]

February 1, 1960: four Black freshmen from North Carolina A&T sit down at a segregated lunch counter at a Woolworth's in downtown Greensboro, North Carolina.

The courageous actions of these four Black young men sparked a wave of resistance throughout the South. "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 were white—participated in some kind of demonstration or another,"[80] Ahmad recounts.

As a result of student protests—most resulting in the arrests of the young protestors—hundreds of segregated lunch counters were desegregated throughout the South. During that same period, Ella Baker, a founding member and key organizer for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), called a conference to bring the student sit-in leaders together. Baker knew she had to act quickly because of the possibility that an established civil rights organization might co-opt the students and their movement. Baker had a different idea: keep the students at the vanguard.[81]

An alumnus of Shaw University in North Carolina, Baker was able to get the SCLC to underwrite a grant to pay for the conference at her alma mater. The meeting took place April 15–17, 1960—Easter weekend. The meeting attracted "over two-hundred people … one hundred twenty-six of them student delegates from fifty-eight different Southern communities in twelve states."[82] The conference led to the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which was constructed to be the organizing epicenter for student activity in the 1960s based on the nonviolent philosophies of the SCLC.

The next year, SNCC launched a successful organizing effort that led to the start of the Congress of Racial Equality's (CORE) freedom rides. This innovative form of protest began on May 14, 1961, and was intended to test the compliance of southern jurisdictions and businesses with the Supreme Court's decision ← 27 | 28 → outlawing segregation in transportation terminals. In response to the efforts of CORE, white violence increased and death tolls mounted.[83]

Embarrassed by the violent spectacle unfolding 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 its mass voter registration efforts, especially in rural communities throughout Mississippi and Georgia. Not only did these efforts gain national attention, thus they also provide a recruitment tool for young people on a national basis.[84]

In northern cities, the Nation of Islam was making its own inroads, in part because of aggressive sales of its news organ, *Muhammad Speaks*, but largely because of the brash intellect and visibility of its national spokesman, Malcolm X. Many young people of both high school and college age gravitated toward the NOI as they heard Malcolm 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.

Exemplifying the magnetic attraction to Malcolm's brashness, candid speaking style, and witty intellect were the students of the Non-Violent Action Group (NAG) in Washington, D.C. A friend of SNCC affiliate, NAG was born through the nonviolent direct action protests in the Washington, D.C. area and later formally organized and established on the Howard University campus on June 26, 1960. NAG was founded to assist in raising funds for SNCC, hold demonstrations in D.C. for voter's rights, send food and clothing to Mississippi for disenfranchised Black folks, and to organize in and around the D.C. area. NAG members evolved as a critical force of young activists by literally "nagging" the Washington area establishment through nonviolent direct action. Never comprised of more than fifty members, NAG's activism at Howard led to the establishment of Project Awareness as a pedagogical mechanism that brought speakers to the Howard campus to stimulate ideas among the students and faculty. Most importantly, Howard University gained recognition as the premier academic space in Washington, D.C. for intellectual activity related to the civil rights struggle. The activists of NAG and Howard publicly reinforced its reputaion by scheduling the first Project Awareness debate between Malcolm X and Bayard Rustin. Malcom's previous debate confirmation on Howard's Campus was met with scepticism by ← 28 | 29 → the administration, but since the historically Black university had already received accolades for the event, the administration had no choice but to allow the debate.[85]

The debate took place on October 31, 1961, at Howard's Cramton Auditorium before a packed audience with hundreds of more eager students and community persons waiting outside to catch a glimpse of the two intellectual titans. Moderated by the sociologist E. Franklin Frazier, the debate was titled "Integration or Separation." Sparing like champion prizefighters, Malcolm and Rustin engaged the question of the usage of nonviolence in the Movement and the roles of integration versus Black self-reliance for the liberation of Black people. While the debate was stimulating and captivating, the event marked the beginnings of a relationship that would endure the shifts of movement and forever arrest the attention of a critical mass of the NAG membership. Many of the NAG membership expected Rustin to win the debate without any real challenge from the NOI spokesman; however, the result was quite the opposite and enlightening for all of those in attendance. Stokely Carmichael recalled some decades later in his own autobiography that Malcolm unquestionably won the debate and also gained stature with the NAG members due to Malcolm's interaction with the students.[86] Carmichael, who was a NAG member and a chief organizer for the Malcolm-Rustin debate, remarked that "it was from this point that it can be dated, when nationalism took its firm root and became dominant inside of the nonviolent action group. It was from Malcolm's debate."[87]

Captivated by Malcolm's rhetoric and the paramilitary discipline of the NOI's Fruit

of Islam (FOI), two Black college students traveled from Philadelphia to New York's Harlem Temple 7 to meet the man himself. It was Thanksgiving Day, 1962, and Max Stanford and Wanda Marshall, both students at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, wanted nothing less than to meet Malcolm X and gain his approval to join the Nation of Islam. The two couldn't believe their good fortune when they were not only introduced to Malcolm, but also they were able to engage him 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. Malcolm promptly replied, "No, you can do more for the Honorable Elijah Muhammad by organizing outside of the Nation." Within a few months, Stanford, Marshall, and a host of other Black students had begun conceptualizing a new organization: the Revolutionary Action Movement, better known as RAM.[88] ← 29 | 30 →

In a very real sense, RAM's historical antecedent wasn't the Nation of Islam: it was the white radical youth organization, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Stanford, Marshall, and a small group of African American SDS members who had become interested in the work of the NOI and Malcolm X began to further their ideological stance around the tenets of Black Nationalism and Black consciousness. By the fall of 1961, the students had formed a Black Nationalist group 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.[89] "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."[90] 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 sociopolitical actions of more moderate groups like SNCC in the South.[91]

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 titled "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American." Stanford made the article required reading for Challenge members. He sensed that the radical politics espoused by Cruse would provide a roadmap for Challenge as it steered the Black Student Movement in the direction of revolutionary Black Nationalism. Acting on that impetus, Challenge members—most of whom were students at three Ohio universities, Central State (CSC), Wilberforce, and Case Western Reserve—decided that their next move would be to take over the student government at CSC.

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.[92]

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 ← 30 | 31 → to their home communities and organize RAM chapters there, thus mobilizing RAM into a professional organization that consisted of students and nonstudents 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. This was done by establishing a bimonthly news organ, *Black America*, and also study groups.[93]

RAM members also benefited from the mentorship of Malcolm X. He not only provided feedback and direction on the development of RAM's early documents, he also agreed to serve as RAM's international spokesman. The latter agreement came with an important caveat: Malcolm's role was to be a secret. He told Stanford "he would become RAM's spokesman; but that it would have to be secretive because RAM's International Chairman, Robert F. Williams, was a fugitive from 'justice' and, his association organizationally with Williams could make him indictable."[94]

RAM and SNCC emerged at the forefront of the burgeoning Black Student Movement, but the energies and restlessness of Black students would gradually exceed the doctrinal and political boundaries of both organizations. Eventually, these forces would reach critical mass and lead not only to internal agitation but also new directions and considerations as students became affected by a liberating philosophy such as the one that Malcolm X espoused both implicitly and explicitly.

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86 "Malcolm X Speech, Howard University, October 30, 1961." Vertical File. AURCRWL; Stokley Carmichael and Ekuwueme Michael Thelwell, *Ready for Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture)* (New York: Scribner, 2003), 257–259; Interview with Cleveland Sellers, conducted by Blackside, on October 21, 1988, EOPII.

87 Interview with Stokely Carmichael, conducted by Blackside, on November 7, 1988, EOPII.

88 Ibid.

89 Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins Press, 2004), 78–79.

90 Ibid., 78.

91 Ibid.

92 Muhammad Ahmad (Maxwell Stanford Jr.), *We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations 1960–1975* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2007), 96–97.

93 Ogbar, *Black Power*, 79. Also see Peniel E. Joseph's "Dashikis and Democracy: Black Studies, Student Activism and the Black Power Movement," *Journal of African American History*, 88, no. 2 (Spring 2003), 182–203.

94 Ahmad, "On the Black Student Movement 1960–1970," n.d. Reel 17, no. 242, BPM RAM microfilm. ← 35 | 36 →

# 2

# Sowing the Wind to Reap a Whirlwind

## *Ideological Shifts and Radical Expressions in the Black Student Movement, 1963–1966*

> 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?[1]
>
> —Black Member of SNCC 1963, *Black Students*

Like the advance guard of a steadfast army, the young members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) the early part of 1963 engaged in a series of high-profile, nonviolent protests against racial injustice in Birmingham, Alabama, and elsewhere in the South. As this "spring offensive" continued, the opposition became increasingly brutal. Men, women, and children who dared to protest were beaten, jailed, blasted with fire hoses, mauled by police dogs, or worse. The leader of their movement, Martin Luther King Jr., was imprisoned. Ahmad declares, "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."[2]

For many Americans who saw or read reports about the violence, the spring of 1963 was transformational evidence of the inherent viciousness of American ← 37 | 38 → racism. Even those who were not ready to concede that the nation had a deeply rooted race problem could no longer deny that something was amiss.

Such doubts helped tip the scale in favor of the protestors who ended their Birmingham protests after local government and business leaders acceded to their integrationist demands. Such victories in Birmingham and other parts of the South had

come at a high cost in "blood and human lives." Clayborne Carson's seminal work *In Struggle* provides a critical assessment of the offensive's human toll and foreshadows a corresponding shift in ideology and tactics for young African American activists:

> 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.[3]

In northern cities like Philadelphia, the Revolutionary Action Movement's (RAM) maturation and work coincided with that of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) by organizing 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 [Congress of Racial Equality] began demonstrating at down-state northern cities with freedom marches and police brutality demonstrations."[4] 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).[5] 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 1963.[6]

As the vanguard of the student movement, SNCC's grassroots organizing was critical in the mobilization efforts that made the historic day a success. However, the pre-march meetings that took place among 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 ← 38 | 39 → 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, but to definitely problematize the activity of the Kennedy administration on a national and international platform.[7]

The original idea for the march stemmed from the 1941 intentions of A. Philip 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 1962, 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's 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."[8]

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 earmarked and disseminated among 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.

Lewis, James Forman, and other representatives of SNCC initially planned to demonstrate at the Justice Department with Lewis delivering a speech highly critical of the Kennedy administration and the federal government's neglect of the Black masses. In the original text of his speech, Lewis asked, "Which side is the federal government on?" He went on to argue that,

> the revolution is at hand and we must free ourselves 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 hands and create a source of power, outside of any national structure.[9]

The speech was vehemently opposed by the elder civil rights leadership. Lewis was eventually convinced to change it by a special committee that included ← 39 | 40 → Forman, Courtland Cox, Bayard Rustin, Randolph, Martin Luther King Jr., Ralph Abernathy, and Eugene Carson Blake of the National Council of Churches.

For his part, Malcolm had been highly critical of the march, suggesting that it was a pointless spectacle. However, on the night before the demonstration, Malcolm surprised many observers by traveling to Washington and holding an impromptu press conference —right outside a meeting of key march leaders. The meeting, held at the Statler Hilton Hotel in downtown Washington, had been organized by Bayard Rustin and included A. Philip Randolph, Whitney Young, Martin Luther King, Roy Wilkins, and John Lewis.

Ensconced in a hallway just outside the meeting room, Malcolm responded to a series of questions about the march and about his reasons for being in Washington.

"Why did you show up?" asked one reporter.

Malcolm replied, "Well, whatever Black folks do, maybe I don't agree with it but

I'm going to be there, brother, 'cause that's where I belong."[10]

March leaders were aghast. That didn't stop Malcolm. He eventually met with several SNCC members including John Lewis (laying the groundwork for several later encounters). Many of those who conferred with Malcolm were former Non-Violent Action Group (NAG) members who had met him during efforts to bring Malcolm to Howard's campus for the Project Awareness debates with Rustin. Cleveland Sellers, who was present during an impromptu meeting at a Washington coffee shop, recalled that Malcolm had discussed the transformation of the march from an act of Black civil disobedience into an integrated set of compromise.[11]

Incensed by the march's cooptation, Malcolm later referred to the event as the "Farce on Washington." Malcolm lamented that the "Chump's March," as he sometimes called it, had been subsidized and controlled by the Kennedy administration to thwart any possibility of radical activity. Malcolm, keenly aware of the $800,000 subsidy to the Big Six (civil rights leaders Martin Luther King Jr., James Farmer, John Lewis, A. Philip Randolph, Roy Wilkins, and Whitney Young) also decried the promised $700,000 grant targeted for the Big Six to be disseminated upon completion of the event.[12]

Malcolm, who routinely used adept metaphors in his pedagogical approach, applied that technique to his observations about the march. "If I have a cup of coffee that's too strong for me because it's too black, I weaken it by pouring cream into it," he said during a speech on October 6, 1963, at the Ford Hall Forum in Boston. "I integrate it with cream … If enough cream is poured in, eventually you ← 40 | 41 → don't even know that I have coffee in my cup. This is what happened to the march on Washington."[13]

Malcolm was less figurative when he observed

> The white man behind the "revolution" had even said what buses to take. What trains and planes to catch. They told them what time to arrive in Washington. They told them that when they arrived, not to shout any slogans. They told them to sing just one song ("We Shall Overcome"). They told them to bring no signs of their own making, but to carry the approved signs and placards that would be supplied. They told the "revolutionists" what streets to walk on. And, finally, they told the "revolutionists" to get out of town by sundown.[14]

Malcolm's objections aside, the march was a watershed for the civil rights struggle. It galvanized the American public and inspired broad-based sympathy for the Movement. However, only a few months later, the principles espoused by Dr. King and his constituents were further tested by white violence in the South. Many SNCC workers questioned the use of nonviolence after 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 sent waves of demoralization inside the Civil Rights Movement."[15]

Black college students, disaffected by the seeming impotence of civil rights leaders,

began exploring Black Nationalism as an alternative. Malcolm, who had cultivated strong ties to Black students on scores of campuses, was primed to address the growing restiveness of these young people. His ability to inspire and maintain the confidence of college students became a significant factor in Malcolm's influence among members of the emerging RAM organization.[16]

Paradoxically, it was during this same period that Black Muslims began developing a working relationship with the Big Six civil rights organizations. Widely viewed as the most conservative, socially acceptable element of the Black rights struggle, the Big Six had begun showing signs of increasing radicalization. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) was especially aggressive in questioning the Movement's ideology and strategies. Brooklyn CORE, which was comprised largely of Black and Puerto Rican members, was considered a cutting-edge operation capable of influencing the actions of other chapters. The Brooklyn office also had close ties to Malcolm and other members of the NOI. [17] Malcolm, who had engaged in forceful but friendly debates with CORE leaders James Farmer and Floyd McKissick, was regarded by many CORE members as a prescient and insightful truth-speaker. After a 1962 debate between Malcolm and Bayard Rustin, CORE's community relations director, Robert Gore said, "I must confess it did ← 41 | 42 → my heart a world of good to sit back and listen to Mr. X list the sins of the White man toward the Black man in America."[18] In New Orleans, members of CORE and the NOI frequently worked together addressing problems of poor Blacks and students at local colleges. CORE and the NOI held sway "upon the two population segments in which the chapter was involved—the lower class and the students."[19] Malcolm's involvement with CORE became a significant element of his effort to further involve Black Muslims with the larger political landscape.

This effort was further developed on November 10, 1963,—two months after the March on Washington—when Malcolm appeared at the Northern Negro Grassroots Leadership Conference in Detroit. During the meeting, Malcolm delivered his historic "Message to the Grassroots" speech. Speaking before an enthusiastic crowd that included many college students and representatives of RAM, Malcolm appealed for a Black united front, reasserted an ideal articulated at the 1954 International Bandung Conference. Malcolm's speech strongly influenced the young members of his audience and helped induce RAM to adopt a globalist perspective.[20]

Even as Malcolm was extending his influence outside the NOI, his power inside the Nation was being challenged. Within weeks of his appearance in Detroit, 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 silencing, Malcolm became increasingly aware of the competing interests and internal organizational maneuvers within the NOI. He eventually concluded that his reinstatement was unlikely. Therefore, he chose to declare his

independence from the organization that he had helped build.[21]

At a press conference on March 12, 1964, the nationalist community converged for the official announcement that Malcolm was severing ties with 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 too narrowly sectarian and too inhibited."[22] He announced the establishment of his own organization, the Muslim Mosque Incorporated (MMI), and indicated that the organization would be guided by the principals of Black Nationalism. Malcolm also emphasized the importance of civic engagement for the organization's members and, most importantly, signaled his willingness to work with mainstream civil rights groups. This action was exemplified in correspondence from the MMI to the then-chairman of SNCC, John Lewis, asking support for the endeavors of the newly established organization.[23] ← 42 | 43 →

Liberated from the conservative constraints of the NOI, Malcolm would not only be able to broaden his activities, but he also would be able to build the coalitions he had envisioned in his grassroots speech.[24] However, sensing that the MMI's religious profile might mitigate such effort, on June 28, 1964, Malcolm established the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU). The group was nonsectarian, Pan-Africanist, and intended to merge the intellectual, political, and social capabilities of Malcolm's increasingly varied associates.[25]

With the formation of the OAAU, Malcolm was ready to actualize his vision of a unified front of Black thinkers, activists, and social and political leaders:

> 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.[26]

A significant aspect of Malcolm's objectives for the OAAU would be to emphasize the role of youth and students in constructing ideas and strategies to build grassroots activism and promote Black Nationalism. Malcolm was especially intent on having college students engage in study and critical investigation of racial injustice in the United States and abroad. He informed the press that the OAAU would encourage and support "students to launch their independent study, and give analysis and their suggestions."[27]

Malcolm's call to Black students compelled RAM members to adopt a more nationalist position. Eventually, RAM sought to separate from 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 these mobilization efforts, the ASM was able to organize its first student conference with the theme: Black Nationalism.[28] ← 43 | 44 →

## 1964 ASM Conference on Black Nationalism

On May 1, 1964, the Afro-American Student Movement (ASM) met at Fisk University in Nashville for its first national conference. Organizers hoped to formulate a conceptual framework for the spread of Black Nationalism among Black workers, student activists, and radical grassroots intellectuals and to draw attention to the emerging "Third World Force."[29] The conference included SNCC members, Pan-African students, and Southern grassroots leadership. Malcolm X and Robert F. Williams, the foremost ideologues of the emerging RAM organization, set the tone for the conference by arguing that Blacks had a right to defend themselves against white aggression, even going to far as to suggest a need to establish rifle clubs within the Black community.[30]

According to Max Stanford in his 1986 MA thesis, "The conference was the ideological catalyst that eventually shifted the Civil Rights Movement into the Black Power Movement." Evidence of that shift can be found in Don Freeman's detailed record of the conference proceedings. Freeman, a RAM member, published the material in RAM's news organ, *Black America*, under the title "Black Youth and Afro-American Liberation."[31]

> The first conference session evaluated "bourgeois reformism." The integrationist civil rights organizations CORE, SNCC, NAACP, etc., substantiate Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois' 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 oathological 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 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 ← 44 | 45 → Black control; dedicated, disciplined, and decisive youth cadres willing to make the supreme sacrifice to build and sustain a Nationalist Movement.[32]

These ideas not only forced many members of traditionally integrationist organizations to question their motives and tactics but also challenged some who had long considered themselves Black Nationalists. As the conference proceeded, the ideas became less abstract and more action-oriented. The conference proffered a 13-point platform that made it clear that Black Nationalism would require action and not just talk. 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.
8. Construction of a Pan-African Student Conference.
9. Secretariat contacts 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.[33]

Black students left Fisk determined to implement the platform. Some RAM members, including Stanford and Ronald Snellings "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."[34]

In Greenwood, the RAM leaders learned that not all members of SNCC shared their growing militancy. In the months leading up to RAM's arrival in Greenwood, SNCC had attracted scores of white students for its voter registration campaign. The effort, a joint project of SNCC and the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), led to the formation of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP). Some of the credit for the success of the campaign went to the one hundred Yale and Stanford University students who spent two weeks ← 45 | 46 → during that Freedom Summer working to secure the rights of Black voters.[35] These newly minted, mostly white SNCC members

were outraged by the growing emphasis on Black self-defense promoted by RAM members.[36] Their concerns and those of some Black SNCC members fueled a sometimes-bitter debate that roiled the Mississippi SNCC and called into question many of the Civil Rights Movement's most touted ideologies, including the need for racial integration. The debate estranged many SNCC members from their BLF-RAM counterparts. 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 involved Black students 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."[37]

The debate did have an important secondary effect for the white students. "Their involvement led to their leftist radicalization which they later developed into the anti-war student movement."[38]

Withstanding the festering potential for inner organizational turmoil between SNCC workers and the BLF-RAM contingent, SNCC's mobilization of Mississippians reached fruition within the structure of the MFDP. The intention of the MFDP was to challenge the Democratic Party by sending sixty-eight delegates to the national 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 in protest.[39]

## A Chance Meeting in Africa: Malcolm X and SNCC

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 was presented with an opportunity that had ← 46 | 47 → the potential to rejuvenate and also to broaden the organization's transnational perspective.[40]

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."[41] 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 United States 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 socialist literature and information that they were not privy to in the United States. 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 had 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."[42]

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 CIA 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.[43] Malcolm, whose presence and words 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 ← 47 | 48 → Rockefeller?" and chased the man out of the auditorium with shouts of "Stooge! C.I.A. and American Agent!"[44]

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?[45]

Malcolm's travels had taken him to eleven countries, and his prestige granted him the opportunity to address eleven heads of state and the majority of the parliaments in those countries. Now in the midst of October 1964 and a successful tour of the African continent, Malcolm stopped in Kenya to meet with President Jomo Kenyatta to further strengthen his African ties. However, he would be provided with an unexpected encounter that would advance his relationship with SNCC. Due to Malcolm's newfound independence from the NOI, it would be even more vital that he foster his ties with the prominent student group.[46]

While headed toward Zambia, John Lewis and Donald Harris's plane was forced to make an emergency landing in Kenya. Due to the inconvenience, the airline compensated the two young activists with a three-nights stay in Nairobi at the New Stanley Hotel until the airline was able to resolve the plane's mechanical problems. While in the lobby of the New Stanley Hotel in Nairobi, Lewis and Harris ran into Malcolm. For John Lewis, it was his second encounter with Malcolm. The high impression that Malcolm left on Lewis upon their first encounter in D.C. during the 1963 March on Washington was now amplified as Lewis referred to those coffee shop meetings with Malcolm in Nairobi, Kenya as "moving."[47]

Lewis remarked that the café meetings were probably the longest meetings as well, for the young SNCC activists spent two days in the New Stanley Hotel meeting with Malcolm and talking about the problems of Black people in America. Most importantly, Malcolm was invigorated about voting and the democratic process. He was also intentional about sharing his new plans to become an ← 48 | 49 → integral force in civil rights struggle. Lewis remarked that Malcolm "kept saying over and over again, that he really wanted to be helpful and be supportive of the Civil Rights Movement. And he wanted to visit the South." Malcolm's charge to the two young activists and SNCC may have been the most significant and telling about his hope for the student group. Lewis recounted Malcolm's saying, "You know this is an ongoing struggle … be prepared for the worst, but keep it up. Keep fighting. People are changing, there are people supporting you all over world."[48]

For Lewis and Harris, a major point of departure from the Africa trip was definitely a great sense of pride and reaffirmation gained from their encounter with not only Malcolm but also from experiencing people of Africa operating effectively in all sectors of society. Lewis and Harris were able to witness continental Africans and envision the possibilities of Blacks in America fulfilling their promise by ascending to prominence in all sectors of American life. While the political process and emphasis on voter registration and political independence had not waned, SNCC's African experience assisted in the organization's internationalization, by allowing members to see the critical need to include global along with local struggles. As a battle-tested organization that adopted the phrase "One man, one vote" from the liberation efforts in

Ghana for the organizing efforts with the MFDP, SNCC's identification with Africa became a natural evolution for the student activists.[49] According to Cleveland Sellers, "We began to see the commonality between the liberation movements in Africa and the freedom fighters in Africa and what we were doing in Mississippi—that those struggles were, in fact the struggles for empowerment of people."[50] For many of the SNCC representatives that participated, the Africa sojourn was a much-needed retreat but also became an obvious springboard of motivation to continue their international efforts as change agents.

In addition to traveling the African continent and meeting with Malcolm X, SNCC worked closely with the Pan African Student Organization of the Americas (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 students. PASOA aggressively promoted political education and the ideas of Guinean president Sékou Touré, as well.[51] Facilitated by SNCC's Executive Secretary James Forman, PASOA collaborated with the SNCC organization to fuse ← 49 | 50 → their domestic and internationalist agendas, the outreach of which would include the United States, Africa, Canada, and Latin America.[52]

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 the movement. These substitutions for integrationist policy touted critiques of capitalism 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 to November 1 on the theme of "Afro Youth." The conference was titled "The Black

Revolution's Relationship to the Bandung World." The gathering produced the *Black Youth Manifesto*, a speech that was delivered at the conference over that weekend and later revised in September 1965.[53] 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 toward 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 ← 50 | 51 → 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.[54]

As early as 1964, an aggressive call for power among 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 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 SNCC and also the worldwide struggles against imperialism. On December 3, 1964, while participating at a debate sponsored by the Oxford Union at Britain's Oxford University, Malcolm couldn't have projected this message more clearly than in the close of his famous debate on the ideation of "extremism in defense of liberty is no vice, moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue."[55] In front of an audience comprised of many students from Africa and Asia, Malcolm delivered profound declarations in defense of his position on extremism. After convincingly handling his opponent, Malcolm's closing remarks gave the impression of being more of an invitation to join him in the efforts to combat the evils that plague humankind. Malcolm stated,

> In my opinion the young generation of whites, Blacks, browns, whatever else there is—you're living at a time of extremism, a time of revolution, a time when there's got to be a change. People in power have misused it, and now there has to be a change and a better world has to be built, and the only way it's going to be built is with extreme methods. And I for one will join in with anyone, I don't care what color you are, as long as you

> want to change this miserable condition that exists on this earth.[56]

After Malcolm's time in England (and in keeping with his frenetic speaking engagement schedule), he continued with his intentions and promise to forge his connections with SNCC and the larger Civil Rights Movement. As Carson states, "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."[57] ← 51 | 52 →

On December 20, 1964, Malcolm shared a platform with Fannie Lou Hamer at an MFDP rally held at the Williams Institutional CME Church in Harlem, after which he invited her and the SNCC Freedom Singers to an OAAU meeting. Following a riveting address by Mrs. Hamer and the SNCC Freedom Singer's "Odinga Odinga of Kenya," Malcolm informed the audience of the need to forge transnational relationships and go beyond their local and regional perspectives to see their struggle as a worldwide problem worthy of global support.[58] At the meeting, Malcolm remarked, "It is important for you to know that when you're in Mississippi, you're not alone."[59] In addition to pushing for a Pan-Africanist approach to dismantle oppression, Malcolm further solidified his relationship with Hamer and members of SNCC. Malcolm provided the audience with an augmented perspective that reflected his post-NOI position on gender politics and the critical role of Hamer's work and other women who were active in the MFDP. According to 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 a part 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 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.[60]

In keeping with his intentions to build his relationship with SNCC and to have a greater impact on the Civil Rights Movement, on December 31, 1964, Malcolm addressed a delegation of thirty-seven teenagers from McComb, Mississippi, at the Hotel Theresa in Harlem. SNCC sponsored the Christmas vacation to the Big Apple for teens who displayed exemplary actions as civil rights activists in their hometown. In speaking to the young activists and keeping within alignment of his need to instruct on critical thinking, Malcolm informed the teens to see, listen, and, most importantly, think for themselves.[61]

Malcolm continued to be very influential in the ranks of SNCC but now through

recorded speeches that were forwarded from New York to Selma, Alabama. The New York City contacts of Doug and Tina Harris, who were on staff in Alabama at the time, would have "Malcolm's speeches from the Audubon taped ← 52 | 53 → and sent down to the Selma SNCC office where copies would be had and would be passed around within the SNCC staff people."[62] For SNCC workers in Alabama, these intentional actions later led to an all-important meeting for Malcolm in the South. On February 3, 1965, Malcolm traveled south to Tuskegee Institute in Alabama to speak during the voting rights campaign. The lecture, which was sponsored by the Tuskegee Institute Council, was held in Logan Hall of the historically Black college. While addressing a crowd of 3,000 students at Tuskegee, Malcolm spoke candidly on the U.S. involvement to thwart the liberation forces in the Congo (today called Zaire) and the power of propaganda as used by the press to sanitize the situation. While replying to a post lecture question-and-answer segment, Malcolm informed the audience that, while being a firm believer in religion, he was not so willing to wait solely on God to intervene as it related to the challenges of Black folk. Malcolm went on to inform the audience that his religious foundation must include economic, political, and social action designed to make a systemic change in the now.[63] Fay Bellamy, a SNCC worker at the time, was in attendance and recalled that Malcolm "seeming larger than life, spoke and taught as usual," and that "he spent more time addressing questions after his speech than it took to give it, dealing thoughtfully with all questions, whether praise or criticism."[64]

Bellamy, while in attendance to hear the firebrand who had come south to interface with the movement that had garnered international attention, intended for more than just to hear Malcolm speak. Seeing the impact that Malcolm had on the group of Mississippi youth who went to Harlem just a month earlier, SNCC hoped to continue building their relationship with Malcolm by having him speak to Black youth in Selma in a very similar fashion.[65] Silas Norman, the newly elected project director of SNCC, and Bellamy traveled to Tuskegee with the intention of speaking to Malcolm to see if he would come to Selma to speak at Brown's Chapel.

Malcolm's reputation for being able to arrest the attention of young people was noted by the SNCC staff, and Bellamy noted, "We thought it would be a good idea to expose the young people to Malcolm and his teachings."[66] Cleveland Sellers echoed a very similar sentiment regarding the intentions of having Malcolm travel to Selma to speak to the youth. Seller noted that SNCC wanted the younger generation that hadn't had the opportunity to see Malcolm "to begin to appreciate the leadership and the efforts on the part of other leaders who were not as popular in the press."[67]

While in Selma, Malcolm met with the SCLC Executive Director Andrew Young and Reverend James Bevel prior to his lecture. The SCLC representatives ← 53 | 54 → implored Malcolm "not to incite any incidents and cautioned that just his presence could cause violence."[68] Malcolm took note and in typical fashion listened with a smile.

However, en route to Brown's Chapel, Faye Bellamy recalled Malcolm stating, "Nobody puts words in my mouth."[69]

Malcolm delivered his famous "House Negro and Field Negro" address to about three hundred eager attendees in Selma. While continuing to internationalize the civil rights struggle, Malcolm informed the Selma audience that "whites better be glad Martin Luther King is rallying people because other forces are waiting to take over if he fails."[70]

Malcolm, who was well aware of the political ramifications of his presence in Selma wanted to inform the world that an alternative (to the nonviolent tactics of Dr. King) was eagerly waiting in the wings to assist in the struggle if the larger movement did not get what they were asking for. However, Malcolm did not intend to make his trip to Selma a contentious one for the SNCC and the SCLC. Malcolm knew that Selma was not only a hot bed of activity for the SNCC and the SCLC, but also the Ku Klux Klan and White Citizens Council had increased their terrorist activity in attempting to thwart the gains of the Movement. Thus, he didn't want to make things harder for civil rights organizations through his presence in Selma.[71] In assurance of this, Mrs. Coretta Scott King recounted in her conversation with Malcolm at Brown's Chapel that Malcolm informed her "he was trying to help" and that "he wanted to present an alternative; that it might be easier for whites to accept Martin's proposals after hearing him."[72] During this time, Dr. King and a number of SCLC and SNCC members were in jail. Malcolm attempted to see Dr. King and a number of the SNCC staff who were imprisoned, but the local officials, headed by Sheriff James Clark, denied Malcolm the opportunity to meet with the activists.[73]

Malcolm, being very attentive to the ensuing tide of the Movement due to the eagerness and restlessness of Black youth, initiated a bold move to establish an OAAU base in the South aimed at attracting Black youth to spearhead programmatic intentions. Just prior to Malcolm's departure from the Montgomery, Alabama, airport, Bellamy and Silas accompanied Malcolm and engaged in further conversation about how he could be of assistance. Malcolm also informed them that he and the OAAU were planning to come South in two weeks from that time to begin recruitment for the OAAU, and he wanted to know if SNCC would be willing to work with him and the OAAU in his efforts.[74]

Malcolm continued his frenetic speaking schedule during mid-February 1965, traveling back to England to deliver a lecture at the London School of Economics ← 54 | 55 → on February 11. Prior to delivering his speech, while talking to the press, he informed the reporter from the *London Times*, "students are potential revolutionaries" and that the "politically mature students in Britain will play a part making changes when things are unjust."[75] Continuing with his pedagogical stance with respect to students and education, Malcolm spoke at Detroit's Ford Auditorium on February 14, 1965.

Sponsored by the Afro-American Broadcasting Company, chaired by Milton Henry, Malcolm addressed a crowd of approximately four hundred people for the First Annual Dignity and Scholarship Award Ceremony. Malcolm delivered his speech titled, "Educate Our People in the Science of Politics," emphasizing the international aspects of the African struggle while pointing out the global power bases of imperialism. Malcolm stated, "It's one huge complex or combine, and it creates what's known as not the American power structure or the French power structure, but it's an international power structure."[76]

A few days 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 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 the 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—who 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 that anyone else on the scene—including Dr. King—the bitterness and frustration of Black Americans."[77] While conducting interviews for the *Eyes on the Prize Series* in 1988, Cleveland Sellers, who expressed having a kinship to Malcolm, provided commentary on Malcolm X's funeral and what the relationship of Malcolm to SNCC meant for him and many of the other students as Malcolm affectionately referred to them as. According to Sellers, "It was a sad occasion but it was also inspirational in that we felt like we were bringing a message to Malcolm. And that message, was that, 'We heard you, we were listening, and in essence, we have the best of what you offered and we will continue to incorporate that movement in our struggle."[78] ← 55 | 56 →

For Lewis, Sellers, and many members of SNCC, a great appreciation developed for the broadening of Malcolm's scope on life and the movement. Many of the SNCC members greatly admired Malcolm because they viewed Malcolm as person who was "able to change, discipline himself, educate himself and move forward."[79] Malcolm not only displayed his ability to be reflexive in his thinking, he also increased his understanding of transnational struggles as they related to the ills of Black people in the Western Hemisphere. The human rights direction in which Malcolm hoped to steer the

momentum of the movement 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 among the Black masses.[80] 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."[81] Many students who had not been as familiar with Malcolm X became acquainted with the slain leader through his autobiography, books, 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.'"[82]

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 7 in Harlem, was able to nurture and assist Malcolm in his religious and political development as Malcolm ascended to international prominence among liberation struggles worldwide.[83] 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 "Audacious Power." Powell informed the congregation of Ebenezer Baptist Church that "the time 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 that rejected ← 56 | 57 → 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."[84]

Powell delivered 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 militant and aggresive rhetorical style 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?
>
> Indeed, we must "drop our 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.[85]

Powell's call for Audacious Power at Howard later evolved into a call for Black Power and 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 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. ← 57 | 58 →

## 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 radical outlook of the sociopolitical 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 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 subtheme of the conference focused its conversation on how Black youth could address the oppression of "Yanqui" (U.S. and NATO) 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.[86]

The summer of 1965 had also proved to be a critical year for SNCC as an organization that was grappling with a rapidly shifting political landscape that continued to question and deconstruct race and notions of class oppression. Notably, these critiques began with the organization itself and the internal struggles of white membership; leadership and entitlement became a burden to bear for the now seasoned student activists. Having experienced the hardships of Mississippi, influences of Malcolm X, and the political opulence of traveling abroad in Africa, SNCC was inevitably heading in a new direction. Moreover, SNCC was posturing for the inevitability of a radial turn that would forever change the course of history.

In a 1989 interview, Cleveland Sellers recounted his time in SNCC after Malcolm's death and shifts that SNCC began to take as a result of overall exhaustion and the organizational insecurities caused by the Atlantic City debacle: ← 58 | 59 →

> We began to come to grips. 'Well, who is it that we work with? I mean, and what is it that our organization is all about?' And the bottom line on that was as hard as we tried in Mississippi to have a, what we called a 'White Folk Project,' it just didn't go anywhere. What the reality was, was that we were still primarily working in the Black community.[87]

SNCC's increased sense of Black awareness and projected intentions to fully engage the political process from a nationalist stance boded well for the organizing motivations and zeal of the young and charismatic Stokely Carmichael. Carmichael, who was dispatched to Lowndes County, Alabama, to register voters and begin the overwhelming, but promising, task of working in the Alabama Black belt to build a party independent of the Democratic Party and register Black voters.[88] In a county that was approximately 85 percent Black, a majority non-land owning population who were mostly sharecroppers and laden with a history of white violence and terrorism, SNCC found a county that did not possess a single Black person who was registered to vote. In addition, the Alabama Democratic Party unapologetically boasted its racist social control in the form of a white rooster with the adjoining phrase, "White Supremacy" atop of the image and at the bottom the words, "Forever."[89]

SNCC activist and researcher Jack Mennis identified an antiquated Alabama state statute that asserted that, in Alabama, a political party could be established in a county and the party could establish its legitimacy if the upstart organization was able to garner

at least two thirds of the voters for that particular election registered as members to the organization. The SNCC activists were successful in its quest to attract and register the voters and, thus, the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO) was born.[90] SNCC field secretary Courtland Cox may have best captured the sentiment of SNCC's position of participating with the Democratic Party: "Voting in the Democratic primaries, particularly on the local level, would just be a farce."[91] In need of a symbol that represented a fierce but regal quality of the Black folks of Lowndes County, the icon of the black panther was adopted and the LCFO Black Panther Party was born. However, not mystified by the passive "turn thy cheek" approach to liberation and in the spirit of Malcolm X, Black folks in Lowndes County "carried their shotguns and rifles in full view on the dashboards of their cars when they went to mass meetings."[92] In Lowndes County Alabama, Blacks outnumbered Whites four to one and, just as Malcolm X had envisioned Black political autonomy, SNCC was now poised to bring this dream to fruition. Stokely Carmichael may have captured the mood and objectives best in his reflections of the period: ← 59 | 60 →

> Our direction was clear. A heavy emphasis on nationalism. Strong, as Malcolm had it, as strong as we could get it. Clear, a strong policy on organizing the mass of people, putting first before us, the political organization of the masses as the only route to, ah clearly solving our problem. A strong emphasis on the point of the fact that nonviolence for us was a tactic and not a philosophy as it was for SCLC. Thus, since it was a tactic we were at any time had a right as an organization to choose the appropriate tactics that would lead to the people's liberation.[93]

Using many of the techniques and mobilization strategies developed in Mississippi with the MFDP, SNCC knew the critical need of preparing Black folks in Lowndes County through political education and literacy classes. In reflecting on his organizing experiences with the LCFO, Carmichael recounted that as a part of the political education process for the residents of Lowndes, he and Bob Mants would ensure that every week Malcolm X tapes were played throughout Lowndes County, Alabama. This was supplemented with African history courses and the development of comic books to teach about the importance and role of local politics and politicians.[94]

Furthering the changing complexities of the latter part of 1965 was the increased activity of the 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 the SNCC was able to continue its campaigns in the South, in addition 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, Hartford, Connecticut, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C., that worked in conjunction with SNCC and

partnering organizations in funding drives, the proceeds of which were divided among 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.[95]

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 toward 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. ← 60 | 61 → Author Grady-Willis states, "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."[96] One of SNCC's most controversial moments came on January 6, 1966, when the student group held a press conference and read the SNCC antiwar statement to the press. This act of criticizing the Vietnam War reverberated throughout the Civil Rights Movement and did not receive favorable responses from the more prominent officials in the SCLC. Now posturing as unabashed internationalists in solidarity of Third World anti-imperialist revolution, SNCC's antiwar statement claimed a major concern for the liberation of peoples in colonized countries of the Dominican Republic, Rhodesia, South Africa, the Congo, and the United States. Most importantly, the statement criticized the United States for drafting a high percentage of Black youth to serve the interests of Uncle Sam abroad but did not recognize the lack of democracy for Black folks at home, asking the significant question, "Where is the draft for the freedom fight in the United States?"[97]

Paramount to the ideological shift of consciousness in SNCC, the Atlanta Project activists of SNCC waged an aggressive campaign for a reconsideration of the tenets of the overall movement. The Atlanta staff pushed for the thrust of Movements activity to be recentered 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.[98]

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, "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 the SNCC because of these aforementioned issues, an increase in Black 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 ← 61 | 62 → 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.[99]

As SNCC ushered in the year of 1966, an inevitable change of the guard took place as well. John Lewis, who had served as the chairman of the student organization, had been challenged and defeated for the chairmanship of SNCC by Stokely Carmichael. Viewed by many as a natural leader, his brash intellect and vitality eventually gained him recognition in the national spotlight as the new Malcolm X for the next generation. Consequently, the move to challenge Lewis was not a surprising one to many of the SNCC activists. Moreover, an SNCC contingent that flowed for Blackness in the vein of Malcolm yearned for a more autonomous, less influenced SCLC version of SNCC. Thus, the discussion to the move for a change in leadership had been taking place since the latter part of 1964. With the LCFO organized as an all-Black party and SNCC now organized to represent more than a junior SCLC student group organized for voter registration, the transition from Lewis to Carmichael was more than logical.[100]

As the year of 1966 progressed, the work of the SNCC students was becoming even more life threatening. As SNCC members became older and more mature, the discontent over the passive action of SCLC members became intolerable. Now that SNCC was making a pronouncement of Black Nationalism aimed at electoral politics in Lowndes County, the programmatic aims of SNCC were being constructed to reflect the evolution of the organization. However, the nation was not as ready for an SNCC that readied for grassroots activism that solely targeted poor Black southerners through political education and self-directed action.

A special SNCC bulletin was generated from the New York office dated June 3, 1966, titled, "What's Happening in SNCC?" The document was based on the meetings held by Carmichael and the New York SNCC staff as an update on the annual SNCC spring conference held near Nashville, TN, on May 8–13, 1966. The press reports of an SNCC "takeover" by "anti-white extremists," prompted the organization to respond to the accusations. Moreover, the counter-document addressed the secondhand propaganda of the media and the "press's misuse of such terms as 'black power', 'anti-integration',

‘black nationalism’ and ‘separatism’ in accusations against SNCC.”[101]

The document gave a most important perspective on SNCC’s position vis-à-vis the Black population of Lowndes County and the new program of the LCFO ← 62 | 63 → Black Panther Party. The report discussed the structural changes that were taking place in the organization as they related to the new chairmanship of Carmichael and the newly elected officers to posts in the organization. The dispatch also detailed the intentions of SNCC in Lowndes County, Alabama, for establishing the LCFO Black Panther Party. Most importantly, the bulletin expressed the intentions of SNCC to duplicate the efforts of the LCFO in three counties in southwest Georgia. More specific, more intentional, and before the phrase was integrated as a slogan, SNCC informed the general organization of their new program, which was to be called “Black Power:”[102]

> The goal of this program is indeed ‘Black Power.’ What does this mean? It means, for example, that in Lowndes County if a Negro is elected tax assessor, he will be able to collect and channel funds for the building of better roads and schools—things which determine the quality of daily life. If elected sheriff, he can end police brutality. It means, ultimately, the freeing of colonies—which is what the ghettos of this country, North and South, really are.[103]

SNCC’s changing attitudes eventually become applicable during a very historic march through Mississippi led by a young man named James Meredith, who had gained national attention as a young man attempting to desegregate the University of Mississippi.[104] Peniel Joseph writes, “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.”[105] Meredith’s “March on 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 became the baton which for the civil rights groups of the SCLC and SNCC assumed in the spirit of Meredith.[106] 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 to accommodate white liberals. 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 ← 63 | 64 → also empowerment for Black people. In fact, Ricks is the one who would actually introduce the phrase “Black Power” to Stokely Carmichael and SNCC.[107]

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 his release from jail. As the crowd of participants from the march waited for him to ascend the platform, Willie Ricks was prepping the crowd with what to say. Carmichael began by informing the crowd of the number of times he had been arrested.[108] 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!'"[109]

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 of an era that characterized the sentiment of Black Nationalism revitalized for a generation who felt that the leadership of the Civil Rights Movement was 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 marches and sit-ins. "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 student unions, which in 1966, were already beginning to appear on the nation's college campuses and in its high schools.[110]

SNCC continued to develop politically, and the edification of Malcolm X continued to be a part of the organization's political maturation. "Throughout the latter part of 1966, Malcolm's speeches were frequently discussed at SNCC gatherings."[111] Established as the Vanguard organization of a rapidly changing national student movement, SNCC's awareness of the impatience of Black youth in ghettos in every major city translated to the promise of establishing Black Power projects ← 64 | 65 → in the North. SNCC began to further its analysis and study of international revolutionary liberation struggles in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Largely attracted to the concepts of anti-imperialism, anticapitalism and antiracism, SNCC's studies included the work of Kwame Nkrumah and Frantz Fanon and their deconstruction of neocolonialism.[112] According to Cleveland Sellers, "SNCC's members were becoming increasingly aware of the international implications of domestic Black oppression. Malcolm X had a lot to do with this new awareness."[113]

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# 3

# Purges, Proscriptions, and New Directions

## *Black Student Protests and a Call for a Black University, 1966–1969*

> Many so-called Black religious and political leaders start out with sincerity and a determination to help the Black race in its struggle for justice and equality but are trapped and processed into Uncle Toms by cunning white politicians and a conditioned yen for "silken living." Of course there are Blacks who successfully resist the process, but they usually suffer stunted careers and are shunted to oblivion by the Master.[1]
>
> —Robert Beck, *The Naked Soul of Iceberg Slim*

The enigmatic concept of Black Power not only left the civil rights landscape stunned, it also forced an ideological split between the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the elder leadership of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (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 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 ← 71 | 72 → 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 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 who needed a mantra to represent their already existing nationalist perspective.

The year 1966 marked a turning point for the movement in general. Urban rebellions swept the country like wildfire with approximately 210 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; 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 ← 72 | 73 → 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 that he "did not wish to excommunicate organizations from the Civil Rights Movement."[2]

Rustin, who was considered the chief architect of the 1963 March on Washington,

provided choice words in opposition to the concept of Black Power. Just as Rustin spearheaded the anti-Black Nationalist posture against Malcolm X years earlier, he was now faced with the charisma of Stokely Carmichael, who, in the spirit of Malcolm X, espoused Black Nationalism through the thrust of Black Power. Rustin referred to Black Power as a "negative way of trying to achieve racial equality." He commented, "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 the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), was in full agreement with the statements of Rustin. Farmer charged that much of the "white backlash" resulted from 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.[3]

Aiding in the defense of SNCC was the newly elected national director of CORE, Floyd B. McKissick, who defended not only the aims of SNCC, but also shielded himself from those civil rights leaders who chided the more prominent supporters of Black Power. McKissick's disposition about the Movement shifted as the federal government showed its inability and unwillingness to aid Black people, and supported 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."[4] McKissick also informed the press, "The Civil Rights Movement died during the March on Washington in 1963 because it was united around a single common cause—integration."[5] 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 to do so.

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, were 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 ← 73 | 74 → an atmosphere of sectarianism in the student organization. Thus, by late 1966, SNCC began the process of expelling white members from the organization after the call for Black Power.

Much of the inner organizational turmoil surrounding many of the white members of SNCC stemmed from the foundations of the organization. At the startup of SNCC, new members encountered an overwhelmingly white majority executive membership. For example, in Manhattan in 1964 in an SNCC office, Faye Bellamy 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."[6] As in many of the other SNCC offices throughout the landscape, members found the offices mainly run by whites.

Many in the Black community viewed SNCC cosmetically as a replica of the overall Movement. 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."[7] The papers also argued that whites should leave the organization because a "climate has to be created whereby Blacks can express themselves."[8] 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."[9]

In many cases, this general intimidation effect came even from the 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 formal education, as well as the result of being "the sons and daughters of the executives of some of the nation's largest corporations."[10] 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.[11]

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 postsecondary institutions throughout the nation, the question of whose struggle it was[12] loomed heavily in their hearts and minds. A major example of this surfaced when more than eighty white students were brought in from the North to assist in the efforts of SNCC by Bob Moses. In his memoir, John Lewis, 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 ← 74 | 75 → *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.[13]

Even white members of SNCC who weren't as actively engaged in organizational activities of SNCC, 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."[14] Such manipulation in the executive ranks of SNCC had not always

been generated from the *financial* (emphasis mine) influence of whites. In many cases, the control of the early and less reported militancy of SNCC was often subverted by other measures of persuasion.

RAM member Rolland 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*, titled "The Long Hot Summer." The article examined the activity of SNCC in the spring of 1963 and provided more of an exposé 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 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."[15] Echoing the sentiments of Snellings is the work of Bruce Watson, *Freedom Summer*. According to Watson, "Nothing was eroding racial harmony more than sex. From their first days in their sites, volunteers who had never thought much about interracial sex found Mississippi obsessed with it."[16] Snellings also writes that much of the early influences on decision- and policymaking 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.[17]

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 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 ← 75 | 76 → grandstanding, 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.[18] 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.[19] As supporters of SNCC ceased to exist after the

announcement of Black Power, SNCC's funding drastically diminished during the latter part of the 1960s. Though the announcement of Black Power may have debilitated SNCC's funding, the organization's most crippling blows were yet to come. As SNCC moved squarely into a position of building coalitions with Third World revolutionary organizations, their fatal blow of financial support would come from their aggressive critiques and commentary on the Vietnam War and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict of 1967.

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 United States. Following SNCC's initial anti-Vietnam declaration in 1965, Carmichael stated, "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."[20] Carmichael, who in his speech fully supported the antiwar 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 antiwar activities. Carmichael stated to the antiwar 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?"[21]

The very next month, the *SNCC Newsletter* published a very controversial issue titled "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. The publication was accompanied by ← 76 | 77 → cartoons that depicted the Israeli Defense Minister, Major-General Moshe Dayan with dollar signs instead of stripes on his military regalia.[22] Addressing violations of human rights in Israel, SNCC 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:

> 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.[23]

Incensed by the SNCC publication, the Jewish community quickly labeled the Black student organization as anti-Semitic. The combined force of media criticism 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.[24] According to Cleveland Sellers, "The most important result of the article was that it led to the end of all significant financial support from the white community. The little money we were still receiving from white sources just stopped coming in."[25]

In addition, activists of Jewish heritage who claimed to have been members in SNCC chided the organization in the press, submitted their letters of resignation, citing that the activist group had reduced itself to echoing ideas "found in the Ku Klux Klan and the American Nazi Party."[26] While SNCC held steadfast to the position that the article was not anti-Semitic but anti-Zionist and anti-oppression to a marginalized Arab population, SNCC was taken to task from all comers in the white press. Ralph Featherstone, program director for SNCC, held steadfast to this position and commented, "Our position was clearly anti-Zionist, not anti- Semitic." He added, "It was a bit disconcerting to us, the reaction from the Jewish community, in that anything that is not pro-Jewish is interpreted as anti-Jewish."[27]

Much of that support was in direct alignment with the legacy of Jewish supporters such as 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.[28] In support of SNCC and critical of the civil rights leadership was Ali M. Baghdadi, vice president of the Organization of Arab Students. While speaking in solidarity for SNCC, Baghdadi commented that humanitarian goals of many of the civil ← 77 | 78 → rights leadership might have been compromised. "He said leaders of other civil rights organizations would also speak out if they weren't quite so interested in retaining funds from Jewish sources in the American community."[29]

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; 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 permissive of an alternative standard for military assistance for the state of Israel. Rustin, Whitney Young, and other civil rights leadership who were lambasting SNCC, CORE, and other supporters of Black Power for its association with violence and vigilantism were now on record supporting Israel's position in a war effort. Rustin went so far as to call for jet fighters to be sent to the State of Israel for the Six-Day War effort.[30] While addressing the biennial

convention of the Jewish Labor committee, 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."[31]

Controversy of the Israel-Arab debate reached a fever pitch at the New Politics Convention held in Chicago over Labor Day weekend in 1967 where both Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and a militant pro-Arab Black caucus were in attendance. While at the convention, the caucus drafted a thirteen-point policy statement that included a section condemning the state of Israel for its role in the Israel-Arab conflict. There to provide the opening address, Dr. King was questioned about the SCLC's position on the document. He also received a telegram from ten Jewish organizations strongly urging him to dissociate himself and the SCLC from the radical forces and views that were coming out of the New Politics Convention. Making a polarizing move that overtly demarked his separation from militant ideologies, Dr. King responded favorably to the Jewish organizations' demands.[32]

As the decade of the 1960s neared its end, SNCC's financial woes worsened as the organization was now solidly identified as a Black Nationalist organization intent on challenging the establishment both domestically and internationally. By 1969, SNCC's outside contributions plummeted to only $50,000, whereas just two years earlier, the vanguard organization received approximately $250,000 in 1967 and $150,000 in 1968 respectively.[33] Crippled by the waves of resignations from key organizers and SNCC leaders such as Julian Bond and John Lewis, SNCC was rapidly moving toward its end. Through speaking engagements at ← 78 | 79 → colleges and universities nationwide by key figures such as Carmichael, H. Rap Brown, and Willie Ricks, the organization was able to sustain itself a bit longer. Also, a percentage of the proceeds from Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton's classic work *Black Power* went to support the organization as well. Nevertheless, the financial tolls suffered between 1966 and 1967 were too great for the organization to recover.[34]

Although 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 nonrepresentation 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, and the call for autonomy created campus protests as Black students demanded Black Studies be included into the fabric of post secondary institutions.[35]

## 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 mounting racial tensions.[36] Malcolm also believed that the students of the world would be the ones who were going to make the changes needed as part of an international youth movement due to the restlessness of youth and the worsening global conditions.[37] 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. In addition, the infectious spirit to demand social change for marginalized persons was not merely reserved for impressionable youth of America.

The Civil Rights Movement began to transition into a Black Freedom struggle that incorporated human rights, Black Nationalism, and a critical importance on Black culture. Martin Luther King Jr. continued his own personal evolution that began to heavily critique the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, imperialism, and abuses of power. On April 4, 1967, at the historic Riverside Church in New York City, King, who took a page out of Malcolm's book, delivered a scathing critique of U.S. militarism calling the United States "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today."[38] ← 79 | 80 →

Exactly a year from the day that King delivered his Riverside speech, he would be assassinated while in Memphis while supporting the protests of Black sanitation workers. The assassination of Dr. King in April 1968 marked a decisive turning point in the call for more autonomous representation by Black students nationwide, beginning with urban rebellions in response to the horrific killing. The nationwide outbreaks of rioting in 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 sociopolitical agitation, Black Studies was formed,[39]

> 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 demanded, 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.[40]

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 argued 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. 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 was for "an exposition of the facts of life in their totality, not just those statistics that reinforce white supremacy and racism."[41] Most important, the integration of information about Black life and culture into postsecondary 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.

University recruitment programs began to actively seek out and recruit Black students to provide educational opportunities for those socioeconomically ← 80 | 81 → 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. These same students brought their activist energy and experiences to these campuses nationwide.[42]

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."[43] 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.[44]

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. 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 nationwide coverage that would be misconstrued and negatively propagated by headlines in major newspapers such as 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*, "College Plan for Negroes Passes Test; But 'Project 500' at Illinois U. Meets Obstacle." These articles and others provided false impressions of the student sit-ins; however, the climate of Black student discontent aligned with the national Black student protest movement.[45]

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, the Republic of Dahomey (now Benin), Kenya, Burma, Canada, and South Africa. Many of the protests by students centered on 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 student populations demonstrated their opposition to the inadequate funding of schools.[46] ← 81 | 82 →

An extraordinary example of the raised level of international consciousness stemmed from the ousting of former Ghana president Kwame Nkrumah in 1966 by a 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."[47] In Ghana, student unrest manifested in protests and demonstrations at universities throughout the country. Staunch 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."[48]

Looming larger than life for Black students and arguably more influential during the latter 1960s was the presence of Malcolm X. "More than any other person Malcolm X was responsible for the new militancy that had entered the movement in 1965. Malcolm X said aloud those things which Negroes had been saying among themselves."[49] Immediate testaments to the legacy of Malcolm X was the development of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense in Oakland, California, founded 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. 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."[50] The same held true for BPP leader Eldridge Cleaver, author of the acclaimed *Soul on Ice*, who worked on reviving the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) in San Francisco but was unsuccessful before joining the BPP. 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. Organization after Malcolm's OAAU.[51]

However, toward the close of the 1960s the allure and impact of Malcolm X was

even more intoxicating than it had been closer to the time of his death. According to scholar James Turner in a 1969 article in *Ebony*, "Malcolm X is perhaps the single most important influence on black students. His pictures and political philosophy abound where ever young Blacks gather on campuses from Harvard to Tugaloo."[52] In Chicago, on the city's Westside, Crane Junior College was renamed for Malcolm X in 1969 and also remains to this day, serving a critical mass ← 82 | 83 → of Chicago's Black population.[53] Sociologist Harry Edwards in his seminal work, *Black Students*, refers to Malcolm as "St. Malcolm" and notes, "Malcolm X's message to Black students was clear, concise and unmistakably explicit. He presented to Black Students a philosophy and directives that changed their perspectives as well as ignited the Black Student Movement."[54] At a Harlem march held on February 21, 1967, Stokely Carmichael continued to echo this sentiment loud and clear as he joined in solidarity with approximately two hundred persons gathered to honor the slain leader. While wearing a t-shirt with the likeness of Malcolm X, Carmichael told the crowd, "Negroes would have to make their own heroes and that no one will tell us whom to honor."[55]

In protest occurrences in the late 1960s, Black students renamed buildings in campus takeovers, such as at Voorhees College in Denmark, South Carolina, when approximately seventy-five Black student activists took over the college and declared that the historically Black college be called "the liberated Malcolm X University."[56] Nationwide, as Black students engaged in protest, the images, rhetoric, books, and supplementary literature on Malcolm X adorned college dormitories in honor of the slain leader. For Black students of the latter part of the 1960s, Malcolm was recognized as the "shining prince and recordings of his speeches became treasured things. His autobiography of his speeches became treasured things. His autobiography was studied, his life marveled at."[57]

Additionally, admirers of Malcolm X outside of colleges and universities were also dramatically affected by his life and influence. Such was the Fort Jackson Eight, a group of Black, White, and Puerto Rican soldiers, who became known as GIs United Against the War, were imprisoned for organizing against the Vietnam War. However, the soldiers' organizing and meetings initially began with small groups of soldiers listening to and being influenced by Malcolm X tapes and then talking and reflecting for hours on his messages.[58] Another example that truly reflects the impact of Malcolm was in the politicization of legendary Nigerian musical genius, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, the father of the Afro-Beat musical genre. While living in Los Angeles in 1969, Fela began to read an array of books on Black culture, history, and politics. However, when Fela was introduced to *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, he emphatically commented, "I couldn't put it down … I never read a book like that before in my life … I said, 'THIS IS A MAN!' I wanted to be like Malcolm X! Fuck it! Shit! I wanted to *be* Malcolm X."[59] A similar experience held true for actress Denise Nichols from television and Bill

Cosby and Sidney Poitier films of the 1970s. Nichols would state, "I never knew I was Black until I read Malcolm X."[60] ← 83 | 84 →

## 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. 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.[61]

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 more than 150 people, including students who represented the school's Third World student population and nonacademic 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, called for a coalition between faculty and nonacademic employees. At the rally, Hopkins emphasized the need for Black demands to be met.[62] He later reiterated his feelings the subsequent month in an article for *Harambee*, an Afro-American publication of Durham, North Carolina. 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.[63]

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 ← 84 | 85 → of demands of Duke's Afro-American Society by offering them a Black advisor and a summer remedial program."[64] 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. Later, President Knight assured a full assessment of the remaining demands upon an administrative evaluation.[65]

During mid-February 1969, the Afro-American Society of Duke University hosted Black Week. This week of festivities for Black students on campus brought unification and more camaraderie among 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. 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. However, representatives commented on future initiatives to emphasize white student support for future Black student events.[66]

Members of the Afro-American Society later made bitter remarks regarding the lack of white student participation in the educational activities of the week. 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 in meeting 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.[67]

## 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 ← 85 | 86 → School."[68] The morning of the Allen Building takeover, students issued the following statement:

> We seized the building because we have been negotiating with the Duke Administration and faculty concerning different issues that affect Black students for two and half years. We have no meaningful results. We have exhausted all the so-called proper channels.[69]

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.[70] Outside of Allen Building, approximately four hundred white students of Duke University decided that they would 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 more than 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 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 toward the administration's negligence and unwillingness to negotiate for the demands of the Black students.[71] Duke's administration eventually agreed to meet for one hour and talk over the concerns of the Black Students. Hopkins disapprovingly commented, "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?"[72]

The Allen Building takeover ended after nearly ten hours of occupation. Shortly afterward the police began to teargas a crowd of nearly one thousand students and faculty who were protesting in support of the Black students exiting the Allen Building after negotiations failed with the Duke administration. Black students leaving the building formed a parade line and proceeded to march down ← 86 | 87 → the campus drive. The leaders of the parade carried a banner that read "Malcolm X Liberation School" while repeatedly chanting, "It's not over."[73]

The actions of the Black students caused divisions among 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 President Knight's use of the police to both invade the Allen Building and restore calm to the campus, by force if necessary.[74]

## 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, one of Milwaukee's poor inner-city 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 during a protest activity against school segregation. Fuller recalled the experience as a significant occurrence that forecasted 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 who was responsible for placing Black applicants in jobs throughout the Chicago area. Fuller, who had also worked in CORE, spent eleven months in Chicago with the Urban League until a more attractive offer with more responsibilities became available.[75] "Youthful impatience and a desire to do what he was trained to do prompted Fuller to take a job as the director of community ← 87 | 88 → development with Operation Breakthrough (a local office of the Poverty Program) in Durham, North Carolina."[76]

While in Durham, 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 aware of the greater benefits of pushing for social change, which aligned 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 Fuller "exemplified the more successful attempts at true involvement of the poor."[77]

Under Operation Breakthrough, Fuller was responsible for the development of and training in 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 of training under the organizational direction of Nathan Garrett, executive director of the FCD. 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 displayed, he would be able to fulfill the needs of the community and garner results—and Fuller did. As 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 incited fear from the governor's office down through the North Carolina white political establishment.[78] 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.[79]
>
> 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 our doing grass roots organizing at the neighborhood level trying to get ← 88 | 89 → streets paved, have houses fixed and get rid of rats. So that really shaped my opinion about the need for power.[80]

In the Durham and Greensboro, North Carolina, area that was heavily steeped in postsecondary 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 activist Cleveland Sellers and also the nationally and internationally emerging Black Power activist Stokely Carmichael, Fuller was increasing 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-Africanism, which Carmichael espoused as the natural progression for Black Power as the 1960s came to a close.[81]

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.[82]

## Black Power in North Carolina: Establishing MXLU, SOBU, and the FCD Grant Controversy

The attention that Fuller was generating was far from noncontroversial. An effective organizer, Fuller began to create more exposure that the press immediately attributed to the "tumultuous" effects of Black Power. In addition, while working for the FCD, Fuller's role and activity as a social activist brought attention that the Durham media sought to exploit at every turn. This couldn't have been truer for Fuller and the FCD than in the case of an Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) grant of $960,000, which was slated for FCD usage for aiding Black business ventures in the city of Durham.[83]

Fuller, who was labeled as a Black militant by the Republican officials and conservative forces of Durham, came under attack when Republican officials contacted the OEO office in Washington, D.C., to request that the grant slated for ← 89 | 90 → the FCD be withdrawn because of its profile employee, Howard Fuller. Inquiries were even made by the GOP of the county to insist that the governor, Robert Scott, flex his political muscle to have the grant blocked. However, Scott commented that though state governors were normally forwarded information on such grants prior to their release, he informed the press "he could not veto the grant not any other OEO grant."[84] In spite of this, Scott did make a later attempt to obstruct the dissemination of the funds. A few days later in the press, Scott stated, "I did make contact with some members of the North Carolina Fund board and asked them not to make this money available to the organization which employs Fuller, but they saw fit to do otherwise."[85] Though the money was granted to begin the pilot project for Black capitalism in Durham, the county Republican Party chairman, Oliver Alphin, informed the press that the local party would make its most effective attempts "to block appropriation of the money, despite the approval announcement."[86] The grant, which was the first of its type in the nation, was taken from a $10 million federal budget of the Nixon administration's OEO's Special Impact Program to combat poverty, which was allocated to establish Black self-help programs across the nation. The Durham County Commissioner, Darrell Kennedy, informed the press that though the funding controversy had been created, the grant "is to be used to set up three or four supermarkets in low income areas of Durham, a jam and jelly processing plant locally and a casket manufacturing plant."[87]

Nathan Garrett, director of the FCD and Fuller's supervisor, maintained a low-

profile role and shied from the public eye in the events surrounding Fuller's criticisms and the funding controversy. He chose to direct the focus of the grant for its intended purposes. Garrett commented, "About 3,000 jobs will be added to Durham's labor market as a result of the grants. Most of the jobs will be open to the low-income Negro in an effort to provide business training for him and give him access to a successful business career."[88]

With the white conservative elements of Durham unwilling to acquiesce to defeat, the controversy of the OEO funding to the FCD finally caught the attention of Richard Nixon's administration. President Nixon's selection to the position of director of the OEO, Donald Rumsfeld, had finally been sworn into the post of director late spring of 1969.

At the national conference of community action held in Durham that spring, Fuller told a cheering crowd that the OEO's antipoverty program must be destroyed from within or without. Conversely, the Black leadership of Durham praised the FCD, Garrett, and Fuller for their actions and contributions. One prominent Black Durham leader commented, "Fuller has organized the Black ← 90 | 91 → community here. All he's giving the whites is the same thing the Black man in Durham has experienced so long a time."[89]

As May 1969 came to a close, the FCD remained a target for public criticism. The antipoverty organization would again find itself embroiled in controversy due to gun and ammunition purchases made by employees of the FCD, including Fuller, James Lee, and Franklin Williams. While continuously facing the threat of death for their work, the FCD employees informed Garrett of their intention to purchase protection. "Garrett said that both Fuller and Williams told him in advance that they intended to purchase guns with their own funds for protection purposes."[90]

Fuller continuously stressed that he and other employees of the FCD had been threatened several times by whites. Garrett echoed this sentiment on Fuller's safety, when he commented to the press "that at one time they had a 24-hour watch on his house."[91] While the press of Durham were furthering their smear campaign of the FCD, Fuller, and all of those related, one official of the Alcohol, Tobacco Tax and Firearms Unit informed the press that they were aware of several weapons that Fuller had purchased. Garrett also remained adamant when stressing to the press "that the purchases of guns and ammunition were not made with foundation funds. The agency is funded by the Ford Foundation."[92]

Standing in solidarity with the FCD and Fuller was the Greensboro (North Carolina) Association of Poor People (GAPP), a grassroots organization Fuller and many of the FCD employees worked with. While interviewed by the *Greensboro Daily* on the issues plaguing the FCD, Walter Brame, the executive director of GAPP, unabashedly told the press, "None of the purchases was illegal, it was their constitutional right … How about

all the whites who've bought guns and ammunition lately right there in Greensboro? Why weren't there any stories about that?"[93] While Brame's sentiments were shared by much of the Black community in Greensboro and Durham, his comment on why the situation had escalated to newsworthy subject matter may have been the most poignant as he provided his interview to the press. Brame stated, "I think what the police are trying to do (in investigating the Foundation for Community Development) is to damage the foundation's reputation, and get its funds cut off. And the police want to discredit its constituency."[94]

Apparently fed up with the intentional practices of the press to defame the FCD and its employees, Garrett stated, "We do not expect to be tried in the newspapers because of bits and pieces of random information received from unnamed sources and reported third-hand through unnamed bureaucrats in Raleigh offices and assembled under headlines that are blatant lies."[95] ← 91 | 92 →

Garrett, who was very specific in his accusations of negative publicity, accused the *Durham Morning Herald* of not obtaining the correct information that the news organ had been reporting. Garrett also extended an invitation to the paper to seek out pertinent and more accurate information on the activities of the FCD and Fuller so that the general public would have a more objective perspective on the work of the organization. Garrett told the press,

> What does Howard Fuller really do for a living? If a newspaper reporter or anyone else would come to my office to ask, I could cite him the ways in which Howard and his staff are working in the state to help low-income people solve their problems through amending the system that has made and kept them poor. We encourage reform, not revolution … In Fayetteville we are working with a group of sanitation workers who want an increase from $1.60 an hour to 2$ an hour … In Durham, the residents of a new housing project have bus service to town because of group action.[96]

With news of the controversial grant and the conservative forces of Durham continuing their push to protest the grant to the FCD, the eventual came to pass. The Nixon administration withheld the grant, pending further investigation into the activities of the FCD. The state GOP chairman, Jim Holshouser, informed the press that he personally "intervened in connection with the recent $900,000 grant to the Foundation for Community Development which employs Black militant Howard Fuller."[97] Resolution of the delayed grant would not be swift, for Donald Rumsfeld, director of the OEO, informed the press that a decision would not be made for months until a full investigation of the charges leveled against the FCD was completed and the findings were analyzed by the OEO. The situation became even murkier when conflicting reports surfaced on the status of the grant. A memorandum reportedly from President Nixon stated that the President was to cut the grant: "A high ranking administration official said late Tuesday that Nixon had sent a memo to the Office of Economic Opportunity telling the office not to give the foundation any more money."[98] With Rumsfeld denying any

knowledge of the memo and the officials of the FCD informing the press that no official decision from the OEO had been sent on the status of the grant, it was almost a given that the dissemination of the funds to the FCD was not going to happen.

Durham county commissioner Darrell Kennedy, who had taken an obvious posture of triumph over the grant issue, was definitely able to work his clout to have the grant halted. "Working through high-placed sources in the Nixon Administration, he was instrumental in having the grants held up by federal agencies."[99] Kennedy commented that he was able to accomplish the task of arresting the intended funding of the award to the FCD "by displaying to federal officials newspaper ← 92 | 93 → clippings and other information indicating that Howard Fuller, the FCD's training director"[100] had been active in disorderly conduct and racial and college campus disturbances in North Carolina.

Further confirmation was later received from Washington that the OEO grant to the FCD would be halted following a White House hearing in early June 1969. Rumsfeld informed the press that his office had no intention of disseminating the funds to the FCD and in his commentary informed the press that "the money will not go to that particular group."[101] Sources of the Nixon administration remarked that $40,000 of the funds had already been allocated to the FCD and was done so prior to the Nixon administration taking office. Other White House sources remarked, "The ends of the grant are fine, but the people involved and specifically Howard Fuller are wrong."[102]

Chiming in on the collusion activity to halt funding to the FCD was the senator from South Carolina, Strom Thurmond. Thurmond, who was not totally satisfied with the outcome of the Senate hearings, pressed Rumsfeld with remarks on the activities of the FCD and Fuller. "Thurmond said that should the OEO fund an organization with known militants it would destroy public confidence in government programs."[103]

Fuller, who was charismatic and very influential had a considerable amount of support from Durham's Black community and many Black students in and around the city of Durham. His 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 the demands 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 began to meet regularly at the offices of the FCD with Chuck Hopkins and other students of Duke's Afro-American Society to assist the students in developing strategies to attain their demands at Duke University. At times in these strategizing sessions, Fuller and the students would be joined by faculty members from Duke, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and North Carolina College in Durham who provided additional tactical support.

Eventually, the students were 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 ← 93 | 94 → uncompromising on the demands made by Black students.[104] Garrett, who also became involved in the matters of assisting the Black students from Duke, later recalled in his autobiography, *A Palette, Not a Portrait*:

> I had some idea of what the parents of the kids might be going through. They were paying dearly for the tuition and fees and most did not approve of this form of protest. As far as I could tell, all education other than what they were learning about the dynamics of social protest, had ceased. I hoped that Duke would make the concessions they were demanding quickly and felt that with the help of sympathetic faculty from both North Carolina College and Duke perhaps they could continue their studies so as not to be too far behind when they resumed their classes.[105]

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. With the establishment of MXLU, the conservative forces of Durham were seething with disdain of a perceived victory of the FCD. The FCD was also being criticized for its involvement and backing of the newly formed Malcolm X Liberation University, which had opened on the floor above the offices of the FCD. FCD officials openly provided support to the new school as much as possible and "the FCD board approved a small grant to MXLU to get them started."[106] One official commented, "It is an interesting experiment with the potential to add something for the Black people."[107]Additionally, with Howard Fuller continuing to garner attention with unyielding attacks on the establishment, the hammer from Washington was soon to drop. At an early dedication ceremony of the establishment of Malcolm X Liberation University at the offices of the FCD, Fuller informed the crowd, "We will teach here why we must destroy capitalism."[108]

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 Nelson Johnson and 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.[109]

> 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 ← 94 | 95 → 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.[110]

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 the Black college youth of the Raleigh-Durham and Greensboro areas, which included North Carolina A&T, North Carolina Central University, and Duke students.[111] 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.[112]

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 student organization called the Grassroots Students Association. The two future Black student leaders worked during the summers of 1967 and 1968 in the Cape Fear Housing Projects in Fayetteville, North Carolina, where they organizing tenants. During this time, Fuller became a mentor of sorts to Johnson, who considered Fuller a "powerful thinker."[113] The combined leadership of Fuller and Johnson for the emerging Student Organization for Black Unity (SOBU) and upstart MXLU signified the initiation of Black student activism in Raleigh-Durham and Greensboro.

On a national basis, the impatience and intentions of Black students continued to become more unapologetically evident and intentional. The representation and participation of Black students in organizations such as the U.S. National Student Association (NSA) became contentious due to criticism of the NSA's omission of Black students' input in shaping policy and thus creating the façade of having representation for all students on a national level. Many Black students who participated in the NSA were adamant that the NSA not only lacked the sincerity to concern itself with the issues of the Black community but also felt that the organization used its purse-string power to create divisiveness among Black students.

On February 15, 1969, at a southern area conference of the NSA, Black students who participated at the conference drafted a resolution condemning the ← 95 | 96 → NSA for the organization's racist practices. "As a result of the resolution taken at the Atlanta conference steps were taken to establish a new organization that would meet the needs of Black students. The result was SOBU (Student Organization for Black Unity)."[114] Later, in May 1969, a three-day conference was held at North Carolina A&T University and approximately sixty students attended, representing various colleges and universities from across the nation. As a result of the conference, a number of resolutions were passed, and Nelson Johnson, "newly elected vice president of A&T's

student body, was elected as national convener for SOBU."[115] As a new Black student organization, SOBU went on to declare its opposition to Black capitalism, "stating that was simply white capitalism in reverse, exploiting the masses for economic gains."[116] Delegates of the conference also agreed that the temporary SOBU headquarters would be located at Malcolm X Liberation University in Durham.

The formation of SOBU in late spring 1969 signified the beginnings of a working relationship that would soon flourish for Fuller and Johnson. 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 than the occupancy of the FCD offices. Immediate action was called for and, thus, the early stages were set to build an independent Black educational institution.[117]

# Notes

1 Robert Beck, *The Naked Soul of Iceberg Slim* (Los Angeles: Holloway House, 1971), 185.

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3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Winston A. Grady-Willis, *Challenging U.S. Apartheid: Atlanta Struggles For Human Rights, 1960–1977* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2006), 87.

7 Ibid., 89.

8 Ibid., 89.

9 Ibid. ← 96 | 97 →

10 John Lewis, *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 251.

11 Ibid., 252.

12 Ibid., 248.

13 Ibid., 249.

14 Harry Edwards, *Black Students* (Toronto & Ontario: Free, 1970), 35.

15 Rolland Snellings, "The Long Hot Summer: A Study in Conflict: Birmingham, Spring 1963," *Black America*, 13–14. BPRO, File Box 1, Folder 3, MLK CNSC.

16 Bruce Watson, *Freedom Summer: The Savage Season of 1964 That Made Mississippi Burn and Made America a Democracy* (New York & London: Penguin, 2010), 229. Additionally, Watson's work posits that much of the sexual tension was further exacerbated by the taboo of White women and Black men in the South and the constant climate of rape accusations attached to Black men, thus further inciting the possibilities for interracial sex among SNCC workers.

17 Grady-Willis. *Challenging U.S. Apartheid*, 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. Willis also

finds contention with this gross omission of accountability with the Black male membership of the organization (65). Askia Touré (formerly Rolland Snellings) interview with author, Boston, MA, October 17, 2011.

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23 "The Palestine Problem," *SNCC NL*, June–July 1967, 1–4. BPRO, File Box 1, Folder 17, MLK CNSC. 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* (New York: Pathfinder, 2009). Also see Fred Feldman and Georges Sayad, *Palestine and the Arabs' Fight for Liberation* (New York: Pathfinder, 1989).

24 Robert Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World, 1992), 254, 256; Kathleen Teltsch, "SNCC Criticized for Israel Stand," *NYT*, August 16, 1967, 28; "AJC Answers SNCC," *NYAN*, September 30, 1967, 3; "Hadassah Speaks Out," *CDD*, September 25, 1967, 13.

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30 Lewis Young, "American Blacks and the Arab-Israeli Conflict," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 2, no. 1, 70–85; "Prejudiced Negroes Scored by Wilkins," *NYT*, November 11, 1967, 18; "Dr. King Backs Israel in Middle East Crisis," *CDD*, May 29, 1967, 2; "Israel Aid Backed by Whitney Young," November 1, 1970, 74; "Randolph Rallies Negroes' Support to Israel's Cause," *CDD*, June 7, 1967, 2.

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92 "Guns Were Bought for Own Protection," *GDN*, May 30, 1969. TAFP, Series 2. MXLU 1969–1974, Folders 65–67, SHC UNC. The press in most instances were not able to withstand its obviously biased slants regarding how the issue was reported. A good example of this can be found in the "Arming out of Fear," May 31, 1969, article in *TNO*. This article is a good example of the subjective and biased reporting on issues related to the purchasing of weapons. The objective of the article was to lobby for stiffer gun control laws. Instead, the column continued the course of vilifying the FCD, Garrett, and Fuller and was laden with rhetoric such as "Black Militants" and content suggesting that rifles purchased by Black militants should be enough to cause a scare.

93 "Whites Don't Have to Explain: Blacks' Arms Purchases Were Legal—GAPP Chief," *GDN*, May 31, 1969. NCFR, FCD Clippings, Folder 915, SHC UNC.

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95 "Statement by Garrett on FCD Work," *DMH*, June 1, 1969. NCFR, FCD Clippings, Folder 915, SHC UNC.

96 Ibid. See also the article titled, "Foundation is a Magnet for Controversy," by Jack Childs, staff writer for the *TNO*, dated June 1, 1969. Garrett, who continued the defense of the FCD, blatantly told the press, "If society had dealt with Blacks properly, there would be no need for an organization like ours." Garrett also commented to the press

that the FCD did receive donations from community sympathizers interested and supportive of the FCD. He also disclosed that the FCD had received funding from IFCO for the continuance of the community work they had been engaged in. This article can also be found in NCFR, FCD Clippings, Folder 915, SHC UNC.

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104 "Students Put on Probation for Seizing Duke Building," *DMH*, March 20, 1969, 1A–2A; Nathan Garrett, *A Palette, Not a Portrait: Stories from the Life of Nathan Garrett* (New York & Bloomington: iUniverse, 2010), 147.

105 Garrett, *A Palette, Not a Portrait*, 147; Nathan Garrett, interview with the author via telephone, January 2, 2013.

106 Garrett, *A Palette, Not a Portrait*, 153; "MXLU Funding Proposal to the Board of Directors of the FCD," June 20, 1969, NCFR, Folder 903, SHC UNC. In the proposal from MXLU to the Board of Directors of the FCD, MXLU requested a total of $20,000 to assist in the planning and implementation of the new educational institution. Also see Folder 899, "Grant Requests to the FCD" and Folder 900, "Reports on Funded Organizations" for more information on community organizations that sought funding from and that were funded by the FCD.

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110 Signe Waller, *Love and Revolution: A Political Memoir: People's History of the Greensboro Massacre, Its Setting and Aftermath* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 42.

111 Ibid., 42–46.

112 Ibid., 49.

113 Ibid., 43. 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, 2001, 130.

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116 Ibid. For more information on the National Student Association and the formation of the National Association of Black Students and the unmasking of the FBI's counter-intelligence program, see "An FBI Document," *Struggle: Voice of the Black Student Worker*, May 1971, JFP, Box 109, Folder 7, MD LOC.

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← 104 | 105 →

# 4

# Uhuru Na Kazi (Freedom and Hard Work)![1]

## *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.[2]
>
> —Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere

> 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.[3]
>
> —Maulana Karenga

In early 1969, Duke University President Douglas M. Knight announced that he had resigned his membership in a segregated country club. The announcement came fifteen years after *Brown v, Board of Education*; fourteen years after Rosa Parks took the Birmingham bus, nine after the Greensboro sit-ins, and nearly five years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964. But change was coming slowly to Durham, North Carolina. And even a Massachusetts-born Yale graduate like Douglas M. Knight must have felt obliged to step to the turgid cadence of Durham's southern traditions. But Knight soon discovered that there was no reward in retrograde progressivity. Within months of his announcement, he was ← 105 | 106 → out as Duke's president; his leadership was called into question after a group of African American students staged a day-long occupation of the University's Allen Building, sparking campus protests and police intervention.

The fact that Knight and other members of Duke's administration wouldn't or couldn't see the dark at the end of their tunnel helps explain why the African American students who had occupied the Allen Building subsequently threatened to leave Duke altogether. Never mind that they had been exonerated; for these students it had become stunningly clear that Duke and other historically white educational institutions wouldn't or couldn't address their academic needs or forward their cultural interests. This realization would provide the impetus for the establishment of an independent Black educational institution with the mission of providing a relevant educational experience for Black students and their brothers and sisters throughout the Pan-African sphere.

In an interim report on the development of such an institution, Chuck Hopkins wrote, "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 a relevant educational institution they would have to build it themselves."[4]

The consensus regarding the state of Black youth and education was that the national development of Black Studies programs would be enough to satisfy Black students on predominantly white campuses. However, the building sentiment among those Black students 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. In a 1971 monthly editorial column for the *SOBU Newsletter*, Nelson Johnson, the national chairman for Student Organization for Black Unity (SOBU), provided insight into the perspective of Black Studies. According to Johnson,

> 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.[5] ← 106 | 107 →

The overwhelming feeling among many Black college students about 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."[6]

Black students at Duke shared this sentiment. As the University moved to develop its Black Studies program, Black students became increasingly suspicious of the school's efforts. Members of Duke's Afro-American Society noted that the school's new Black Studies committee had five faculty members and three students, even though the Society had proposed equal numbers of faculty and students. In addition, Duke's way of

providing a "Black Studies" department and curriculum was to reengineer the school's preexisting curriculum. 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 preexisting courses would be renamed and only one new course would be added. Because Duke had not sincerely moved toward establishing an identifiable department, the fate of the preexisting courses and the proposed "new" course would be under the direction of departments such as English and history. The result was that Black Studies at Duke ended up resembling an interdisciplinary major and not an independent program. A member of the Afro-American Society observed,

> There is not one Black instructor, there is no autonomous Black studies department, there is no 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.[7]

For many Black observers, the logical next step was to develop an educational independent educational institution conducive to Black Nationalism. This independent institution would provide a pedagogy and curriculum aimed at "Nation Building" and Pan-Africanism.[8]

## MXLU Planning Stages and Episcopalian Grant Controversy

In spring of 1969, Black students at Duke, activists from Durham, and a cadre of Black scholars from around the country met at the Franklinton Center in Bricks, North Carolina. Their goal: the development of a new Black university in North Carolina. Out of that meeting, Malcolm X Liberation University was chartered. Established as a tax-exempt non-profit, the new university enjoyed "the ← 107 | 108 → customary … right to obtain and sell property," and was bound by "a pledge not to participate in political campaigns."[9] The charter listed the following as incorporators: Bertie Howard, Sandra Philpot, and Timothy Harris, all residents of Durham, and all members of the fifteen-member MXLU board of trustees.[10] The board members spent much of the summer of 1969 drafting proposals and position papers related to the school. Also, a lot of time was expended on printing pamphlets and fliers to document the school's aims and objectives.

MXLU's early progress was tracked in local newspapers including the *Durham Morning Herald*, the *Durham Sun*, the *News and Observer* of Raleigh, the *Duke Chronicle*, and the *Greensboro Record*. Headlines trumpeted "Malcolm X U Taking Shape" and "Operations of Malcolm X U Outlined." Some of the press reports focused

on brass tacks matters such as entrance requirements and tuition costs, but most centered on the school's ideological perspective and the involvement of local activists, most notably Howard Fuller.

Fuller, a high-profile labor and housing activist in Durham, had been tapped to serve as MXLU's chief administrator. An early advocate of Black Nationalism, he had strong ties to Duke's Black student body and had been a ready ally during the Allen Building takeover. As MXLU's most visible local leader, Fuller used the press to articulate a decidedly straightforward vision for the new school. When asked to describe the average MXLU student, Fuller replied: "He's Black—and he wants to learn." For many, that answer did not suffice, so Fuller would explain what MXLU wasn't: a military training center for Black radicals. In fact, Fuller and other MXLU leaders often found themselves struggling to squash wild conjectures, errant myths, and out-and-out lies about the yet-to-be established institution. Although many of the rumors were dismissed as products of white paranoia, at least one story had troubling resonance. It involved the financial tie between MXLU and that elemental fixture of the white power structure, the Episcopal Church.[11]

In 1967, during its general convention in Seattle, the Episcopal Church had grappled with the question of how to help "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."[12] The General Convention Special Program (GCSP) subsequently sanctioned efforts at urban renewal. The church earmarked $9 million for an Urban Crisis Program Fund to be distributed to foundations and minority organizations working in urban centers.[13]

Fuller and other MXLU leaders identified the Urban Crisis Program Fund as a funding source for the fledgling educational institution. Thus, a grant proposal ← 108 | 109 → was forwarded to the Episcopal Church during the late spring months of 1969. As early as July of that year, MXLU received word that $15,000 of a $45,000 grant had been approved for the educational institution.[14] The $15,000 was awarded on an emergency basis and was approved by Rev. E. N. Porter of Durham, director of the Urban Crisis Program. The remaining $30,000 of the grant was later approved by the bishop and the national church administration. The funding of the school sent shockwaves through the forty thousand-member Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, which covered thirty-nine counties from Edgecombe to Mecklenburg.

The trouble stemmed from something that had occurred several months before Porter approved the MXLU grant. On April 26, at the Black Economic Development Conference financed, planned, and largely organized by the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO), James Forman, a seasoned activist and former executive secretary for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) had presented his *Black Manifesto*. The document—a withering challenge to white Judeo-

Christian organizations and their explicit, implicit, or complicit roles in the institution of slavery—demanded that churches and synagogues pay $500 million in reparations to Black Americans. Predictably, Forman's remarks ignited a nationwide firestorm of controversy.[15] However, what eventually raised the ire of many North Carolina Episcopalians was something listed near the bottom on Forman's ten-point treatise. Point 9 called for "the establishment of a Black university to be founded with $130,000,000 to be located in the South."[16] According to the Manifesto, the negotiations were in process with a Southern university. It is unclear whether MXLU was that university. What is clear is that in the month following the Black Economic Development Conference, the Episcopal Church responded to Forman's Manifesto, asserting that Episcopalians had provided and would continue to provide financial support for programs aimed at ending poverty and addressing racial injustice. That response certainly seemed to suggest that Porter's approval of the MXLU grant request was in keeping with the Episcopal Church's stated objectives. However, this wasn't enough to ease the backlash within the local diocese. Eventually, the diocese assembled a council of twenty lay and clergy members to review the grant and address the controversy. Much of the discussion centered on the grant approval process. One outraged church officer told the local press that most members of the diocese were totally unaware of the MXLU grant until they read about it in the newspapers.[17]

The controversy drew the attention of the Union of Black Clergy and Laity. The group, which had supported the grant, commented, ← 109 | 110 →

> 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.[18]

Bishop Thomas A. Fraser, head of the Episcopal Diocese of the North Carolina, was troubled by the controversy, but stood by the initial decision to award the grant. The grant the national church had already approved was not under consideration for withdrawal since the national church was not bound to act on any decisions made by the local diocese. In addition, ten members of the lay-clergy commission assigned to review the grant ultimately decided in favor of MXLU, which was a prerequisite for approval.[19]

The national Episcopal Church eventually adopted 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."[20] Other church congregations, such as St. Ambrose Episcopal Church, pastored 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, "My congregation is Black—and is a little bit more sympathetic with the school."[21]

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 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 32/10,000ths 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 ← 110 | 111 → 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.[22]

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 Episcopal Church 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*. Additionally, the NCBC, BEDC, and IFCO held overlapping membership suggesting a possible conflict of interests. The links among agencies involved with MXLU's funding went even further. Nathan Garrett, Executive Director of the Foundation for Community Development (FDC)—which had pushed for the formation of MXLU—was also treasurer for IFCO and a long-time supporter of Black Nationalist efforts in and around Durham. MXLU leader Fuller had once held a position with the FCD. He had left the FCD to work with MXLU, and on June 20, 1966, he applied for and later received a grant of $20,000 to assist with the planning and organization of MXLU. Despite these apparent conflicts of interests, members of the FCD, IFCO, BEDC, and NCBC argued that the grand jury investigation was driven by a racist desire to undermine MXLU.[23]

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, argued that he was "only concerned that a

university prepare people to compete in the society in which they live."[24] Young, who eventually developed considerable respect for Fuller, felt that he could only support MXLU if it "prepares people to compete in the mainstream."[25] Young's response was indicative of the views of "old guard" civil rights activists who were partially, if not totally, opposed to the concept of Black Self-Determination. But Fuller, who was not foreign to opposition posed by veteran civil rights leaders, was undaunted. Determined to press his case for MXLU with mainstream civil rights organizations, Fuller led a group of around twenty MXLU staff and students to an awards banquet hosted by the North Carolina chapter of the NAACP. The members of the group wore Malcolm X sweatshirts. Fuller was determined to confront Kelly Alexander, president of the North Carolina NAACP about comments he had made criticizing MXLU. Fuller and the MXLU staff eventually departed after ← 111 | 112 → refusing to pay the entrance fee, but not before those in attendance were made aware of the protesters, their aims, and MXLU.[26]

Following the NAACP incident, Fuller seemed even more intent on confronting what he viewed as misinformation about MXLU. On October 9, 1969, Fuller addressed questions during a "curb side" press conference outside the Durham site undergoing renovations in anticipation of MXLU's October 25 inaugural ceremonies and its 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,"[27] Fuller spoke to approximately a dozen newsmen and thirty or so onlookers. 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 do it in the true nature of the Black people, so I'm the head nigger in charge."[28] 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.[29]

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 planning 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 on and examine the question of education for Black people and the role of Black Studies programs in the future of Black education. This convergence of the two organizations turned into a recruitment tool and planning assistance ← 112 | 113 → opportunity for MXLU because of the prominent national figures associated with the SOBU conference.[30]

## 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 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 3,500 community residents celebrated the opening day ceremonies for MXLU. The festivities involved a festival of Black folks clad in African-style garments who spoke of the greatness of the day. The University's inauguration included a parade that stretched a half a mile and was 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 from as far as Washington, D.C.; Brunswick, New Jersey; and Atlanta, Georgia; for example, the Harambee Singers "opened the ceremonies with their deeply gospel rooted version of 'The Black Magician,'" and made the audience join in.[31] Milton Coleman, who reported for the *Milwaukee Courier*, noted,

> 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.[32]

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, D.C., 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 ← 113 | 114 → 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 through 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.[33] Carmichael, who was in Guinea at the time working with 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.[34]

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 more than 3,500 march participants and supporters of MXLU. Thus, the zeal for Pan-Africanism as expressed in Malcolm X's excerpt became the programmatic foundation on which MXLU concentrated the University's operations. Carmichael's letter closed with the famous salutation, "With an undying love for Black people, wherever we may be, Stokely."[35]

Fuller, who delivered the closing speech of the day's 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."[36] Fuller also acknowledged the planning committee that made the dedication day a success. He informed the crowd that the school and those who represented the MXLU family were not involved in making ← 114 | 115 → 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 aggression against Black people."[37] Fuller continued to

comment on the love of learning that must continuously be engaged as a component of revolutionary action as well as the greater importance of learning by independently establishing something for Black folks that would take place at MXLU. Fuller, who was noted for quoting Frederick Douglass, 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 lightning. 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 may be 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.[38]

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, "The city was only too happy to provide sanitation trucks free of charge for so noble a purpose."[39]

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 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 titled, "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 through its founding in 1969. This issue also ← 115 | 116 → 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 in white community newspapers provided inaccurate and contradictory information that was obviously constructed 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 appearing October 19, 1969, in the *Durham Morning*

*Herald*, titled, “Malcolm X Ready to Open: Nature of Its Program Still Unclear.” This work was in direct contradiction to two previous articles posted on MXLU—one by the same newspaper on August 23, 1969, titled, “Brochure Outlines Malcolm X Plans,” and the other an article by the Raleigh-Durham periodical, the *News and Observer*, dated October 10, 1969, titled, “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.[40] Sensationalized news articles failed to provide 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 of providing information on the interests and progress of the independent Black institution.

The October 25, 1969, MXLU opening-day ceremonies symbolized the strength, 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 1969 the staff’s official first year of operation in Durham.

## 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 fifteen to forty. 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 ← 116 | 117 → original enrollment expectation was exceeded to include twenty more students, which brought the initial student body for the year of 1969 to a total of fifty-one students. Of this student body, MXLU would lose thirty-four 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

which the University professed to nurture in the African communities, both domestic and abroad. First year curriculum changes also saw the addition of an economics course to the MXLU course load.[41]

The press's preoccupation with the University increased as staff and MXLU students received 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 article published December 1, 1969, in the *Charlotte Observer* by staff writer Bradley Martin demonstrates this interest. 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 ranged from curiosity about the institution's intentions to whether any of the student body were "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."[42] 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, an example being ← 117 | 118 → a November 11 forum that took place on Duke's campus that year to commemorate and reexamine the execution and sociopolitical climate around the revolt and reactions to Nat Turner. The event, presented 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 at 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."[43]

Also, in early November 1969, 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 then 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, "The aims of the Black separatist university in Durham clash with the ideals of communism and socialism." He further noted, "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 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 nonviolent. Then maybe we can talk about violence."[44] 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."[45]

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 ← 118 | 119 → conceptual framework for their anticipated success. He also informed the Episcopalians that the university family was in the process of securing additional funding 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 decline in financial contributions from local parishioners after they learned of the grant that was awarded to MXLU.[46] 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.[47]

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."[48]

MXLU's 1969–1970 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 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 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 ← 119 | 120 → being in an 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.[49]

At a press conference held at the SOBU national headquarters, Fuller announced the relocation plans of MXLU were to be completed by October 5, 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 even though the event was 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."[50]

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 facility, 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, which 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."[51]

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 ← 120 | 121 → 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 NC 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.[52] 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 the work of Dent,

> 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.[53]

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 the 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 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 also was

established as the northern branch of MXLU, and the two institutions collaborated on curriculum improvements from a Pan-Africanist–centered perspective.[54]

## MXLU Operations, 1970–1971

Operations for the 1970–1971 school year opened on October 5th at the new expanded Greensboro location on Asheboro Street to the great anticipation of ← 121 | 122 → community residents. The opening-day ceremonies delivered by Fuller provided the audience with a glimpse of the past year's activity and obstacles experienced by the MXLU family. Fuller also informed the audience of modifications made by the Council of Elders for the 1970–1971 operational program, which included three critical components to be integrated and stressed during the academic year: (1) ideology, (2) skills, and (3) a positive attitude toward physical work. Fuller also added,

> 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.[55]

Changing to a centralized location was not the only modification made in service of the progression of the University'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.[56]

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 two others 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 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 biomedical lab. The addition of four Greensboro houses brought MXLU's total 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 ← 122 | 123 → financial needs persisted. However, the institution was able to break even largely on income received for speaking engagements.[57]

Coinciding with the establishment of institutions like MXLU and CBE came increased motivation nationally to investigate alternative educational solutions for cultural reinforcement of Black folks. The inspiration produced not only more independent Pan-Africanist institutions but also the need for the consolidation of efforts among 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 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. Of the Federation schools the only postsecondary 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 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."[58] A Significant resource contributions 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.[59]

## Pre-Text to an MXLU Ideological Shift: Owusu Sadaukai (Howard Fuller) Inside Mozambique

The latter part of MXLU's 1970–1971 school year was affected largely 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. The assembling of some fifty Black Americans and their African counterparts in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania,

marked an event of historical transnational ← 123 | 124 → significance. The conference, which took place from August 22 through August 29, 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 Sadaukai's paper, titled "Black Education," 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 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 garnering 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. He knew that he would have to be as proactive as possible in solicitating potential contacts from the various groups. Little did Sadaukai know his aforementioned intentions would not only come to fruition, but also 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.[60]

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."[61] Blacks in America who 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 to investigate ways in which to assist the liberation movements on the African continent.[62] 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"[63] who had already been inside the liberated ← 124 | 125 → sections of Mozambique and Angola. However, because Adjali fell ill, Sadaukai was invited to Mozambique by FRELIMO in his place.[64]

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 liberation struggles. With this understanding, Sadaukai departed for Mozambique with Fletcher and Van Lierop on the morning of August 27, 1971, for the experience of a lifetime. Besides the filmmakers, Sadaukai packed two cameras, one with color slides to make prints for MXLU and the other with black-and-white film so he could provide photos for the *African World*, SOBU's publication.

Sadaukai, who felt that he was not prepared for the trip either mentally or 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.[65]

Sadaukai, who remained in constant dialogue with the FRELIMO soldiers—who averaged about twenty-two 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 also asked questions about American Blacks such as Sonny Liston, Muhammad Ali, and Angela Davis. He surprised his 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 spent only 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 ← 125 | 126 → 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.[66]

The following day, the three American guests of the FRELIMO Freedom Fighters arrived at their Mozambican campsite 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 spoke English very well and was also fluent in 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 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 ← 126 | 127 → 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 neocolonialism 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 reevaluation of his ideations while in the midst of war-torn Mozambique.[67] Another

diary entry of Owusu Sadaukai reflects 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.[68]

Sadaukai's epiphany was further supported by the constant realization that he and the two filmmakers were gaining the experiential knowledge about which Black folks back in the states had only theorized and pontificated.

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 ← 127 | 128 → 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 hikes every day 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, elephant droppings, and simple log bridges, which made a line of vision impossible.

One of Sadaukai's most interesting 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."[69] 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 more than fifty pounds on her head. She seldom used her hands to steady the load, and at one point even broke into a brisk trot."[70] 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 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 the 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 ← 128 | 129 → Freedom Fighters for FRELIMO projects, such as 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, "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."[71] This very candid and forward request 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 biomedical 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 organizations 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 in disseminating information about the liberation

struggles on the African continent.[72] The film, *A Luta Continua (The Struggle Continues)*, distributed by Tricontinental Films in conjunction with the Africa Information Service (AIS), became one of the most popular documentary films detailing 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.[73]

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 also the experience of having participated in leading treks and coming under attack with an African liberation organization about which most Black "revolutionaries" in ← 129 | 130 → 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 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 question with most concerns focused on the growth and improvement of the institution's infrastructure and facilities.[74]

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.

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 1970 when some white residents were so infuriated with the success of MXLU that they burned down one of the residences that school used as a men's dormitory.[75] By early 1971, MXLU's total operations consisted of the Greensboro location of centralized operations; the former Durham location that was ← 130 | 131 → the initial site of the University and now being used for children's and community outreach programs; and, spread among 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 and to maximize 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.[76]

## 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 summer of 1971, MXLU received notification from a member of the community about a potential property for sale. The potential location, Palmer Memorial Institute (PMI)[77] 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 auditorium. At a board meeting on May 29, 1971, the trustees of PMI felt that it would be in the best interests of the institution to close the historic institution. By the close of PMI's 1970–1971 academic year, the total indebtedness of the institution was $250,000 with an additional $140,000 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 PMI's equipment used for farming and agricultural purposes. Of the total 270 acres, only an estimated 70 acres was in use by PMI for total operational purposes. The remaining land, estimated to be about two hundred acres, was mostly wooded land and unused real estate. The vast potential of the

property in Sedalia made it imperative for MXLU staff to exhaust all measures possible to purchase it.[78]

Working in conjunction with members of PMI's board of trustees, MXLU proposed to acquire the property of PMI as early as July 1971. During this early ← 131 | 132 → 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. 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.
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.[79]

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 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 fifteen-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 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 in obtaining

the property.[80] ← 132 | 133 →

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."[81] The citizens committee, which began to mount an aggressive campaign to halt the sale of 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 Julius Douglas's decision to resign from the PMI board of trustees because of his disagreement with the initial decision to sell the PMI campus to MXLU. A disgruntled campus grounds worker for PMI remarked to representatives of the press and MXLU, "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."[82]

The petition, circulated in Greensboro and other rural areas of North Carolina such as Gibsonville, McLeansville, Wadsworth, and Whitsett, referred to the proposed sale of PMI to MXLU as a measure that would "lessen the value" of the property in the area and "disorganize the entire section."[83] The anti-MXLU propaganda was even more damaging to the school's reputation, by informing 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."[84] 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, 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."[85]

MXLU supporters attempted to counter the opposition efforts by going door to door with their own petition drive to garner 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 ← 133 | 134 → and MXLU was forced to withdraw its proposal for the PMI campus. After much consideration, in mid-October 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 agreement with the option to buy," and second, all of the "properties in the lease agreement would remain in control of Palmer's trustees."[86]

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 were the inevitable blow that prevented MXLU from obtaining the PMI campus. Former SNCC member and Civil Rights Movement–Black Power activist Cleveland Sellers provides significant insight on the Palmer controversy. 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 that all measures were 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 Palmer, 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.[87]

With MXLU out of the running for the PMI campus, the board of trustees narrowed their choices to eight proposals 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 proposals received for the sale, the United Holiness Church's offer 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 1971, the sale to United Holiness Church seemed final. However, at the last minute, 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."[88]

In November 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 ← 134 | 135 → 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 postmortem 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.[89] According to one of 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.[90]

MXLU's failure to capitalize on the potential expansion opportunity with 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 individuals but also 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 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 toward the University's 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."[91] ← 135 | 136 →

## MXLU Operations, 1971–1972 Continued: In Preparation for ALD

Despite the Palmer incident, operations at MXLU proceeded aggressively 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. Many 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 biomedics, 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 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 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. Also, MXLU was able to provide activist support for the Greensboro community's efforts to highlight the problems of police brutality.[92]

Media and press interest did not wane during this academic year as the *Greensboro Record* ran a four-part series on MXLU in late 1971 through early 1972 to highlight the school's activities, its historical beginnings, even the theoretical and practical objectives and framework of the school. The series 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 2 installment, ← 136 | 137 → titled, "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 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 commented to 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.[93]

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 among 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, 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 leaders 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 United States. Now poised with 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. ← 137 | 138 →

By the end of 1971, Sadaukai's motivations to further assist the liberation forces on the African continent cultivated an inspiration of historic proportions. That idea would become known as 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, neocolonialism, and imperialism as they affected Africans on a transnational level away from the propaganda that was reported by white media sources in America and abroad.[94]

In January 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 Day Coordinating 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, $3,000 was subsidized by an IFCO grant with the full support of IFCO's executive director, Lucius Walker.[95]

Sadaukai and the ALDCC's call for support is best exemplified in a letter that describes his inspirations and experiences on the African continent that 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:

> 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 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 ← 138 | 139 → 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.[96]

In addition to building the national grassroots initiatives among 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 Christian Leadership Conference; Angela Davis, who at the time was on trial for conspiracy to commit murder and kidnapping; Reps. John Conyers Jr. (D-Michigan) and Charles Diggs (D-Michigan); 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; 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; and Betty Shabazz, activist and widow of Malcolm X.[97]

For the remainder of the 1971–1972 academic year, MXLU became a hub for the coordination activities of the ensuing ALD demonstration, which further advanced the school's credibility concerning political action. The school was also increasing in recognition as a major force in national and international demonstration efforts. MXLU helped to bring about the first Black Political Prisoner Conference in North Carolina and acted as a major catalyst in the organizing efforts for North Carolina participation in the Gary, Indiana, convention called by the Black Congressional Caucus, which hosted more than four thousand delegates ← 139 | 140 → from forty-nine states and the District of Columbia. As the 1971–1972 academic year drew to a close, MXLU's staff and students could rest in the knowledge that they had done much to ensure the success of Sadaukai's brainchild.[98]

# Notes

1 As the 1960s and early 1970s burgeoned with expressions of Black consciousness, many Black Americans developed a transnational perspective. For many Black folks, this Pan-Africanist viewpoint was summarized in the Kiswahili-derived phrase "Uhuru na Kazi," which signified the need to work for the freedom sought by those throughout the Black world. For more on this subject, see Peniel Joseph's "Dashikis and Democracy: Black Studies, Student Activism and the Black Power Movement," *Journal of African American History* 88, no. 2 (Spring 2003), 182–203; and Colin A. Beckles' work "Black Bookstores, Black Power, and the FBI: The Case of Drum and Spear," *Western Journal of Black Studies* 20, no. 2 (1996), 63–71.

2 "African Free School Pamphlet," n.d. IFCO Records, Box 22, Folder 6, SRCBC.

3 Clyde Halisi and James Mtume, eds., *The Quotable Karenga* (Los Angeles: US Organization, 1967), 3.

4 Chuck Hopkins, "Interim Report: Malcolm X Liberation University," *ND/BW* 19, nos. 1–12 (November 1969–October 1970), 40–41.

5 "Black Studies and Revolution," *SNL*, February 6, 1971, 4.

6 Ibid.

7 "Black Studies Plans Rejected By Duke Afro-American Group," *DMH*, October 3, 1969, NCCCF UNC.

8 Ibid.

9 "Malcolm X University Chartered," *DMH*, June 7, 1969.

10 "Malcolm X University Chartered," *TNO*, June 7, 1969.

11 "Brochure Outlines Malcolm X Plans," *DMH*, August 23, 1969; "Malcolm X U Taking Shape," *DMH*, September 27,1969; "Malcolm X U Doing Well," *TNO*, October 5, 1969; "Aim: 'Work With Black People,'" *DMH*, October 10, 1969; "Operation of Malcolm X U Outlined by Howard Fuller," *TNO*, October 10, 1969; "Malcolm X Ready to Open: Nature of Program Still Unclear," *DMH*, October 19, 1969; "'No, We Do Not Teach Violence,' Fuller Says of Malcolm X Univ.," *TNO*, November 3, 1969.

12 "Episcopal Money Reported Helping Malcolm X School," *TNO*, October 11, 1969.

13 "Episcopal Money Reported Helping Malcolm X School," *TNO*, October 11, 1969; "Effect of Episcopal Meet On Grant Dispute Unknown," *DMH*, October 22, 1969; Brent H. Belvin, "Malcolm X Liberation University: An

Experiment in Independent Black Education," Master's Thesis, North Carolina State University, 2004, 53. ← 140 | 141 →

14 "Episcopal Money Reported Helping Malcolm X School," *TNO*, October 11, 1969. The $45,000 grant that MXLU received in 1969 would have in 2013 the purchasing power of $268,770.16. This figure was found using the inflation calculator located at http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpical.pl.

15 Robert S. Lecky and H. Elliot Wright, eds., *Black Manifesto: Religion, Racism and Reparations* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1969).

16 James Forman, "The Black Manifesto," in *Black Manifesto: Religion, Racism and Reparations*, edited by Robert S. Lecky and H. Elliot Wright (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1969), 122.

17 Ibid.; "Grant Stirs Up Episcopalians," *TNO*, October 22, 1969; "Malcolm X School Announced," *TNO*, October 14, 1969; "Grant to Malcolm X University Gets Varied Reactions From Episcopalians," *DMH*, October 15, 1969.

18 "Black Church Group Backs Disputed Episcopal Grant," *TNO*, October 31, 1969.

19 "Effect of Episcopal Meet On Grant Dispute Unknown," *DMH*, October 22, 1969; "Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina Press Release," October 21, 1969. TAFP, Folder 68–73, Malcolm X University General 1969–1974.

20 "Episcopal Body Urges Process Review," *DMH*, November 1, 1969.

21 "Grant Stirs Up Episcopalians," *TNO*, October 22, 1969; "Episcopal Body Urges Process Review," *DMH*, November 1, 1969.

22 "Episcopal Rector Speaks: About That Money to Malcolm X U," *Chapel Hill Weekly*, October 22, 1969; James N. McCutcheon, "Jesus Christ and Civil Rights," *Crisis* 80, no. 9 (1973), 303–306. IFCO, which was considered to have been the fundraising apparatus of the NCBC, BEDC, SCLC, and George Wiley's National Welfare Rights Organization, published a report in April 1970 that announced a summary of financial contributors represented from IFCO's inception, 1966 to March 1970. The contributors and monetary amounts are as follows: Episcopal Church, $476,504; United Church of Christ, $182, 382.48; UCC Commission for Racial Justice, $6,789.50; United Presbyterian Church USA, $481,787; United Methodist Church, $340,133.12; American Baptist Church Mission Society, $197, 756.10; Black Affairs Council Unitarian-Universalist, $74,549; Disciples of Christ, $20,000; Lutheran Church in America, $118,842.75; Presbyterian Church USA, $2,500; Roman Catholic Church, $22,928.08; American Jewish Committee, $2,000.

23 "Grant Proposal to the FCD from The Interim Committee of Malcolm X Liberation University," dated June 20, 1969. NCFR, Folder 903, MXLU; "Federal Grand Jury Probes MXLU Grant," *DMH*, October 27, 1969; Garrett, *A Palette, Not a Portrait*, 153.

24 "Fuller to Confer with Urban League on MXLU Funding," *DMH*, October 31, 1969.

25 Ibid.

26 "Fuller to Confer with Urban League on MXLU Funding," *DMH*, October 31, 1969; "NAACP Bars Fuller, Group," *Durham Morning Herald*, October 12, 1969. ← 141 | 142 →

27 "Operation of Malcolm X U. Outlined by Howard Fuller," *TNO*, October 10, 1969.

28 "Malcolm X U Set to Open Doors Oct. 27," *DMH*, October 10, 1969; "Aim: 'Work With Black People,'" *DMH*, October 10, 1969; "Operation of Malcolm X U. Outlined by Howard Fuller," *TNO*, October 10, 1969.

29 Ibid.

30 "Student Organization for Black Unity Proposal," December 20, 1969, CSC, Box 11, Folder 12, ARC CCC; "Aim: 'Work With Black People,'" *DMH*, October 10, 1969; "Malcolm X Ready To Open: Nature of Its Program Still Unclear," *DMH*, October 19, 1969; "Form New Black Students Unit in N.C.," *CDD*, October 23, 1969.

31 "At MXLU Opening, Fuller Emphasizes Need for Continuous Struggle," *MC*, November 2, 1969; "Day-Long Celebrations Mark Malcolm X School Program: African-Clad Group Marches to School," *DMH*, October 26, 1969, 1A, 8A; "New Malcolm X School," *CDD*, November 4, 1969.

32 "In Durham, NC, 'Liberation' University Opens,'" *MC*, November 2, 1969.

33 "At MXLU Opening, Fuller Emphasizes Need for Continuous Struggle," *MC*, November 2, 1969; "Day-Long Celebrations Mark Malcolm X School Program: African-Clad Group Marches to School," *DMH*, October 26, 1969, 1A, 8A; "Opening of Malcolm X U Includes All-Day Ceremonies," *DC*, October 28, 1969, 1, 8; "Malcolm X

Liberation U Opens!" *MOJO*, December 1969.

34 Stokely Carmichael, "We Are All Africans," *Black Scholar* 1, no. 7 (May 1970), 65–68.

35 Ibid.

36 "At MXLU Opening, Fuller Emphasizes Need for Continuous Struggle," *MC*, November 2, 1969.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.; Jack White, "Black University Survives in NC," *Race Relations Reporter* 2, no. 12 (July 6, 1971), IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 37, SRCBC.

40 Osha Gray Davidson, *The Best of Enemies: Race and Redemption in the New South* (New York: Scribner, 1996), 162.

41 Proposal For MXLU, n.d. IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 37, SRCBC; "Malcolm X University: Alternative to the System," *Charlotte Observer*, December 1, 1969, NCCF UNC.

42 "Malcolm X University: Alternative to the System," *CO*, December 1, 1969, North Carolina Collection Clipping File through 1975, UNC Library, Chapel Hill.

43 "Afros Hold Nat Turner Discussion," *DC*, November 12, 1969.

44 "No, We Do Not Teach Violence, Fuller Says of Malcolm X Univ.," *TNO*, November 3, 1969.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.; "Malcolm X University Going to Greensboro," *DMH*, August 21, 1970. ← 142 | 143 →

47 "IFCO Grants $312,318 for Social Action Works," *CDD*, April 4, 1970. The IFCO grant was disseminated to twenty Black, Chicano, and American Indian community organizations and development projects.

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53 Tom Dent, *Southern Journey: A Return to the Civil Rights Movement* (Athens, GA: 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.

54 Center for Black Education, *The Struggle for Black Education* (Washington, DC: Drum & Spear & CBE, 1972); "A Position Paper: Center For Black Education," *ND/BW* 19, no. 1–12 (March 1970), 38.

55 "Opening Day Statement, October 1970, Mwalimu Owusu Sakauki." (Document provided by Dr. Howard Fuller from his private collection).

56 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.

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58 "Pan African School Federation Seeks Cooperative Solutions," *SNL*, December 5, 1970.

59 Ibid.

60 "The Church, Medium for Rapid Social Change Theme of Confab," *CDD*, August 7, 1971; "Inside Liberated Mozambique," *TAW*, 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).

61 "Inside Liberated Mozambique," *TAW*, January 8, 1972. ← 143 | 144 →

62 "The Church, Medium for Rapid Social Change Theme of Confab," *CDD*, August 7, 1971; "Inside Liberated Mozambique," *TAW*, 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).

63 "Inside Liberated Mozambique," *TAW*, January 8, 1972.

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65 "Inside Liberated Mozambique," *TAW*, 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).

66 Ibid., 10–11.

67 Wilkins, "In the Belly of the Beast," Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 2001, 140–141.

68 "The 31 Day Diary of Owusu Sadaukai (Howard Fuller): Inside of Mozambique," August 1971, 3. (Document in author's possession).

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

71 Signe Waller, *Love and Revolution: A Political Memoir: People's History of the Greensboro Massacre, Its Setting and Aftermath* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 54–55.

72 Ibid., 19–22, 26, 32; "Inside Liberated Mozambique," *TAW*, January 8, 1972.

73 Wilkins, "In the Belly of the Beast," Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 2001, 136.

74 "Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University," n.d., 5, IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 38, SRCBC.

75 "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.

76 "Proposal For MXLU," n.d., 12, IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 38, SRCBC.

77 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. The school provided African Americans with an educational base for cultural "refinement." Funded largely by White philanthropists from the New England area, the school was named after Alice Freeman Palmer, the first woman president of Wellesley College. Brown, a teacher, speaker, and writer, was a self-proclaimed disciple of the agrarian economic principles espoused by Booker T. Washington. She hoped to achieve middle-class respectability for Black folks through the education of ← 144 | 145 → an African American elite. See the later notes attached for Wadelington and Knapp's work, *Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Palmer Memorial Institute: What One Young African American Woman Could Do* (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999). Also see Diane Silcox-Jarrett's *Charlotte Hawkins Brown: One Woman's Dream* (Winston-Salem, NC: Bandit, 1995).

78 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: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 210; Diane Silcox-Jarrett, *Charlotte Hawkins Brown: One Woman's Dream* (Winston-Salem, NC: Bandit, 1995), 107; "Malcolm X University May Buy Palmer Site," *GR*, August 31, 1971; "Institute Trustees Split Over Sale: Black University May Purchase Defunct School," *DMH*, September 1, 1971, NCCCF, UNC; "Malcolm X University Seeks A Campus," *TAC*, September 2, 1971, NCCF, UNC; "Sedalia Area to Discuss Ways to Block Palmer Institute Sale," *GDN*, 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, IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 37, SRCBC.

79 "Funding Proposal Letter From Howard Fuller to Bishop Charles Golden of the Commission on Religion and Race

—Minneapolis, MN—October 22, 1971," 2. IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 37, SRCBC.

80 "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," *GDN*, September 3, 1971; IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 37, SRCBC; "Malcolm X University May Buy Palmer Site," *GR*, August 31, 1971. In preparation for the procurement of the PMI property, the MXLU financial advisor–accountant approximated the monthly expenditures of the projected site at $7,500. This figure included salaries, utilities, and other miscellaneous operating costs.

81 Sedalia Area to Discuss Ways to Block Palmer Institute Sale," *GDN*, September 3, 1971.

82 "Sedalia Area to Discuss Ways to Block Palmer Institute Sale," *GDN*, September 3, 1971; Wadelington and Knapp, *Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Palmer Memorial Institute*, 210.

83 Sedalia Area to Discuss Ways to Block Palmer Institute Sale," *GDN*, September 3, 1971.

84 Ibid.

85 Ibid.; Wadelington and Knapp, *Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Palmer Memorial Institute*, 210.

86 "Bid for Institute Renewed," *DMH*, October 15, 1971.

87 Dr. Cleveland Sellers, interview with author, Columbia, SC, January 28, 2008. ← 145 | 146 →

88 Wadelington and Knapp, *Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Palmer Memorial Institute*, 210.

89 Ibid., 211; Silcox-Jarrett, *Charlotte Hawkins Brown*, 107; Ernest Allen Jr., "Religious Heterodoxy and Nationalist Tradition: The Continuing Evolution of the Nation of Islam," *Black Scholar* 26, no. 3–4 (1996), 15–21.

90 Wadelington and Knapp, *Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Palmer Memorial Institute*, 211.

91 Ibid., 266.

92 "MXLU Progress Report to IFCO December 1, 1972 to June 30, 1972," July 5, 1972, IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 37, SRCBC.

93 "Controversial School Comes of Age—First in a Series of Four," *GR*, November 24, 1971; "At Malcolm X—Dawn to Dusk Education," "Classroom Dialogue: 'Building Things,' But Not Here—Second of Four Parts," *GR*, November 25, 1971; "At MXLU: 'Meeting Needs'—Third of Four Parts," *GR*, November 26, 1971; "Howard Fuller: Respect For Those Who Struggle—Final of Four Parts," *GR*, November 27, 1971.

94 "1st 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.

95 "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 & London: 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," IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 39, SRCBC.

96 Ronald W. Walters, *Pan Africanism in the African Diaspora: An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Political Movements* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 70.

97 Ibid., 71; "Blacks Mobilize for African Liberation," *TWP*, April 1, 1972; Cedric Johnson, *Revolutionaries to Race Leaders: Black Power and the Making of African American Politics* (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press), 140.

98 "MXLU Progress Report to IFCO December 1, 1972 to June 30, 1972," July 5, 1972, IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 37, SRCBC; "4,000 Convene for a Black Beginning in Gary," *TAW* 2, no. 12 April 1, 1972, 1,9. ← 146 | 147 →

# 5

# Malcolm X Liberation University

## *Planning, Curriculum, Projects, and 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.[1]
>
> —Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*

## Background: Historical Antecedents of Malcolm X Liberation University

To all appearances, Malcolm X Liberation University was a child of the turbulent times in which it was born. Founded in 1969, it was indeed a direct outgrowth of the restive dissatisfaction of African American scholars and college students and the broader disaffection of the Black urban poor. However, MXLU was no mere child of the 1960s. Its sociopolitical DNA could be traced to Black liberation and Black Nationalist efforts dating to the antebellum period and to the self-reliance movements of Booker T. Washington and Marcus Garvey in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Following the Civil War, Black folks who had emerged from the cauldron of chattel slavery embarked on a tireless journey to improve their condition by ← 147 | 148 → educating themselves. For many ex-slaves, the ability to read and write their own names was a benchmark achievement that meant the beginnings of improved self-esteem and a psychological freedom that rivaled the removal of physical shackles. Ex-slaves rushed to become part of a literate society and to escape the bleak nostalgia of a slavery that had prevented them from reading and writing. One former slave said, “There is one sin

that slavery committed against me which I will never forgive. It robbed me of my education."[2]

For many former slaves, the chance to advance a future for themselves and their children could only be secured through schools that they would establish themselves apart from the control of their former masters. James D. Anderson notes, "The values of self-help and self-determination underlay the ex-slaves' educational movement."[3]

With this decisive understanding that liberation through education would only be achieved through their own efforts, Black folks provided their own money, labor, and time toward the development of schools and other educational institutions. In many cases, white assistance was neither sought nor accepted:

> 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.[4]

This movement to create educational sites for manumitted Black people grew in conjunction with an effort to secure places of worship. Throughout the South, this need to learn and worship led to the growth of institutions known as "Sabbath schools." From 1863 to 1870, Sabbath schools worked in conjunction with the following institutions:

1. day schools that educated mostly freed children;
2. night schools that educated freed adults;
3. regimental schools that addressed the educational needs of Black men enlisted in the Union Army; and ← 148 | 149 →
4. hundreds of independent schools throughout the South whose combined efforts aided in educating more than 900,000 freed Blacks during the era.

In addition, Sabbath schools enabled instructors to teach large masses of Black folks while addressing students' spiritual needs. Historian Randy Sparks notes that "religious instruction was supplemented with singing, reading exercises and patriotic lessons."[5]

These self-determinative efforts had a profound impact on literacy rates among Blacks. Historian V. P. Franklin notes, "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 the number of illiterates in (relevant) age groups decreased during the decade ending in 1910 and that 'this had also occurred in the two previous decades."[6]

At the turn of the twentieth century, Black educational aspirations would take a decidedly more Nationalist profile, owing in part to the rise of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Under "Garveyism," self-reliance and self-determinative action became pervasive themes of operational effectiveness in bringing about Garvey's vision of "Africa for the Africans … at home and abroad." Garvey saw himself and his movement as educational tools for promoting original and creative strategies for improving Black life:

> 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.[7]

Garvey, who was strongly influenced by Booker T. Washington, desired to establish educational institutions for Blacks in Jamaica as well as in the United States for the purpose of developing an agriculturally based pedagogy. In 1920, UNIA's Declaration of Rights called for the "unlimited and unprejudiced education for black people … UNIA locals in Port Limón (Costa Rica), Colón (Panama), British Guiana and elsewhere ran elementary and sometimes grammar schools."[8] In 1926, UNIA's New York City branch founded and owned Booker T. Washington University, and as UNIA expanded in membership and organizational strength, ← 149 | 150 → a second postsecondary institution was acquired in Virginia and named Liberty University. As with many Black colleges of the period, the curricular standards of the schools were of high school level and, as with most Black educational institutions, the schools suffered financially. After three years of operation, the educational institutions closed because of lack of funding. However, Garvey's organization was still able to network and train workers for UNIA.

Garvey was eventually deported and spent the remaining years of his life in London. However, his educational efforts continued. He founded the School of African Philosophy, using correspondence courses and intensive personal training (including courses he taught in Canada) to prepare UNIA workers for their roles in the organization."[9]

Garvey's pedagogical impulses were reflected in what historians call the "re-emergence" of Black Nationalism during the mid-1960s. Independent Black education centers, the study and propagation of Black consciousness, and the emphasis on self-reliance in such endeavors were all rooted, at least in part, in the Garveyist ethic.

Like Garvey, Black students and educators had practical as well as ideological reasons for detaching themselves from the nation's educational infrastructure. Early

Black Studies programs on white college campuses were often ostracized academically and financially. This inevitably meant that proper funding and academic personnel could not be maintained and Black Studies programs and departments suffered. Perhaps even worse was a proclivity on the part of some institutions to dilute Black studies programs or to interfere with them to such a degree as to render them untenable. As a result, many Nationalists moved for the development of independent institutions to avoid white control over direction, curriculum, and ideological foundations.[10]

The press for separate and independent Black universities and sites of learning became more operational when a group of African American scholars and students held a series of conferences to address the relationship between Black Power and pedagogy. The conferences were held between 1966 and 1969 in the following locales:

- Washington, D.C.—1966
- Newark, New Jersey—1967
- Philadelphia—1968
- Bermuda (international meeting)—1969 ← 150 | 151 →

The work from these conferences helped spur a period of educational institution building, including the establishment of both the National Association of African American Education (NAAAE) and the Council of Independent Black Institutions (CIBI).[11]

However, the most significant outcome was the decision to develop a university built on a curriculum that reflected the historical, social, and political experiences of African Americans. Discussion of the university often centered on the question of whether the school should be located in the North or South. The question had obvious historical and social resonance.

According to 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.[12]

In the years just before the conferences, several of these "communiversities" had already begun to emerge. The Institute of the Black World (IBW), headed by Vincent Harding and involving scholars Gerald McWorter, Stephen Henderson, Lerone Bennett, Sterling Stuckey, Robert Brown, and Joyce Ladner, was formed in Atlanta; the Communiversity, involving scholars Anderson Thompson, Conrad Worrill, Bobby

Wright, Jacob Carruthers, Harold Pates, and Professor Robert Starks and the Malcolm X College, headed by Charles G. Hurst, were both in Chicago; the Center for Black Education, headed by Charlie Cobb, was in Washington, D.C.; Nairobi College was in East Palo Alto, California; the African Free School, founded by Imamu Amiri Baraka of the Congress of Afrikan People (CAP), was based in Newark, New Jersey; and Uhuru Sasa Shule (Freedom Now School), headed by Jitu Weusi of the East Organization, was in Brooklyn, New York.[13]

The debate over whether the new university would be in the North or South was resolved when conference leaders settled on Durham, North Carolina, the site of the Black student protests at Duke University. The students had provided an almost poetic impetus for the new university when they seized the Allen Building ← 151 | 152 → and renamed it the Malcolm X Liberation School. So it was virtually a matter of course that the proposed school would be called Malcolm X Liberation University.

## The Structure of Malcolm X Liberation University[14]

How do you build a university?

The international cadre of scholars and students who gathered at a North Carolina conference center in the spring of 1969 doubtless had differing and sometimes even conflicting views on how to develop Malcolm X Liberation University. However, they were in accord on this point: the university had to embody Malcolm's belief that the oppression of African Americans must be addressed as part of a broader Pan-African liberation struggle.[15]

As an independent Black institution, MXLU's operational approach was based on the understanding that because oppression is not limited by geographical boundaries, 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 "me first" educational influences of Western European individualism and to adopt the conceptual framework of African communalism.[16] Borrowing from the Garveyist dictum of "Africa for Africans," MXLU arrived at the following position:

> 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.[17]

These ideals were codified in a series of position papers that emphasized a belief that

the future of Black education rested on "Nation Building" and a profound understanding that self-reliance must be the "end-product of Black education and the beginning of a lasting and meaningful Black people hood."[18]

The organizers at 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."[19] The interim ← 152 | 153 → committee functioned as a screening committee for prospective instructors or "resource people," as they would be referred to. The committee also decided on the curriculum design, which was intended not only to meet the needs of students but also to accord with the ideological evolution of the University.[20]

The sixteen-member interim committee consisted of "Bertie Howard, a student at 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 the 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."[21] MXLU's initial administrative functions were handled by a special taskforce appointed by Fuller. The taskforce included Howard, Edwards, and Charles Hopkins, former president of Duke's Afro-American Society.[22]

By June 1969, MXLU had succeeded in not only establishing a functional organizational scheme but also in securing a charter from 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 organization. The charter also gave the University a measure of legitimacy that the MXLU taskforce could use to attract faculty and staff.[23]

Hoping to garner the attention of the nation's leading African American scholars, Fuller, a group of SOBU students, and members of the interim committee sent out scores of position papers, fact sheets, and newspaper articles about the University. The effort attracted the attention of scores of prominent Black thinkers including John Henrik Clarke, Julian Mayfield, and Ewart Guiner. The three were eventually tapped to serve on an MXLU advisory committee. On October 2, 1969, the advisory committee met 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, there was significant discussion about a merger with the Center for Black Education in Washington.[24]

In December 1969, the interim committee was dismantled and a permanent governing body was established. The committee, which would come to be known as 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."[25] MXLU's administrative functions were executed by a staff that included the director of operations, a public ← 153 | 154 → information officer, a coordinator of curriculum of development, a technical assistant, a coordinator of special programs, and an office manager.[26]

The MXLU administration also established guidelines and policies intended to govern the conduct of staff and students. These rules were enforced by a judicial body called the Indaba Council. The Council's seven members were selected at random from the MXLU community. All MXLU community members were required to serve at least one term.[27]

As a judicial body, the Indaba Council was required to issue rulings in cases of alleged misconduct. Any MXLU member had the right to bring charges against any other member believed to have violated community rules barring use or possession of controlled substances, theft, drunkenness or drinking on University property, lying to the Indaba Council, and other unseemly personal, professional, or academic behavior. To convict the accused, five out of seven of the council members had to find the member guilty.[28] MXLU's aim was to inculcate members with a military-style commitment to self-discipline and a sense of collective responsibility to the larger community.[29] And although the guidelines were primarily intended to help students govern their behavior, the rules were also applicable to faculty and staff.[30]

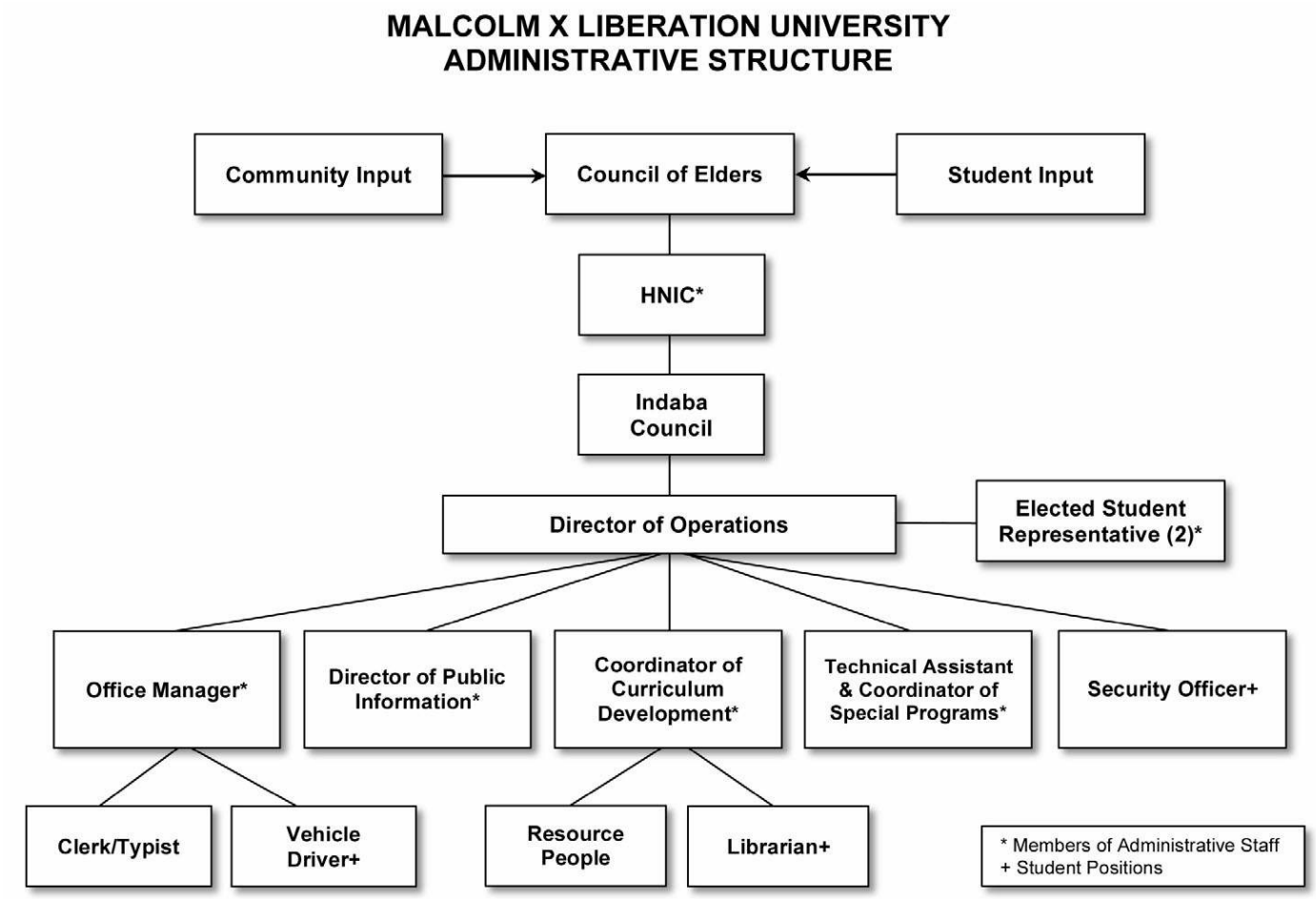


Figure 5.1 Original organizational structure of Malcolm X Liberation University.[31] ← 154 | 155 →

The final organizational structure of Malcolm X Liberation University included more than just the base operations typical of any educational institution. MXLU's institutional structure was driven by the University's community involvement and expressed 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."[32] The Greensboro-based Shabazz Center accommodated children from three to five years of age, four of them from the city's public housing projects. The University also constructed the Children of Africa Program, which operated in the Hampton Homes Housing Project and established the Willie Grimes Educational Center. The Center, which targeted at-risk high school students, worked in conjunction with the Teacher Corps training program of MXLU. The Teacher Corps's main purpose was to provide instruction in political education using historical and cultural analysis to interpret issues related to the African world. 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. MXLU, acting on a community request, also set up political

education seminars for adult learners in Durham and Greensboro.[33]

The policymaking body of Malcolm X Liberation University included the Mwalimu Mkuu, or master teacher, the Council of Elders, community input, and student input. All these leadership positions were governed by principles of African communalism and an understanding that such positions conferred no personal privilege. In fact, the positions were to be viewed as a community trust ordained for the selfless purpose of aiding the progress of African communities both domestic and transnational.[34]

This philosophy was actualized through a set of functional checks and balances. For example, the HNIC/Mwalimu Mkuu was required to submit periodic reports to the Council of Elders on the state of the University. However, the Mwalimu exerted its checking power by serving as the University's major fundraiser and fiduciary manager, and through the oversight of MXLU's operations director. It was the responsibility of the operations director to evaluate staff and faculty—the resource people of the University.[35]

The interim committee and taskforce began its staff and faculty review and selection process during the summer of 1969. From the inception of the University, these resource people provided a wide range of intellectual competencies. They were expected to teach, develop curriculum in conjunction with the academic ← 155 | 156 → coordinator, and to engage in a range of pedagogical duties, including the annotation of bibliographies, the production of a detailed course outline-syllabi, and the generation of an operating budget itemizing the costs of course resources.[36]

Most members of the resource staff were college graduates with extensive academic and practical experience in a wide range of fields, including engineering, anthropology, agricultural science, and language studies. For example, a young French instructor (she also happened to be fluent in Spanish) had been educated at a historically Black college in North Carolina, had taught at Bennett College in Greensboro, and had also studied at the University of Lyon in France. The initial MXLU resource staff also included a Vietnam veteran who had graduated from Harvard Law School. He was put in charge of conducting seminars on political economy and ideology.[37]

While the staff selection process emphasized expertise and intellectual commitment, the student selection process emphasized openness and collectivity. Applicants were required to introduce themselves in a written statement and undergo a personal interview with the admissions committee, but any individual over the age of eighteen and willing to accept MXLU's objectives was eligible for admission. As a consequence, the student body at MXLU represented a wide range of geographical regions and educational backgrounds as the University "received applications from the Congo (Kinshasa), Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guyana and Gambia."[38] Godfrey Mwakikagile, a student from Tanzania, requested admission to MXLU after he met Fuller in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in 1971. According to his book, *Relations Between*

*Africans and African Americans: Misconceptions, Myths and Realities*, Mwakikagile had become aware of MXLU through reading SOBU's publication, the *African World*. When he met Fuller, he expressed a deep interest in attending, and Fuller promised the eager young African student a scholarship.[39] Many of the University's students also came to MXLU with the political experience of having formerly organized youth groups and worked and volunteered in co-ops and other segments of the Black community. MXLU's student body also included drop-outs or students who had been expelled from their former colleges and universities for political reasons.[40] Some students, such as Yusufu Mosely, a former member of Chicago's Communiversity, viewed MXLU as the fulfillment of their vision for a culturally sensitive university based in the South.[41]

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, who grew up in Philadelphia, had hoped to effect change by attending a top school and then earning a law degree. At the ← 156 | 157 → time, predominately white educational institutions were seeking Black students, one of many tactics aimed at suppressing Black campus revolts. Scott, caught up in the trend, was admitted to Brown University on full scholarship. However, the one year he spent at Brown University was unfulfilling and culturally and politically disaffecting. Then, in the spring of 1970, Scott heard Fuller speak during an engagement at Brown. He soon decided to enroll at MXLU. Scott recounted his experiences in an interview with *Greensboro Record* reporter Peter Leo in the third installment of a four-part series about MXLU. A short excerpt of the interview follows:

> **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.[42]

Scott also suggested that his departure from Brown had been spurred by a growing sense of personal militancy and a deepening commitment to Pan-Africanism. In the interview for the *Greensboro Record*, he commented, "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."[43]

For some students, MXLU's chief attraction was its affordability. The annual tuition was $300, and this fee was flexible, depending on the student's financial need. The annual cost for room and board was $20 per month or $200 per year. Students were encouraged to pay more if able. MXLU was able to provide a limited amount of financial assistance to students, and most students had all or some of their costs paid by the University.[44] MXLU administrators and faculty helped underwrite part of the

students' expenses with fees from speaking engagements.[45]

Malcolm X Liberation University was initially founded in Durham, North Carolina, which during the years of 1969–1970 had an estimated population of between 75,000–90,000 residents. Of that number approximately one-third was Black. Many of these were firmly ensconced in the middle class and very well organized politically and socially.[46] Although Durham's overall economy relied heavily on the tobacco industry, the prosperity of the city's Black community was largely due to "the remarkable success of the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, the largest Black financial institution in the world, and the host of African American businesses that grew up around the Mutual."[47] ← 157 | 158 →

MXLU was initially located at 426–28 Pettigrew Street in an abandoned warehouse in an impoverished neighborhood primed for urban renewal. In August 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. Greensboro, where a third of its 150,000 total population was Black, historically had been more militant than Durham. It had been the birthplace of the student sit-in movement of the 1960s.[48] Greensboro was also an attractive location for MXLU because it was home to North Carolina A&T University, a technical institution. There was a strong belief that some faculty members at A&T would be able to assist in developing technical education programs at MXLU.

In Greensboro, MXLU settled into a pair of buildings, including a former church education building, which the University rented from the Black Masonic Lodge of Greensboro. MXLU also rented ten homes in Greensboro's Black community to serve as housing for students and resource people. [49]

MXLU's engagement with the Black community was also reflected in its accreditation policy. The school rejected the conventional, state-federal definition of accreditation, arguing that it could only be accredited by the Black community. The primary measure of evaluation would be the University's ability to produce students who could make a substantial contribution to the global liberation of Black people.[50] This practice of dismissing state and federal measures and jurisdiction was not an anomalous undertaking for MXLU. The Uhuru Sasa Shule (Freedom Now School) of the East Organization in Brooklyn, New York, began by Jitu Weusi, shared a similar outlook. Established in 1970, Uhuru Sasa Shule (*shule* is Kiswahili for school) offered instruction to students from primary levels to adult ages, utilizing an educational approach centered around Black Nationalism and a community-based concept of validation.[51] According to 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).[52]

This same collective spirit was integral to MXLU's evaluation process. The University depended on community input and viewed any evaluation of its progress as part of an ongoing process that included the entire MXLU family. In fact, the preliminary development of the school would have been impossible without the ← 158 | 159 → University's Council of Elders, a diverse group that undertook the work of evaluating the taskforce's guidelines and establishing MXLU's aims and objectives.

This evaluation process also consisted of correspondence with the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO). Established in 1966 as an ecumenical organization, IFCO would serve as an intermediary between the budding Black Power leadership and Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish religious leaders who viewed the Black Power Movement as a valid response to the problems of the urban poor. IFCO's intention was to use the affluence of the white religious establishment to bankroll the efforts of groups working to end racial and economic injustice in American cities. Under the leadership of Lucius Walker, the New York–based IFCO would act as a broker of sorts, fielding funding requests from Black militant organizations while maintaining ties to religious establishments that avoided direct association with radicals. IFCO's intermediary status was especially challenging given the innate racial hostility rippling just below the surface of the entire enterprise. The doctrinal descendants of Malcolm X and the spiritual scions of the Judeo-Christian ethic were not a match made in heaven.[53]

Even so, IFCO became a crucial partner for MXLU. The religious organization played an integral role in the establishment of the University and assisted greatly in MXLU's evaluative and developmental processes. This is exemplified by the quarterly progress reports generated by MXLU for IFCO in 1970. The reports were a product of MXLU's internal evaluation process, which included input from both resource people and students who took part in an intensive five days of university testing at the end of MXLU's academic year. The examinations served as curricular and administrative determinants for how the university administration might proceed in the upcoming 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, MXLU's internal evaluation, and the reports for IFCO aided greatly in the institution's progress.[54] MXLU's theoretical approach 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

Malcolm X Liberation University rooted its theoretical and ideological approach in Pan-Africanism with a utilitarian conceptualization of Nation Building as a ← 159 | 160 → means of achieving its projected goal of liberating Africans throughout the Diaspora.[55] 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 Blacks.

In 1971, MXLU produced a theoretical and ideological manifesto titled, *Understanding the African Struggle: A Series of Essays by the Ideological Research Staff of Malcolm X Liberation University*. The document articulated four major tenets on which the university would base its operational goals and objectives:

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.[56]

In formulating these tenants, MXLU was influenced significantly by the work of Julius K. Nyerere. Nyerere, then president of the United Republic of Tanzania, had constructed a social and political outline for his country 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. He strongly believed that leadership should never live on another's labor; neither should the leader have capitalist or feudalist 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.[57] In Nyerere's book, *Education for Self-Reliance*, he maintained

> The educational systems in different kinds 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 ← 160 | 161 → 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.[58]

MXLU's own approach was built on the concept that education must be an expression of cultural values and should inculcate students in the skills and ethics that perpetuate those values. This approach brought MXLU into direct conflict with the American public education system that more often than not discounted the historical, political, and economic experiences of Black people.[59] A quote taken from the October 25, 1969, inaugural issue of Malcolm X Liberation University's publication, the *African Warrior*, provides a cogent 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 Black people then realistically seek their liberation through participating in the process which emanate from the very sources of their oppression?[60]

For MXLU the answer was a resounding, "No," but the University wasn't content to simply respond to the question. It offered an alternative educational premise: communalism. James "Jim" Lee, an instructor at MXLU, provided insight into the concept of communalism during an interview with the *African Warrior*. Lee argued, "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."[61]

As citizens of the Pan-African Diaspora, students at MXLU were encouraged to divorce themselves from the bare-knuckled individualism fostered by the American educational process and to adopt a communal worldview that included everything from the sharing of textbooks, food, and other material goods to the ongoing effort to improve the University's institutional structure.[62]

## MXLU's Community Education and 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 for students of high school and ← 161 | 162 → college age. However, Malcolm X Liberation University's engagement with Black people in Durham and Greensboro extended beyond the parameters of postsecondary education. MXLU auxiliary programs—most notably the Betty Shabazz Early Education Center and the Willie Grimes Educational Center—focused on students in pre-K through 12. The development of the centers spawned the Teacher Corps Training Program,

which proffered an African-centered pedagogy for instructors. MXLU also provided adult-community education seminars for Black residents who desired an experience of postsecondary education without officially enrolling into MXLU.[63]

The Betty Shabazz Early Education Center was formed on February 9, 1970. MXLU worked with Durham community organizations to develop the preschool as a means of providing positive sociocultural experiences for Black children ages two to seven. MXLU promoted the philosophy that a meaningful education should start at the preschool level and that early exposure to an African-centered curriculum would aid greatly in overcoming the psychological colonization that Black children experience in traditional schools.[64] 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.[65]

In keeping with its advocacy of self-reliance, MXLU established the Early Education Center as an independent school with no obligation to follow state guidelines. Like MXLU, the Center sought validation and assistance from the Black community in which it was located.

The curriculum of the early education center was formulated to address the need for self-awareness and to develop the critical learning skills of children of African descent. Students 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."[66] A significant component of this conditioning process centered on positive social values, including family hood, love for African people, and communalism. There was also an emphasis on functionalism as a concrete versus an abstract phenomenon.[67] ← 162 | 163 →

The curriculum at the preschool included instruction in size, shape, and color perception, 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 and drama, agriculture, physical development, art, and African and American history and culture.[68] The instruction involved original stories and songs created by the Center's instructors to illustrate events in African history, a pedagogical concept, or a commentary on African culture. The stories and songs were in the traditional African languages of Swahili, Yoruba, Hausa, and Ibo.[69]

The mathematical and science concepts of the African Children's Education Center involved the use of numerical operations, basic elements of set theory, simple 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."[70] 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.[71]

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."[72] The operation of both the Willie Grimes Community School and the Betty Shabazz African 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."[73] The Teacher Corps training program was divided into the areas of early learning and adult learning from which the student teachers of MXLU would instruct and fulfill their teaching requirements at either the Betty Shabazz African 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 ← 163 | 164 → exercise their pedagogical skills was the Community/Political Education Seminars for adult learners.[74]

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 Corps 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.[75]

Teacher Corps 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 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.[76]

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 those in the MLXU curriculum. 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."[77] 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. ← 164 | 165 →

The MXLU adult seminars were aimed at addressing four major areas of political education for its adult learners: (1) *Education*, which provided information to the African community concerning the historical and cultural roots of Black people. This also included a diasporic lens for the enhancement of understanding the Pan-Africanist experience. (2) *Politicization*, which provided the opportunity to increase the political awareness of community residents through critical analysis of sociohistorical texts, the contemporary experiences of Black folks, and the conceptual framework of Pan-Africanism–Black Nationalism. (3) *Mobilization*, which focused on the necessary ideological and theoretical inputs of domestic and global struggle. This segment provided an articulation of how to engage community participation from a conscious perspective and aimed at maintaining the global interrelatedness between Black folks in Greensboro and their brothers and sisters on the African continent. (4) *Services*, which stressed the need to provide support for the Black community 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" among Africans worldwide.[78]

MXLU provided a diversified instructional approach that included films, panels, lectures, discussion sessions, and 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 insight on not only the operations of the University, but the film also gave a glimpse of the combined efforts needed to inaugurate MXLU. The seminars also featured historical, ideological, and analytical materials constructed around the theme "Independent African Civilization, European Penetration of Africa, Slavery, Colonialism, Neo-Colonialism, and Nation building."[79]

The course content and curriculum of MLXU's adult seminars was broken into four parts: (1) the *historical background* of African people, which had two subcomponents: examining precolonial Africa's civilizations, and covering the European invasion and colonializing of the African continent. The precolonial content entailed the importance of African geography and land to the cultural development of African people. It also provided a political survey of African states that included countries such as Ethiopia and Egypt. The seminar curriculum referred to the colonial period as the "European Rape and Penetration of Africa" and analyzed African colonization and the effects of imperialism on Africa and the by-product of slavery as a global enterprise. It also examined neocolonialism in the context of contemporary African independence and the reciprocal historical relationship of colonialism to neocolonialism. (2) *Nature and character of African oppression* ← 165 | 166 → assisted adult learners through identification analysis of institutional controls that produced both social and psychological mechanisms of oppression. It also discussed Euro-American identity and the 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* 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) *Special Seminars*, which was offered periodically, covered topics that included, but were not limited to, technological needs of African people, medical and nutritional needs of African people, and the themes of communication and Nation Building.[80]

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.

*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 Yousef ben-Jochanan; and an essay compiled by the research staff of MXLU titled, "Rape and Penetration of Africa." *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 *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 K. 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.[81]

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.[82] ← 166 | 167 →

Key:
P.D.: Physical Development
T.C.: Teacher Corps
Selected Tech.: Selected Technical Area (e.g., communications, engineering, biomedics)

| SCHEDULE FOR 1969-70 SCHOOL YEAR | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Time** | **MONDAY** | **TUESDAY** | **WEDNESDAY** | **THURSDAY** | **FRIDAY** | **SATURDAY** | **SUNDAY** |
| **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** | L U N C H | | | | | | ---- |
| **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** | D I N N E R | | | | | | ---- |
| **6:30** | Free | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- |
| **7:30** | T.C. Community School | Math | T.C. Community School | Physical Science | Math | ---- | ---- |
| **8:30** | ---- | Math | ---- | Physical Science | Math | ---- | ---- |

Figure 5.2 MXLU Weekly Schedule.[83]

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 and 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 would mean that MXLU had successfully fused theory with practice in a way that allowed Black folks to 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 ← 167 | 168 → toward the 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.[84]

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 curriculum was separated into two parts: A and B. Part A: The first-year student at MXLU engaged in what the University considered to be the reordering 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 development of the colonized mind, community organization, and political systems; and last, (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 totaling 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 MXLU students provided their skills 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) biomedics, (2) communication, (3) agriculture, and (4) engineering, which consisted of three sub-areas of study: electrical, mechanical, and construction. ← 168 | 169 →

# Part A

## *History*

The development of MXLU's history course was separated into four components: independent African civilization, slavery, colonialism, and neocolonialism. The course on independent African civilization examined various social aspects on the precolonial African continent. It 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. 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.[85]

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

Both colonialism and neocolonialism 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 imperialism and antebellum U.S. 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, Howard Fuller.[86] 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 stranglehold 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."[87] In addition, MXLU's historical subcomponent on neocolonialism 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 ← 169 | 170 → world on Africa 3) methods of neo-colonial control in Africa and 4) methods of resistance used against neo-colonialism in Africa.[88]

## *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 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. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Touré), James Blyden, C. L. R. James, George Padmore, Kwame Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral, and Julius K. Nyerere."[89] 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.[90]

## *African Languages and 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."[91] 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; and (4) the 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. Last established was (5) ← 170 | 171 → the Floating Swahili program that 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.[92] 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 Kiswahili. According to the 1972 pamphlet–mailing 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.[93]

MXLU's promotion for the Floating Swahili program was that "all Afrikans are eligible for admission" that were of sixteen years and older. Information and 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 ← 171 | 172 → 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.[94]

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 ability of the language learners. The emphasis of the introductory course was placed on pronunciation, 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."[95] 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, advanced Swahili, 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."[96] 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.[97]

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 Swahili learners was ← 172 | 173 → for students to record their voices for word pronunciation and to acquire a learning partner for the exercises.

The advent of the MXLU's Swahili programs and instruction enabled the University to take advantage of 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.[98]

## *Cultural Expression*

This part 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."[99] 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 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.[100]

## *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."[101] A critical aspect of importance that this course stressed was being able to use the tools and talents of public speaking to explicate theoretical positions related to the liberation of Black folks. The course's speaking topics 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, it also was 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 comprehension and deconstruction of the colonial ← 173 | 174 → 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.[102]

## *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 to incorporate physical and

psychological exercises for holistic development. The Physical Education Department met three times a week.

# Part B

The second and third years for an MXLU student entailed developing their proficiency in one of the University's fields that was geared toward Nation Building. The University's core Nation Building technical areas of concentration included (1) biomedics, (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."[103] The areas of study would either be chosen for the student or the student would choose, depending on the student's prior interest level in the proposed field of study. ← 174 | 175 →

## *Biomedics*

As a part of the community outreach initiatives of MXLU, the University aimed to open 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 lacking medical assistance. With the objectives of producing nurses, midwives, lab technicians, and physicians, MXLU's biomedical curriculum was broken into four major parts: Fundamentals of Bio-medicine; Human Biology I, II, and III; Clinical Medical Techniques; and Community Medicine and Health, and Health Survey of the African Continent. The expectation for the biomedics program was three years enrollment, including intense study on the scientific fundamentals of biomedicine: "an introduction to cell biology; biochemistry, microbiology and genetics, general pharmacology and pathology, and introduction to human biology."[104] Beyond the first year of the program, MXLU students would begin to engage community medicine and health projects and 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."[105]

A critical aspect of the success of MXLU's biomedical program was contingent upon the coalitions that could be fostered among Black physicians in the larger Greensboro and Raleigh-Durham areas of North Carolina. These physicians would act in an 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 Biomedics Department of MXLU operated pharmacology classes through the assistance of a local pharmacist, and beginning in June 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.[106]

## *Communications Technology*

The Communications Department of MXLU was crafted to prepare Black students on two fronts, the technical and ideological. The curriculum of the ← 175 | 176 → Communications Department engaged in reporting information regarding Black people from a critical perspective that was not subjectivist in its approach. Much of the 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, they 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."[107]

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,

the *African Warrior* and the *SOBU Newsletter*, later to become the *African World* which was 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, and other publications. By 1972, as MXLU expanded operations, the Communications Department progressed to a printing capability of 8,500 sheets per hour. 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.[108]

MXLU students of the Communications Department also received instruction in photography and cinematography. The use of 35mm format photographic ← 176 | 177 → processes, techniques of filmmaking for short films, and slide shows were integrated into the curriculum. The University was able to secure the volunteer assistance of two Black male instructors who alternated weekends teaching classes in the Communications Department in Greensbro. 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.

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:

> [to] 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.[109]

## *MLXU Engineering Department and Electrical Engineering*[110]

The electrical engineering skill areas were designed to provide instruction in the fundamentals and theoretical and practical applications 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."[111] The program, initially designed as a two- to two-and-a-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 maintaining radio communication systems, general radio repair of electronic devices and components and 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 ← 177 | 178 → of the student's first two years in the program, the advanced student was expected to assist as an instructor in the programs as well.[112]

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 toward the repair of radios and phonographs. In addition to repairing radios and televisions, some students advanced to constructing radios. 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.[113] According to the detailed report,

> The Electrical Engineering Department of Malcolm X Liberation University has started developing an Electronic Service Center utilizing the personnel and resources that have been developed over the past two and one-half years. As of 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 [*sic*] 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 [*sic*] basis, and service whatever equipment the school needs, as well as be an ongoing training mechanism that can be used to benefit our people.[114]

## *Mechanical Engineering*

MXLU's Mechanical Engineering program was developed as a two-and-a-half to three-year course of study. First-year students were expected to receive training in automobile fundamentals, which 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 ← 178 | 179 → 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 give students a chance to apply their skills in the areas of auto shop repair operation, welding shop operation, refrigeration repair and maintenance, farm and agricultural machinery manufacturing 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 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 training purposes was displayed in the fall of 1972 when Leonard L. Boone, 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."[115] 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 noted the shortage of technology on the African continent. He strongly felt that with some assistance to these areas many of his proposed projects could be brought to fruition. Boone also identified that "the housing shortage that many of these African states faced could be lessened by constructing homes of portable type, from the abundant timber resources." Boone, who died in October 1972, never saw his projections materialize. However, the foresight 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.[116] ← 179 | 180 →

## *Construction Engineering*

MXLU's Department of Construction Engineering identified three major curricular components of study for the students of the program. The areas of construction materials, methods and techniques, and construction analysis and design were developed to further

the ideation of synthesizing theory and application. The staff of MXLU's Construction Engineering Department felt that if a student had an applicable knowledge base that fuses theory and practice in the three general areas, then the student should be able to construct a number of potential projects that could possible include building furniture, houses, schools, and even small factories.

Therefore 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 and II, (6) drafting, (7) map work, and (8) soil mechanics. Students would acquire skills enabling them to lay bricks, work from drafting plans, complete carpentry work, assess the work potential of building materials, and perform soil analysis. Completion of the program was intended to 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 on the campus of MXLU. One of the projects included a chicken house for the University's farm. The Department also provided 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.[117]

## *Agriculture*

The agricultural program of MXLU was established as a twelve-month program that was compartmentalized into a three areas. According to MXLU's Agricultural Department, the programs aims were to (1) provide brothers and sisters with the technical skills involved in the science of food production; (2) train them to teach the practical as well as academic aspects of food production, and (3) provide food for the University family. The program's curriculum consisted of four concentrated areas of soil science, field crops (fundamentals of plant science), poultry, and dairy and livestock. Once a student completed training in the Agricultural Department, ← 180 | 181 → the expectations were that the student would be able to produce a variety of edible products that would range from everyday household vegetables to cash crops. Students would also be trained to raise poultry, dairy, and beef products.

The Agricultural Department of MXLU was able to provide student training and performance due to the University's acquisition of approximately twenty-six acres of farmland that 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 nonstudent workers. By acquiring the farmland, MXLU was afforded the opportunity to supply the University family with food grown by the students of the

school.

MXLU's Agricultural Department also capitalized 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.[118] Upon identifying the farms potential for 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 subcomponents of baby calf–fattening, teeter calf, and 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 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) rechannel the agriculture technical personnel present at the institution to an involvement in mechanized production; (2) turn over investment returns to the institution; and (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 in the investment of land, labor, capital, and farming equipment.

## SOBU's Pan-African Work Program and 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 ← 181 | 182 → 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 designed 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 for supporting coalition building. This was later reflected by Howard Fuller's announcement that several MXLU students would move to 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."[119]

The collaborative efforts of MXLU, as a Pan-Africanist–based educational institution, and SOBU, as a viable national Black student organization, grew due to 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."[120] SOBU's Pan-African Work Program, which began domestically, assisted in providing students from various Pan-Africanist institutions such as MXLU, 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."[121] ← 182 | 183 →

The international aspect of MXLU's program was later joined with the efforts of the Pan-African Skills Project (PASP), founded and administered by Irving Davis. The collaboration, which rose in part out of Howard Fuller's role as a PASP board member, was aimed at training Black people from the United States for nation-building efforts in Africa, most notably the East African nations of Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and Somalia. PASP had begun "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 with that government."[122]

PASP director Irving Davis had a long history of involvement with the Black rights movement. As a full-time member of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), he had helped direct the organization away from old guard civil activism toward a fresh Black Nationalist approach. 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."[123] While working 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 liberation movements and community activists groups became beneficiaries of support from virtually every major religious denomination."[124] Davis was able to parley some of that support into the founding of the Pan-African Skills Project. However, the keys to PASP's emergence were Davis's intimate understanding of international affairs and the expansive personal contacts he'd developed in Africa during his time with SNCC. Both provided him the leverage 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.[125]

Under Davis, PASP worked to secure candidates for positions in the areas of education, engineering, chemistry, business administration, pharmacy, medical lab work, accounting, nursing, biology, food and nutrition, and orthodontics. The critical aim of the PASP was to provide placement in multifaceted sectors of developing African nations. To achieve that aim, PASP needed skilled professionals who understood the importance of nation building and were sensitive to African ← 183 | 184 → concerns. Davis and Fuller agreed that those professionals could be produced by MXLU.

After the success of the 1972 African Liberation Day (ALD) efforts, the establishment of the African Liberation Support Committee (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 Tanzania 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."[126]

# Notes

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2 James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935* (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 5.

3 Ibid., 5.

4 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.

5 Ibid.; Randy Sparks, "Schools for Freedom," in *Major Problems in African America History*, edited by C. Thomas Holt and Elsa Barkley Brown (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 388–401; Christopher M. Span and Richard D. Benson II, "Sabbath Schools, in *Encyclopedia of African-American Education*, edited by Kofi Lomotey (Thousand Oaks, CA & London: Sage, 2010), 557–558.

6 V. P. Franklin, *Black Self-Determination: A Cultural History of African American Resistance* (New York: Lawrence Hill, 1984), 175.

7 Tony Martin, *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Westport, CT & London: Greenwood, 1976), 37.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., 36–37.

10 William L. Van Deburg, *The New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965–1975* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 76–78. ← 184 | 185 →

11 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: Africa World Press, 2005), 53–55.

12 Van Deburg, *The New Day in Babylon*, 79–80.

13 Ibid., 80. Konadu, *Truth Crushed to the Earth Will Rise Again*; *ND/BW* 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," *Black Scholar* 31 (Fall 2001), 42–53; "IBW funding proposal to IFCO April 12, 1972," IFCO Records, Box 29, Folder 34, SRCBC; "African Free School Pamphlet," n.d., IFCO Records, Box 22, Folder 6, SRCBC.

14 The MXLU organization chart provided in this section of the document was taken as "Malcolm X Liberation Administrative Structure," CSC, Box 12, Folder 4, ARC CCC.

15 "Proposal for MXLU Spring 1970," CSC, Box 12, Folder 3, ARC CCC.

16 "MXLU Pamphlet 1971–1972," IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 40, SRCBC.

17 IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 40, SRCBC.

18 "Position Paper for MXLU," JHCC, Box 24, Folder 27, SRCBC.

19 "Proposal for MXLU, Spring 1970," CSC, Box 12, Folder 3; "MXLU Fact Sheet," JHCC, Box 24, Folder 27, SRCBC.

20 Ibid.

21 "MXLU Fact Sheet," JHCC, Box 24, Folder 27, SRCBC; "MXLU Fact Sheet dated 5/10/1969," Box 12, Folder 3, ARC CCC.

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23 "Malcolm X University Chartered," *TNO*, June 7, 1969; "Malcolm X University Chartered," *DMH*, Saturday, June 7, 1969.

24 "MXLU Fact Sheet," JHCC, Box 24, Folder 27, SRCBC; "MXLU Fact Sheet dated 5/10/1969," Box 12, Folder 3, ARC CCC; "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." Julian Mayfield Papers Box 5, Folder 3, SRCBC.

25 "Proposal for MXLU, Spring 1970," CSC, Box 12, Folder 3, ARC CCC.

26 Ibid.

27 "Guidelines for the Indaba Council," IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 38, SRCBC.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 "IFCO Summary of MXLU & Correspondence," n.d., IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 37, SRCBC.

31 "MXLU Administrative Structure," CSC, Box 12, Folder 3, ARC CCC.

32 "Proposal for MXLU Spring 1970," CSC, Box 12, Folder 3, ARC CCC.

33 Ibid.; "African Teachers Trained at MXLU," *TAW*, February 5, 1971; "Information on MXLU March 18, 1971," IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 37, SRCBC. ← 185 | 186 →

34 "MXLU: African Peoples' Ideological and Technical Institute"; "MXLU Administrative Structure—Chart," CSC Box, 12, Folder 4, ARC CCC.

35 “MXLU Employee Handbook,” n.d., CSC, Box 12, Folder 7, ARC CCC.

36 Ibid.

37 “MXLU Spring 1970 proposal,” CSC, Box 12, Folder 3; “MXLU Employee Handbook,” CSC, Box 12, Folder 7, ARC CCC; “Proposal for MXLU,” IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 37, SRCBC.

38 “MXLU Pamphlet 1971–1972,” IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 40, SRCBC.

39 “MXLU Pamphlet 1971–1972,” IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 40, SRCBC; Godfrey Mwakikagile, *Relations Between Africans and African Americans: Misconceptions, Myths and Realities* (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: New Africa, 2007), 244–247; Mwakikagile arrived in Greensboro in early November 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.

40 “MXLU Pamphlet 1971–1972,” IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 40, SRCBC.

41 Bro. Yusufu Mosely, interview with author, Chicago, IL, February 11, 2008.

42 “At MXLU: ‘Meeting Needs’: Third of Four Parts,” *GR*, November 26, 1971.

43 Ibid.

44 “Malcolm X University to Open in Durham as Militants’ School,” *NYT*, October 27, 1969; “Proposal for MXLU 1970,” CSC, Box 12, Folder 3, ARC CCC.

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46 “Malcolm X University to Open in Durham as Militants’ School,” *NYT*, October 27, 1969; “Proposal for MXLU 1970,” CSC, Box 12, Folder 3, ARC CCC.

47 Christina Greene, *Women and the Black Freedom Movement in Durham, North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 9.

48 “MXLU Pamphlet 1971–1972,” IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 40; “Proposal for MXLU,” IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 37, SRCBC; “Malcolm X Moving or Expanding?” *DS*, A–4, August 22, 1970.

49 Ibid.

50 “Proposal for MXLU Spring 1970,” CSC, Box 12, Folder 3, ARC CCC.

51 Kwasi Konadu, *Truth Crushed to Earth Will Rise Again: The East Organization and the Principles and Practice of Black Nationalist Development* (Trenton, NJ & Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press, 2005).

52 Ibid., 70.

53 James F. Findlay, *Church People in the Struggle: The National Council of Churches and the Black Freedom Movement, 1950–1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 188.

54 “MXLU Quarterly Report for IFCO, Nov. 1, 1970–Jan 31, 1971,” IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 37, SRCBC; “Proposal for MXLU,” IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 37, SRCBC. ← 186 | 187 →

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56 Ibid., 13.

57 Julius K. Nyerere, *UJAMMA: Essays on Socialism* (Dar es Salaam & London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 44–45; “An Internal Affair: Tanzanian Education System,” *TAW*, 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, SRCBC.

58 Julius K. Nyerere, *UJAMMA: Essays on Socialism*, 44–45.

59 “Malcolm X U: Then, Now and Future,” and “Why Malcolm X,” Special Dedication Day Issue, *TAW: A MXLU*, October 25, 1969.

60 Ibid.

61 “An Interview with Jim Lee,” Special Dedication Day Issue, *TAW*, October 25, 1969. At the time of the interview, Jim Lee was the training director for the FCD.

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1971," IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 37, SRCBC; "MXLU: African Peoples' Ideological and Technical Institute Pamphlet, "n.d., in author's possession.

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72 "Information on MXLU March 13, 1971," IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 37, SRCBC; "MXLU Proposal for CHD In-House Use," n.d., IFCO Records, Box 30, Folder 37, SRCBC.

73 "African Teachers Trained at MXLU," *TAW*, February 5, 1971.

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83 "Proposal for MXLU Spring 1970," CSC, Box 12, Folder 3, ARC CCC.

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← 190 | 191 →

# 6

# Working for African Liberation with the Student Organization for Black Unity

## *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.[1]
>
> —Stokely Carmichael

> 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.[2]
>
> —Nelson Johnson, SOBU National Chairman

## On the Road to Establishment: SOBU's Interim Development Period

It was rude, it was rickety, but it was revolutionary.

In fact, the week-long national conference hosted by SOBU just a week before the inaugural activities for the newly minted Malcolm X Liberation University ← 191 | 192 → was so extemporaneous, so doggedly committed to its Pan-Africanist communal

principles, that after two days of speeches, panels, and group discussions, conference organizers shelved much of the week's agenda in favor of ideas generated at the conference itself.

It was obvious from the start that the conference, which was held in Durham and ran from October 21 to October 26, 1969, was as much about principles as it was about practicalities. On the very first day, Black students expelled white reporters from the inaugural ceremonies, citing concern about past inaccuracies in stories by white news organizations. And while the conference had intended to map out concrete plans to address the academic concerns of Black students and the larger social and political concerns of the African American community, the meeting's open-ended agenda muddled the effort to turn aspirations into actions. Even so, the conference proved a critical step in solidifying the fraternal operations of MXLU and SOBU and setting MXLU on a constructive path.[3]

The key goal of the SOBU conference was 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. Notable activists who attended and conducted workshops for the 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* (1966) were viewed to showcase the success of Algeria against French imperial domination.[4]

After two days the conference made a series of modifications to the agenda in response to ideas and concerns expressed by 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 ← 192 | 193 → about how to deal with the various forms of cooptation for Black Studies programs;
4. The development of community projects that could be undertaken by students

that 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.[5]

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 articulate a Pan-Africanist ideology and its application to the specific conditions of Black Students on both Black and White campuses.[6]

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?[7] 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 or were ideologically inconsistent. SOBU felt that its ← 193 | 194 → strategies addressed the urgencies that aligned with a newer generation of 1970 Black college students who had either adopted or sympathized with Pan-Africanism. Consequently, by early 1970, SOBU implemented a structure and organizational impetus that reflected matters 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

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 domestic Black liberation struggles represented more than just a national complement 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 an 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 and practical 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 ← 194 | 195 → engagement with the texts of theoreticians that posited an African-centered and 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 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, 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 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. 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 planning conferences and workshops. The area staff members of SOBU were to coordinate the activities for their area as well as help with other areas as needed. 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.[8]

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, 1971, in Frogmore, South Carolina. An estimated 150 Black students were in attendance representing schools from as far as California, Massachusetts, and 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 ← 195 | 196 → 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 organization could restructure to model the use of Pan-Africanism for operational effectiveness.

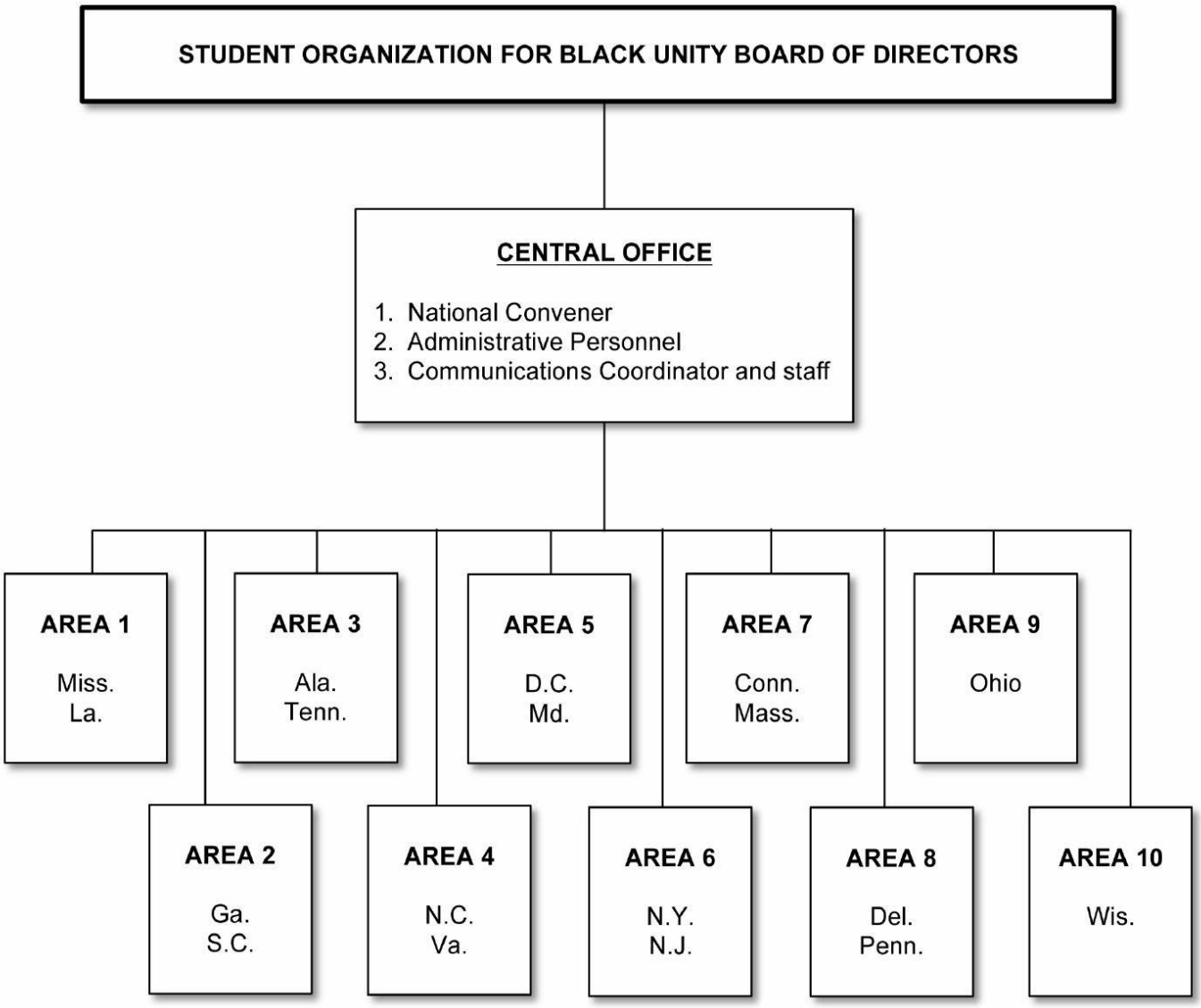


Figure 6.1 SOBU National Organization Structure.[9]

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 to potentially increase membership. 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,

> 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, ← 196 | 197 → 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.[10]

Adding to the vital reconsiderations that 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 an African youth movement in the United States 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.[11]

By 1971, the SOBU structure evolved to include a national convention, a national governing council, a national chairman, regional boards, regional chairmen, and state and local chapters. The new structure developed into 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 were administered by delegates of the SOBU governing council. Those departments included international affairs, training and ideological development, community affairs, informational services, campus affairs, and printing and material distribution.[12]

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 the dismantling of capitalism and 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 22nd 1970 invasion of Guinea and given a role they could play in the unity with the people of Guinea ← 197 | 198 → and Pres. Ahmed Sékou Touré."[14] 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 SOBU activity for the upcoming 1972 year.[15]

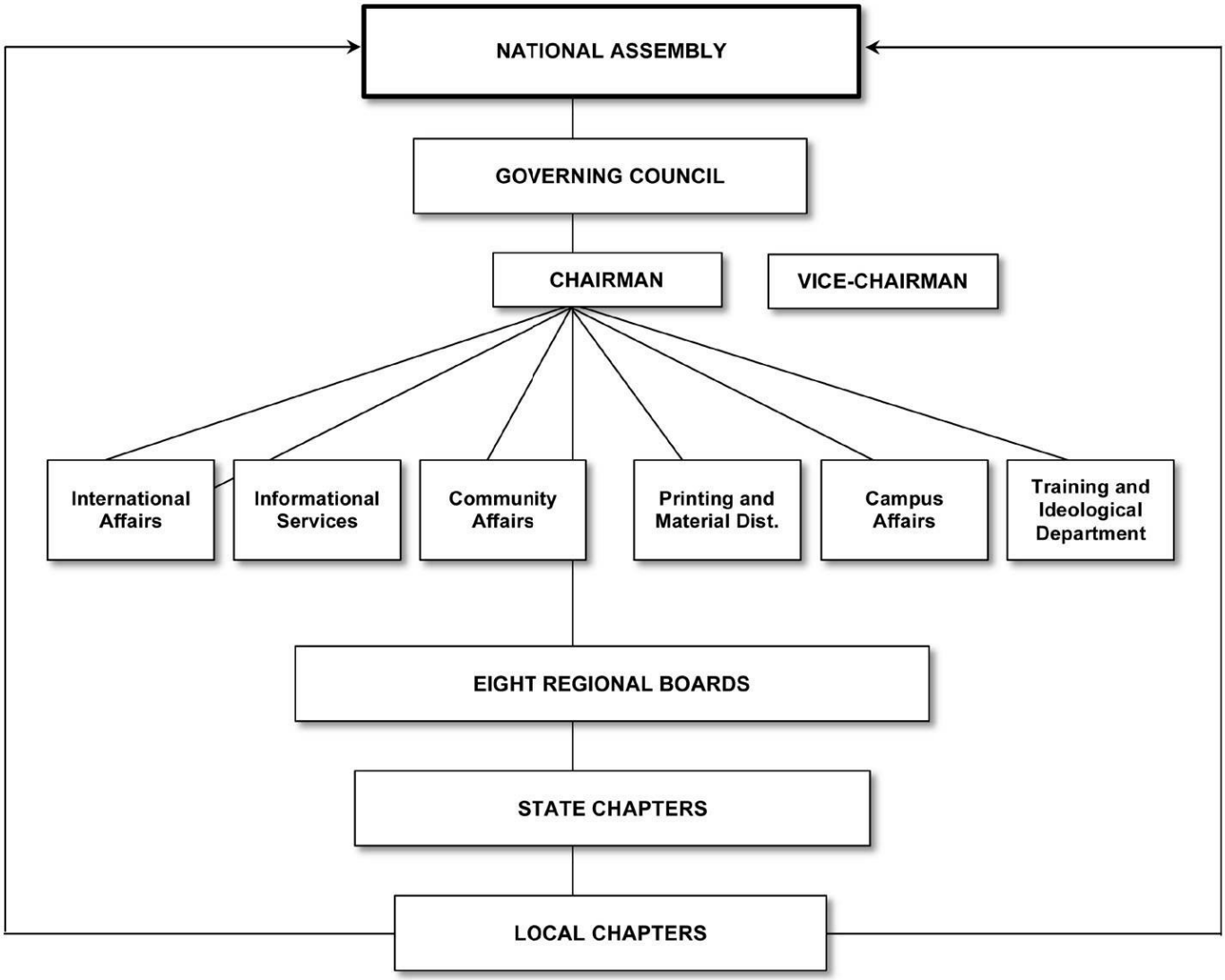


Figure 6.2 SOBU's New Organizational Structure.[13]

# 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 codependent status to physical and psychological 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 ← 198 | 199 → to legitimate the actions of Black folks toward self-direction for the purpose of leading their own lives.[16]

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 and 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."[17] This view also incorporated the communal principle that stressed the importance of Black people not divorcing their individual strife and adversities from the total oppressions experienced by Black people as a whole. SOBU argued that individual successes and misperceived 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.[18]

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.[19]

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), that 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 subsequent sections). SOBU's intersections with the African-born student membership of PASOA aided in problematizing SOBU's ← 199 | 200 → initial Pan-Africanist approach that had evolved from race-based Black Nationalism. 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 event 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."[20] 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.[21]

By late 1971 going into 1972, SOBU's ideological line settled on a leftist position, thus undertaking the ideations and philosophical perspectives of Marxism, which also included a more "scientific" approach as it related to analyzing objective reality. 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 SOBU's 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.[22]

SOBU's relationship to the aforementioned quote on Marx provided only a segmented perspective of the organization's ideological and theoretical positions ← 200 | 201 → 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 K. Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral, Marcus Garvey, Sékou Touré, and Michel Signor, among others, aided in the critical reinterpretation 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.

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."[23] 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.[24]

By 1972, SOBU had become grounded in a five-part ideological and organizational position that was an obvious synthesis of sociopolitical, 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) worldview, (2) identity and nationalism, (3) capitalism, (4) monopoly and imperialism, and (5) capitalism, Black Nationalism, Black folks, and white folks.

The SOBU perspective of addressing the critical needs of Black people from a *worldview* 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. 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 ← 201 | 202 → 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 organization's 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 leftist 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."[25] Drawing from the sociocultural 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 foster 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 people (including 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."[26] 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 K. 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 ← 202 | 203 → 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 representatives 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.[27]

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 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."[28]

SOBU's fourth ideological tenet, *monopoly and imperialism*, identified 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, as the conference was organized for the purposes of pilfering the human, natural, and undeveloped resources of the African continent and Asia as well as Latin America. SOBU principled its ideation on the historical consistencies of nations that had imposed their will on other nations and peoples ill-equipped for defense or resistance against such powers. ← 203 | 204 → 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 final 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 toward 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, that is, 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 workforce) at the turn of the century are now only 12 of the 60 million in the workforce. 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 every day, Black people increasingly seem to be the "real" proletariat, thus reinforcing the bourgeois of white workers.[29]

## *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 organization's 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 ← 204 | 205 → 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."[30] 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 the programs for the community would be developed. In addition, SOBU strove to improve the political consciousness of Black folks through its programming.[31]

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 three major categories:

1. Projects of a service nature: tutorial programs, clothing programs, breakfast and food programs, etc.
2. Projects for the furtherance of economic development and survival: buying clubs, cooperatives, job survey and assistance, etc.
3. 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.[32]

SOBU community support entailed the furtherance of independent educational institutions, namely the Federation of Pan-African Educational Institutions that included Malcolm X Liberation University in Durham and Greensboro, North Carolina; the Betty Shabazz Early Education Centers of MXLU, also located in Durham and Greensboro; the Center for Black Education and Children's Education Center in Washington, D.C.; the Pan-African Work Center in Atlanta, Georgia; Chad School in Newark, New Jersey; Our School in New York City; Clifford McKissick Community School located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and the Willie E. Grimes Community School in Greensboro, North Carolina.[33]

SOBU not only supported the educational ventures of the aforementioned institutions by providing support in the forms of personnel, but it later became 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,"[34] which was an ancillary institution of MXLU. Motivated by the ← 205 | 206 → bi-organizational activity of SOBU and MXLU, SOBU proposed 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.[35]

SOBU perceived all community work, regardless of the social, educational or economic sector to have a political origin. 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 institution building. The Pan-African Work Program assisted Black folks in Washington, D.C., and the states of Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, North and South Carolina, and Virginia.[36]

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."[37]SOBU's educational expansions also progressed to the development of a national organizational and ideological institute in August 1971. This institute was conducted for thirty days on a full-time basis.[38]

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 ← 206 | 207 → converged in support of the international event. In 1970, students congregated on Hammarskjold Plaza

outside of the United Nations to hear various speakers, including Peter Milotsi of the Pan Africanist Congress, Yemi Agbeyegbe of PASOA, and also special guests, husband and wife Stokely Carmichael and Miriam Mekeba. At the rally in 1971, the commemoration produced by the work of SOBU and PASOA was supported by the Nigerian and Palestinian students' unions, who also gathered in Mt. Morris Park in New York City to support the event. The 1971 gathering was held as 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, which would ultimately be donated to the liberation movements of the continent.[39]

## *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 in 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.[40] 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 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.[41]

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 ← 207 | 208 → 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. 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."[42] 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 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 postsecondary Black students resided 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 the Save Black Schools program in the state of North Carolina.[43]

In 1963, the Carlyle Commission produced a report on the status of higher education for the state of North Carolina that concluded that the configuration of education within the state 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 and 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 in Greensboro and in Raleigh. From this structure, the educational modus operandi for 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 ← 208 | 209 → in the state's higher educational structure, the University of North Carolina received more than a proportionate share of state financing, and consequently, it did most of the developing."[44] Furthermore, the educational stratification for the state 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 postsecondary institutions of the state were positioned and identified on the educational pyramid.[45]

In 1967, North Carolina faced challenges in restructuring 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 postsecondary Black institutions in the 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."[46]

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 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 postsecondary education in 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).[47] ← 209 | 210 →

The research data Black institutions compiled was used to further identify the inadequacies 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 North Carolina had received the status of "university," the five Black postsecondary educational institutions in North Carolina were in dire financial conditions due to the two previous state reconfigurations of educational financing. As the 1970s progressed, the chief financial beneficiaries of education were both small and large white postsecondary institutions in the state of North Carolina.[48]

By the early spring of 1970, Robert Scott, then 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 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.[49]

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' detrimental treatment by 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.[50]

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. ← 210 | 211 →

By February 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, that there would be campus-wide meetings of the various Black institutions to 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.[51] Peculiar to some members of Black Nationalist circles were the motivations and energies focused on saving Black schools. This questioning stemmed from how 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 in its Save Black Schools campaign that,

> 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.[52]

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 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.[53]

SOBU's concomitant organization, YOBU, gained a critical induction into addressing the needs of the Save Black Schools Campaign through the sincere ← 211 | 212 → work of veteran SOBU members. YOBU developed a plan of intervention to address 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 capital in Raleigh that the organization identified as Black Monday. Much of the exigency to call statewide and even national attention to the plight of Black schools in the state was spurred by 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 postsecondary 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."[54] Johnson also identified the socioeconomic 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, thus aiding in the prevention of Black students receiving a college education in Maryland.

On Monday, November 8, 1971, more than 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. Close to sixty chartered buses and caravans brought the hundreds that converged to protest 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 endorsement through telegrams supporting 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 that 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 ← 212 | 213 → sympathy of church ministers and congregations who aided many of the demonstrators with financial support for travel to the event.[55]

SOBU national chairman Nelson Johnson brought explicit clarity to the question at hand concerning Black schools and higher education in North Carolina. He commented,

> 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 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.[56]

In addition to 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; 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 Larry Hinton 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.

Sadaukai, who had just recently returned from his trip from Mozambique and riding on the high of his experiences with the Mozambique Liberation Front FRELIMO, provided stirring remarks for the Black Monday gathering. He poignantly criticized the motives behind the N.C. state government's decision to move toward the integration of postsecondary intuitions in the state. Sadaukai adamantive reminded the gathering of Black students and activists to think through the question of "Why is it in their interest to integrate now?"[57] The MXLU president spoke extensively to the critical issues of imperialism and worldwide revolution as a potential threat to all Black educational institutions in the state. Sadaukai also spoke adamantly on the development of a political movement in North Carolina that would not only include the educational aspirations of Black peoples but that would also encompass the social, political, and economic realms of the state's Black population as a whole.[58] ← 213 | 214 →

## *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 "Africanness" to Black people in the United States. Part of the responsibility of developing this facet of SOBU's operations was 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 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 movements 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."[59]

The political education aspects of SOBU were also furthered through the twofold 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 nationally and internationally. A most important objective of PAMP centered on creating opportunities for Black people in the United States to support the liberation struggles on the continent by providing financial support.[60]

In order for Black student organizations around the nation to properly engage and assist the SOBU headquarters in a successful campaign, SOBU circulated pamphlets focused on the protocols of supporting the organization's PAMP. Campus Black Student Unions (BSU) and other Black student organizations were provided with a variety of possible measures to enact the medical drives by, for ← 214 | 215 → example, forming auxiliary committees for the coordination of programs that would target political education for younger brothers and sisters. SOBU set up collection points for the delivery of materials to various campus sites. Campus activity and support for PAMP was encouraged by the 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 United States 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 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 to 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 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 that informing students to organize protests and demonstrations on their various campuses oppose Chase Manhattan, First National, and Chemical Banks' annual $40 million revolving credit to South Africa.[61]

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 1970. The Secretariat, maintaining offices in Georgetown, Guyana, as well as a branch in New York City, initialized the day of solidarity to mobilize concrete support from the "millions of African descendants and to turn these millions into an active reserve of the African liberation movement."[62] With the support of the Pan-African community, which 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 in support of African liberation struggles. ← 215 | 216 →

SOBU's involvement and support for the May 25 day of African solidarity exceeded demonstrations and Black student rallies. The Pan-African Affairs Department of SOBU actualized their involvement through organizing efforts of PAMP activities. Vice-chairman and coordinator for the Pan-African/International Affairs division of SOBU, Brother Tim Thomas, coordinated the May 25, 1971, efforts of PAMP. During an interview for the *SOBU Newsletter*, "Bro. Thomas explained that SOBU had already set aside May 25th, 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."[63] From this decision, SOBU consolidated 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.[64]

## *SOBU Informational Services, 1970–1972*

The Informational Services of SOBU were established to provide a counternarrative on or about 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, and so forth were couched in national and international student activity and Black sociopolitical and historical issues. The SOBU news service also generated the SOBU Speakers Bureau that featured a "panel of Black speakers, poets and other artists from Africa, the West Indies and the Americas."[65]

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 biweekly 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 these difficulties, SOBU produced the *Pan-African Worker* as an ← 216 | 217 → in-house news organ to aid in the eradication of ideological conflicts that became apparent during the summer of 1970.[66]

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. 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's adopting the systematization of their efforts in building a revolutionary Pan-African youth movement in the United States (this will be explicated in chapter 7). 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 *African World*. Still a biweekly publication, it increased its international prominence. Its consistent coverage and quality were 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 who 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.[67] By 1972, *African World* provided more educational aspects and expanded from the original size of sixteen pages to twenty pages. As the organization evolved from SOBU to YOBU, *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 *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/YOBU's ability to provide a form of informal education for the Black community through the publication.[68]

Aspects of the periodical that enabled SOBU to enhance Black student membership and increase the support of the Black community were *African World*'s 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 of 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 ← 217 | 218 → imperialist dictatorship 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 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 U.S. foreign aid and influence. Accounts such as these and others were provided during the tenure of SOBU/YOBU as a Black student–youth organization. These and other insightful articles aided in the *African World's* gaining readership in Canada, the Caribbean, and throughout the United States.[69]

Local colleges and universities SOBU organizations had their own newspapers and also fed newsworthy information to a variety of local Black publications. For example, students in Denmark, South Carolina, 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 to produce the *African Warrior*, which was MXLU's school and community news organ for Durham and

Greensboro. SOBU's collaborative work in the area of communications also extended north of the Mason-Dixon Line to provide 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 acted as an outlet for political education for the enhancement of community information. The bureau consisted of poets, 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. The SOBU Speakers Bureau boasted the participation of poetess Jayne Cortez; Third World Press published poetess Johari Amini; distinguished author and scholar John O. Killens; Ruwa Chiri, chairman of the PASOA Chicago chapter; and Phil Cohran and the Chicago Heritage Ensemble.

SOBU's importance is measured as an expression of Malcolm's Pan-Africanist educational philosophy that the group developed and by its maintenance of ties to Pan-African School Federation member institutions such as the Center for Black Education (CBE) in Washington, D.C., and the Pan-African Education Center in Durham; it also was able to earn the trust and involvement of J. Mwaanga, the ambassador to the United Nations for the Republic of Zambia.[70] ← 218 | 219 →

# Notes

1 "Stokely Carmichael to Students: 'You have an Obligation to Your People—Study, Work," *SNL*, April 3, 1971, 7.

2 "The Struggle in Perspective by Nelson Johnson SOBU National Chairman: 'Students in the Struggle,'" *SNL*, May 1, 1971, 4.

3 "SOBU: A Proposal for the Development of a Training Institute," n.d., CSC, Box 11, Folder 2, ARC CCC.

4 "SOBU at NCCU," *TAW*, October 25, 1969.

5 "SOBU Proposal, December 20, 1969," CSC, Box 11, Folder 1, ARC CCC.

6 "SOBU: A Look Backward and Forward July 1970," CSC, Box 11, Folder 1, ARC CCC.

7 Ibid.

8 "SOBU Proposal, December 20, 1969," CSC, Box 11, Folder 1, ARC CCC; SOBU Explains National Program, October 17, 1970, 7.

9 "SOBU Proposal, December 20, 1969," CSC, Box 11, Folder 1, ARC CCC.

10 "SOBU Sets April 1–4 National Conference," *SNL*, March 20, 1971; "SOBU Conference Outlines the Students' Role in the Struggle," *SNL*, April 17, 1971, 1, 7.

11 SFV, 11.

12 Ibid.

13 SFV, 11. This diagram describes the SOBU national structure once it was reconfigured after the organization's second national conference in April 1971.

14 "SOBU Regional Conference Report: Geographical Expansion and Political Growth," *TAW*, December 11, 1971, 6,

9.

15 Ibid.

16 *Work for African Liberation with SOBU Information* Pamphlet (in author's possession).

17 "SOBU: Ideological Paper," CSC, Box 11, Folder 1, ARC CCC.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 SFV, n.p.

21 *Black Liberation Movement Since 1969*, unpublished paper, 42, Dr. Abdul Alkalimat's private collection.

22 Ibid., 2.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 "SOBU: Ideological Paper," 7–8, CSC, Box 11, Folder 1, ARC CCC.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid. ← 219 | 220 →

29 "SOBU: Ideological Paper," CSC, Box 11, Folder 1, ARC CCC.

30 *Work for African Liberation with SOBU Information* Pamphlet (in author's possession).

31 Ibid.

32 SFV, n.p.

33 Ibid., 6.

34 "SOBU Proposal for an Early Education Center, Spring 1970," CSC, Box 11, Folder 2, ARC CCC.

35 Ibid.

36 "Work for Your People: Pan-African Work Program," *SNL*, April 17, 1971, 11.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid., 11; SFV, n.p.

39 "Sharpeville Rally," *SNL*, March 6, 1971.

40 *Work for African Liberation with the SOBU Information* Pamphlet, 7 (in author's possession); SFV, 6.

41 SFV, 6.

42 *Work for African Liberation with SOBU Information* Pamphlet, 7 (in author's possession); SFV, 7.

43 Ibid.

44 "Save Black Schools: What is Future of Black Higher Education in North Carolina April 1971" (booklet in author's possession).

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 "An Open Letter: Save the Black Schools," *SNL*, February 6, 1971.

51 "Reorganization Plans Would Phase Out Black Colleges," *SNL*, March 6, 1971, 1, 3.

52 "Save Black Schools Part II," *SNL*, March 6, 1971, 4.

53 *Work for African Liberation with SOBU Information* Pamphlet, 7 (in author's possession); "Showdown on Black Schools," *TAW* 2, no. 2, October 30, 1971, 1, 12. Please refer to chapter 7 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 North Carolina Youth Organization for Black Unity (NCYOBU). For the sake of this section on NCYOBU, the auxiliary organization of

SOBU will be referred to as 'YOBU,' which is only an abbreviated version of NCYOBU.

54 "Showdown on Black Schools," *TAW* 2, no. 2, October 30, 1971, 1, 12.

55 "Black Monday in North Carolina: Day of Solidarity to Save Black Schools," Special issue, *TAW* 2, no. 3X z9, November 13, 1971), 1X–2X.

56 Ibid., 2X.

57 Ibid., 3X. ← 220 | 221 →

58 Ibid.

59 *Work for African Liberation with SOBU Information* Pamphlet, 11 (in author's possession); SFV, 8.

60 SFV, 9.

61 SFV, 1–3.

62 "Support the Armed Liberation Struggle: World-Wide African Solidarity Day—May 25," *SNL*, May 15, 1971, 1.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

65 *Work for African Liberation with the SOBU Information* Pamphlet, 10.

66 "SOBU Proposal, December 20, 1969," 12, 3, CSC, Box 11, Folders 1 & 2, ARC CCC.

67 Ibid.; "Words from Our Readers: A Message from Mrs. Garvey," *TAW*, October 16, 1971, 2; Wilkins, "*In the Belly of the Beast*," Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, 2001, 127; SFV, 8.

68 "Change, Motion & Development: Youth Organization for Black Unity," *TAW*, February 5, 1972, 20; "Political Cookbook Column," *TAW*, September 2, 1972.

69 "Poverty Amidst a Façade of Richness Under Dictatorship in Ethiopia," *SNL*, April 3, 1971, 6; "After O.A.U. Meeting Ends Ethiopian Student Demonstrators Jailed," *SNL*, July 24, 1971, 9; "Haile Selassie—"Lion of Judah' and Friend of Imperialism," *TAW*, July 8,1972, 8, 11.

70 "1970–'71 SOBU Speakers Bureau to be Launched Soon," *SNL*, November 21, 1970, 12. ← 221 | 222 →

← 222 | 223 →

# 7

# A Movement of the People … African People

## *African Liberation Day, the Decline of MXLU, and 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*[1]

—Amiri Baraka, *Afrikan Revolution* ← 223 | 224 →

In the beginning was the word and the word was Africa.

That may seem hyperbole, but for the Black Nationalist Movement the early 1970s were indeed a beginning, the advent of a cultural, political, and pedagogical paradigm predicated on an expanding commitment to Africa and its people. Building on the Black

transnationalism advocated by Martin Delaney, W. E. B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, George Padmore, and most notably Malcolm X, young Black Nationalists looked to Africa and saw a reflection of their own aspirations. They took hope from the successful African liberation struggles that had reshaped the homeland during the 1960s, and they cultivated a new form of identity politics that embraced Afrocentric modes of consciousness, spirituality, and beauty. It was a time of high optimism; never had the prospect for a more egalitarian society seemed so immediate, and never had African peoples seemed so entirely free of the oppression, marginalization, and subhumanization that are the by-products of white supremacy.

However, even as a panoply of Pan-African leaders celebrated African Liberation Day in 1972, there were already signs that the delicate infrastructure of the Black Nationalist Movement was starting to rupture. Deep ideological differences among the groups and organizations that had rallied under the twin banners of Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism had become so divisive that both movements were on the brink of organizational ineffectiveness. The rising tide of sectionalism would inevitably have deep and lasting impacts on Black educational institutions and organizations, including 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 also 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) 1972: SOBU and MXLU Activities

On March 18, 1972, the coordinating committee for ALD met at Malcolm X Liberation University for an African Liberation Day Coordinating Committee (ALDCC) planning meeting. A press conference, which evolved from the meeting, ← 224 | 225 → 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 take part on the weekend versus a weekday. 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."[2] Just as Malcolm X had maintained an active role of progressive struggles in the diaspora and also an active role domestically, so too did the newly formed ALDCC hope to further this legacy of activism and Pan-Africanism in their work to produce the upcoming ALD.

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, California; 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,

> We are here today … on behalf of a new breed of concerned Africans, to 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, ← 225 | 226 → 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.[3]

In the Washington, D.C., office for the ALD, efforts for mobilizing did not fall short of the activity that took place in Greensboro. Coming off a two-day conference on the activities and relationship of the United States and South Africa, the movements momentum and awareness of the African liberation struggles was increasing its public appeal among 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."[4] 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.[5]

The coordination efforts of the Congress of Afrikan People (CAP) were made possible largely 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 1972 the full backing needed to guarantee the event's success. The enlistment of CAP aided greatly in helping to solidify support of many Black elected officials. In addition to the relationship forged with CAP for ALD mobilization efforts, IFCO continued to provide the much needed financial assistance necessary to guarantee that the efforts of the ALDCC came to fruition.[6] In an official contractual agreement between IFCO and the ALDCC, the sum of $6,600 was granted to produce ALD. With the promise of the ALDCC to provide extensive educational programming on Black history, African liberation movements, and international racial practices, IFCO would remain a principle supporter of the ALD efforts.[7] Also, the relationship of IFCO and ALDCC was reinforced due to IFCO's ever-increasing role as a financial architect of radical organizations in the United States and liberation struggles on the African continent.

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 ← 226 | 227 → SOBU's expanded membership, which 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 that spring. 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."[8] The assembly was also an opportunity for SOBU's national officials to receive regional reports on activities related to food-buying clubs, community service centers, and the Pan-African Medical Programs that were taking place. The conference also provided an opportunity to further the structural efficiency of its administrative work 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."[9] The conference was critical for SOBU 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 served 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 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."[10] 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 ← 227 | 228 → figurehead of Pan-Africanism throughout the Black Diaspora as he became the first president of the Republic of Ghana. Prior to the 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 to student-activist circles along with the recordings and writings of Malcolm X, Robert F. Williams, Frantz Fanon, Julius K. Nyeyere, 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 exploited 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.[11]

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. 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.[12] Much of the revolutionary fervor around the impact of Nkrumah extended from the pride of Ghana's receiving its independence in 1957 and displaying the revolutionary potential inherent in the African peoples

throughout the Diaspora.

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 1st Conference of Independent African States, attended by representatives from Egypt, Ghana, Sudan, Libya, Tunisia, Liberia, Morocco, and Ethiopia."[13] While at the conference, these eight independent African countries had pledged to work toward liberating the entire continent of Africa. From the conference, the ← 228 | 229 → 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."[14] 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 of 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 United States.[15]

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. 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. In a very matter of fact tone directed toward the press activities around the impending ALD 1972, Smith and Tate noted, "Just as Israel has a constituency here (among American Jews), so does southern Africa (among American Blacks)."[16] Smith and Tate added that the drive of the African Liberation Day efforts were to aid in heightening the awareness of American 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 United 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."[17]

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 of the Middle East. Additional aims of the demonstration included the continued protest of the importation of Rhodesian ← 229 | 230 → chrome, military shipments to South Africa, and recrimination of U.S. economic and political cooperation with the racist Apartheid regime of South Africa.[18] 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 that "organizers of the May 27th demonstration be allowed to speak at assemblies and distribute literature in city schools."[19] This action received obvious backlash due to a previous charge from several congressmen and the Nixon administration accusing Barry and several school board members of using children of the D.C. area as "political pawns." On behalf of the ALDCC, Barry commented, "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."[20] At a planning meeting in Washington, D.C., for ALD activities, SOBU representative Tim Thomas asked that the week be declared "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.[21] 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.

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 1972 increased from press coverage to a televised panel discussion with members of the 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.[22]

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 some nine thousand invitations, and due to ← 230 | 231 → space restrictions, the organizers could accept only 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 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.[23]

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 [sic] in March,"[24] at which time some estimated six thousand Black people met to formulate a political agenda. Diggs also expressed 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."[25] 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."[26]

Also voicing vehement disdain for the imperialist involvement of the United States 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 in New York City on racism and apartheid. Abernathy, who held joint positions as both president of SCLC and chairman of the World Peace Council 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 words '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 of color in those lands nor their supporters in other countries can be expected to submit to those conditions much longer.[27] ← 231 | 232 →

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 the organizing

and planning of the ALDCC. This support was further displayed by Abernathy's three critical propositions to the UN that included (1) declaring May 27 as African Liberation Day, (2) condemning the weakening of the embargo on Rhodesia, and (3) relating to liberated zones in Southern Africa as underdeveloped countries eligible for assistance from the UN's specialized agencies.[28]

## African Liberation Day 1972: "WE ARE AN AFRICAN PEOPLE!!!"

As mentioned earlier, African Liberation Day 1972 had its roots in the work of Kwame Nkrumah. The former leader of Ghana had established African Freedom Day but following the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the thirty-one member-states opted to change the name of the celebration to African Liberation Day. They also changed the date of the commemoration to May 25.[29] In the years following OAU's establishment of the ALD in 1963, Black people throughout the Diaspora witnessed a series of historic and troubling developments, including

> 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.[30]

These events contributed to a slowing of Pan-Africanism's momentum, which in turn dimmed international awareness of and participation in the ALD activities first conceived by the OAU.[31] However, as Black Power seemed to eclipse traditional civil rights efforts in America, the work, travel, and organizing of student groups such as SNCC and Pan-African Students Organization of America (PASOA) aided in providing a more heightened awareness of Pan-Africanism. 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 political and cultural consciousness began to consume the published works of Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral, Julius K. Nyerere, Sékou Touré, and Samora Michel. This aggressive undertaking of the tenets of Pan-Africanism served as a backdrop for the work and actions of MXLU, SOBU, CAP, PASOA, and other groups and eventually laid the groundwork for a full appreciation of the import of ALD. ← 232 | 233 →

On Saturday, May 27, 1972, ALD demonstrators converged on Washington D.C.; San Francisco, California; Toronto, Canada; and 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 activities of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement

Association (UNIA) in the 1920s. In Washington alone, organizers predicted an estimated 25,000–35,000 people would attend the day's events, with the majority of demonstrators traveling from the Midwest, Northeast, and South.

The marchers began assembling at 9:30 a.m. in Malcolm X Park, which had been named by the Black residents of the city just four years earlier, where convoys of buses and cars poured into the park to begin the historic day of activity. Two hours later, the procession began, led by seventy-four-year-old Queen Mother Moore, Owusu Sadaukai, Amiri Baraka and his expectant wife, Don Lee, and other ALD presenters and organizers. As they proceeded orderly along the parade route, the marchers chanted "Power to the people, Black, Black power to the African people," and repeated the phrase throughout the demonstration. The march began with approximately nine thousand 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 (Azania) and Southwest Africa (Namibia)."[32] 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 U.S. 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."[33]

At the Portuguese Embassy, prepared statements were read by Roy Innis of the Congress of Racial Equality (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 accused the Portuguese government of "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."[34] As the ← 233 | 234 → marchers continued to wind through Embassy Row and levy indictments against the identified imperialist governments, the procession gained an increase in spirit and 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 use of slave wages and subhuman working conditions for indigenous miners of the region. Moore and Walker also spoke extensively on the role of the South African government during the 1960 Sharpeville massacre and condemned the West Germany and Israeli governments for providing nuclear weapons to South Africa and the Nixon administration for continuing to trade

with that nation's racist regime.[35]

During the procession, marchers stopped at a succession of locations associated with oppression, economic deprivation, and violence on the Continent including the Rhodesian Information Center, and the U.S. State Department, where Les Campbell (Jitu Weusi) of The East cultural center in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn and Dawolu Gene Locke of Houston's Africans in America for Black Liberation outlined the extent of U.S. collusion with oppressive white minority groups in Southern Africa.[36] Dawolu Locke accused the United States 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."[37]

As the march progressed, the number of marchers grew from an estimated nine thousand to around fifteen thousand as buses continued arriving at the scene. The marchers finally arrived at the Sylvan Theater for the conclusion of the massive rally. The open air theater, which is in earshot of the Washington Monument, was renamed Lumumba Square in honor of the assassinated African leader Patrice Lumumba. Starting an hour off schedule at 4:00 p.m., a slate of notable speakers and activists from a cross-section of sociopolitical ideologies took the stage and offered edifying words of liberation, an analysis of Africa's importance, and speculations on the role that an African ideation should play in the future of Blacks throughout the diaspora.[38]

The closing speech of the day was provided by MXLU's Owusu Sadaukai, the initiator and chair of the ALD demonstration. Sadaukai, channeling the angst and frustration of a Black struggle that had become increasingly radicalized since the mid-1960s, spoke of the resistance he'd faced in his efforts to organize the ALD celebration and bring awareness to Black folks about the plight of Africans throughout the Diaspora. He directed much of his outrage at the so-called Black leadership.[39] What follows is a significant portion of Sadaukai's speech: ← 234 | 235 →

> 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 Cairo, 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 an African people![40]

To underscore the historical implications of ALD 1972, Sadaukai gave an invigorating rendition of some segments of Frederick Douglass's "Without Struggle/No Freedom" speech originally delivered in 1857.[41] Sadaukai ended with another call and response to the crowd—which had grown to more than twenty thousand people—chanting over and over, "We are an African people!"[42]

In the San Francisco Bay area, the ALD took place on May 25, two days before the Washington rally. The event was held at Raymond-Kimball Park, which the Bay Area ALDCC renamed "Dubois Savannah." West Coast organizers and participants conducted a rally at the Portuguese Consulate and a mass demonstration in San Francisco directed by California state assemblyman Willie Brown.[43] SOBU national chairman Nelson Johnson, activist and scholar Walter Rodney, Bobby Seale of the Black Panther Party, activist-intellectual Angela Davis, Rev. Charles Koen, and Gary, Indiana, mayor Richard G. Hatcher addressed the crowd of about ten thousand demonstrators. Johnson spoke at length on the continued need for Black people to foster the already developing relationship with Africa. ← 235 | 236 → Johnson also warned about the increasing danger of having the Pan-Africanist movement co-opted and Black revolutionary fervor diluted. Said Johnson, "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."[44]

During his speech, Walter Rodney offered an educational context for ALD, arguing that the success of the celebration showed an evolution in Black thinking. Black folks, especially those in the West, had at last begun to reject the assimilation and acculturation that many historically "othered" groups had been forced to accept, said Rodney.[45] He also importantly stated, "I am not saying that identification is all, it is a process of struggle."[46]

Bobby Seale spoke about the history of the Black Panther Party's community involvement, including its implementation of "survival" programs. He warned that if the police continued its racist assaults on party members, the Panthers would institute a "free gun program to shoot for survival."[47]

In Toronto's ALD an estimated three thousand Black people participated as a show of support for the transnational event. On Canadian soil, participants 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."[48] Activities were held at Christie Park, which march organizers later renamed in honor of Marcus Garvey.[49] The Toronto march, which was largely coordinated by Rosie Douglas, included speeches by "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"[50]; former SNCC activist and lawyer Julian Bond; and John Conyers.

Outside the United States, there were reports of smaller ALD demonstrations throughout the African-Caribbean Indies. A gathering in Antigua drew around eight thousand people; the celebration in Dominica reportedly attracted five thousand; and in Grenada an estimated two thousand people demonstrated in support of the Africanist cause.[51]

In terms of its educational impact, ALD 1972 must be regarded as a resounding success. The event was a touchstone for scores of postsecondary Black college students who served as aides and organizers. Many of the students were able to use the demonstration not only a means of becoming politicized but also as a point of departure for further political action on their respective campuses. At ← 236 | 237 → some schools, ALD spurred the growth of Black Student Unions (BSUs) and led to new or expanded CAP and SOBU chapters. It also led some students to create offshoots of ALDCC's newly established organization, the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC).[52]

## Riding the ALD Wave of Momentum: MXLU, SOBU, and the Founding of the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC)

As MXLU organizers weighed the impact and importance of ALD 1972, it became increasingly clear that the success of the event had done nothing to ease a growing controversy surrounding the University's funding. During the early summer months of 1972, the Federation of Pan-African Educational Institutions in Newark, New Jersey, requested an $862,000 grant from the General Convention Special Program (GCSP) of the Episcopal Church. The money was to be used to support four of the federation's educational institutions and to cover administrative costs. GCSP agreed to the request, but slashed the final grant amount to $299, 398. The money was to be divided as follows: MXLU: $75,000.00; Chad School, Newark, New Jersey: $127,000; Marcus Garvey School, Youngstown, Ohio: $45,000; and $53,800 for administrative costs. GCSP opted not to fund a federation school in Monrovia, Liberia.[53]

Due to MXLU's former funding issues with the Episcopal Church, the Newark, New Jersey, diocese asked Bishop Thomas A. Fraser to consult on the activity and operations of the University. Fraser, who had been at the epicenter of the 1969 funding crises that pitted MXLU against some Episcopal Church leaders in North Carolina, was well aware that the final decision for the new 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. It was clear from press reports that Bishop Fraser's yet to be submitted review of MXLU would largely depend on the findings amassed by a committee of Episcopal Church leaders in Greensboro. During the 1969 funding crises, the members of the committee had expressed anti-MXLU sentiments. Bishop Fraser, who was anticipating a response from MXLU on the funding issue at hand, commented on MXLU's previous three years of campus existence and surrounding community ← 237 | 238 → involvement saying, "The only question facing us now is whether it [MXLU] has helped the poor and disadvantaged."[54]

The following week, Bishop Fraser submitted his report to Bishop Leland Stark in Newark. The report effectively torpedoed MXLU's funding request. "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," wrote Bishop Fraser.[55] The report included the unanimous decision of the Greensboro committee to oppose any funding to MXLU. The report also wrongly stated that MXLU had not developed any viable programs and included the damning accusation that MXLU had been unaccommodating to whites. Bishop Fraser cited a remark by Howard Fuller (Owusu Sadaukai) in which he suggested that whites were not welcome on the MXLU campus and that the school's operations were clandestine. GCSP ultimately funded the Federation of Pan-African Educational Institutions' request but disallowed MXLU.[56]

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."[57] 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 make only MXLU suffer financially. However, the comments of Bishop Fraser and those who colluded in the opposition efforts did not go unaddressed. Sadaukai responded to comments regarding 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."[58] In an address directed to the charges levied by Bishop Fraser and others 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 a 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 ← 238 | 239 → 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.[59]

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 the 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."[60]

## 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 among the Black activist community. The Black Nationalist coalitions brought together for the May 27 mass demonstration came under consideration for the establishment of an organization that maintained the influence and collective respect of the majority of Black people. With the continuance of an organization like ALDCC came the hopes to carry on mass mobilization and sociopolitical liberator 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. ← 239 | 240 → These same Black folks who were adamant about assisting with Pan-Africanist struggles were asking ALDCC organizers, "What about the problems here? Why Africa?"[61] It also became evident that an organization needed to be created to address the needs of the working poor. These blatant queries added to an impending meeting to work on constructing such an organization that would work to address these needs on a national and transnational level. Another serious issue that arose in the ALDCC was that of letting go of what many of them considered to be dead weight. Many of 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.[62]

With this understanding, a seven-person planning group convened in Chicago, Illinois, on July 6,, 1972, to call a meeting to construct an organization of the aforementioned proportions.[63] A few weeks later, on July 26, 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."[64] 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."[65]

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 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. ← 240 | 241 →
2. To inform our brothers and sisters in the United States, 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 public support and encouragement for all African governments that aid the Southern African liberation movements.[66]

The ALSC meeting also addressed the completed ALD film, *Breaking the Chains of Oppression*, and the upcoming August 2 trip to Africa of 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 among Black people in the United States around issues in Africa. The official state visits by the pair would place Sadaukai and Akpan in dialogue with Nyerere of Tanzania and Kenneth Kuanda 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."[67] 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 Afrikan People'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 students as MXLU prepared for the fourth year of operation.[68]

## MXLU, YOBU, and 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 also signified the ideological shifts that were rapidly taking place in the movement as well. ← 241 | 242 → 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 led 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 it SOBU's first and last "SOBU" National Assembly. At the national meeting the decision was made to change

the organizational name to Youth Organization for Black Unity (YOBU) to embody a myriad of factors that stemmed 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 student-only 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."[69] 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 change would take effect on August 1, 1972. A few weeks later this move was commemorated with a festive occasion to actualize the transition.[70]

## 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 participated in activities for the official name change ceremony of the Student Organization for Black Unity (SOBU) to the Youth Organization for Black Unity (YOBU). The event, which took place at the newly named YOBU headquarters, involved the participation and speeches of YOBU, NC. YOBU, PASOA, and Greensboro Association of Poor People (GAPP) members. Jerry Walker of YOBU began the day's ceremony by informing the crowd, "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."[71] Much of the ← 242 | 243 → 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."[72] The day's events were dedicated to the struggle and hard work of the likes of Samoray Touré, Patrice Lumumba, Felix Moumie, Albert Luthuli, Kwame Nkruham, Du Bois, Garvey, and Malcolm X. Musa Kamara of the Greensboro chapter of PASOA began the name-change and dedication ceremony with water and branches to symbolize peace, unity, continuity, growth, and development, during the opening the day's events.

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, including the factors and activities that 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 activity of SOBU had been immersed in 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 events that led to ideological shifts and reconsiderations of the ideological positions that 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 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, Chocolate Funk, who had provided entertainment throughout the day.[73]

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 nonstudent youth with an increased adoption of an anti-imperialist, capitalist critique of overall American society. YOBU had accepted ← 243 | 244 → that capitalism was the critical factor as to why more members of the Black bourgeoisie and petite bourgeoisie were produced from postsecondary institutions. These principles became fundamental to the increased class-consciousness and identification of oppression on a domestic and transnational scale for YOBU. Much of this ideological evolution came from YOBU's study of dialectical and historical materialism and political economy, which by the year 1972 aided in YOBU's deconstruction and comprehensions of capitalism and domestic oppression. With this increased study of Marxist-Leninism, YOBU began an insistent push toward building the Black student organization as a cadre organization focused on Black youth, workers, and students.[74]

A significant aspect of the evolved YOBU 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 YOBU, the identification of on-campus activity around Pan-Africanism that existed in the organizational objectives became deficient as an organizing tool. Now as YOBU, 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 YOBU's attention to cadre development for the explicit purpose of organizing workers into political enclaves. Post-1972 ALD and YOBU's ideological evolutions also led to the development of a central committee, and 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.

YOBU's adoption of Marxist principles as part of its analysis and intentions was initially covert. After 1972, however, YOBU propaganda was extremely forthright in claiming the newfound communist aims of the organization. Provided in the documents of *The Historical Evolution of YOBU's Line* is YOBU's analysis of what type of organization it would be versus the former SOBU.

> We are seeking to develop YOBU into an intermediate anti-imperialist student organization. That is, YOBU 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 … YOBU 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 ← 244 | 245 → 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.[75]

Though YOBU was intentional about making the dramatic shift toward communism, rank-and-file members and even sympathizers of YOBU still held on to their initial identifications of the organization as being Pan-African with a class critique.[76]

As the new academic year of MXLU progressed in 1972, YOBU and MXLU entered into joint command. Many of the ideological undercurrents that had been matters 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 the financial future of the institution. 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.[77]

## MXLU and YOBU Activity, 1972–1973: Institutional 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."[78] The University began the 1972–1973 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 an 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 benefit incarcerated Black people in the U.S. penal system who largely became aware of MXLU through reading the *SOBU Newsletter*, later renamed *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.[79] ← 245 | 246 →

| SCHEDULE FOR 1972-73 SCHOOL YEAR | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
| 7:30-9:00 | Physical Development | 8:00a.m. Skill Area | Physical Development | 8:00a.m. Skill Area | Physical Development | |
| 9:00-10:30 | Preparation for Class | | Preparation for Class | | Preparation for Class | |
| 10:30 | 1st year seminar | 1st year seminar | Skill Area | Skill Area | Skill Area | |
| 10:30 | Advanced Skill Area | Advanced Skill Area | | | | |
| 1:00 | L U N C H | | | | | |
| 2:00-5:00 | Skill Area | Skill Area | Skill Area | Skill Area | Skill Area | |
| 5:30-7:30 | S U P P E R | | | | | |
| 8:30-10:00 | Advanced Seminar | Community Swahili | MXLU Swahili | Community Swahili | MXLU Swahili | |
| Sunday's 7:00 p.m. COMMUNITY FORUM | | | | | | |

Figure 7.1 MXLU School Schedule for the 1972–1973 School Year.[80]

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 and 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, its ideology, and the students' role. 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 YOBU National chairman Nelson Johnson and Barbara Kamara, the head of the board of directors of the Greensboro Association of Poor People.[81] ← 246 | 247 →

## 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 USA, 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. Just under a month from having established the 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 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 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 covered the Washington, D.C., area, which had begun its day with a march.[82]

Sadaukai and Akpan's showing of the film with an English version and a Swahili version was well received 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."[83] 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 African dignitaries or African freedom fighters but to African youth, namely to Tanzanian students in a small railway town called Tabora.[84]

The film showing to the African youth took place at the Tabora Girls' Secondary School and Tabora Boys' Secondary School, both of which had 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 ← 247 | 248 → with the Tanzanian government and Blacks in the United States as participants in Nation Building.[85] 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's remarks about the Tanzanian student's experience were as follows:

> Indeed I felt the showing of the film here was a 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; 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.[86]

## Phasing Down Operations: MXLU's Decline

Sadaukai and Akpan's efforts to promote ALD and the establish of an ALSC chapter in Tanzania gained accolades on the African continent. However, back in the United States, the financial conditions and outside antagonism that had worn on MXLU since the school's inception had finally come to a head in December 1972. MXLU's administration was beginning the in-house process of restructuring the school's programming and curriculum to scale down operations due to growing financial constraints. On December 20, 1972, Sadaukai crafted a three-page proposal to be circulated to members of MXLU's Political Committee and Joint Command. The document outlined the rationale and proposed procedures to begin "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: the school could not afford to continue as a full-time institution. An aspect that was critical to the document circulated by Owusu Sadaukai was that the proposed reorganization was a necessary administrative decision if MXLU hoped to reopen on September 3, 1973, which would be the start of the 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 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 fundraising was concerned.[87] ← 248 | 249 →

A little over two weeks after Sadaukai initiated the phase down, MXLU made the decision public in the *African World*. On January 5, 1972, it was announced that MXLU would "phase down the operations at the institution in order to undergo a period of extensive re-organization and re-evaluation."[88] The scaling down of school operations meant that the institution would discontinue its full-day class 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 reorganized so that the school's courses were only taught during evenings and on weekends. MXLU officials felt that the phase down "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."[89] As part of the reorganization plans, the personnel and students of MXLU agreed that they would support themselves and also contribute finances to a common MXLU fund. These acts would aid in defraying future costs of running MXLU to enable the school to open on a full-time basis the next academic year.[90]

Though the school's class and operational schedules were readjusted to meet the needs of reorganization, many of MXLU's departments remained unaffected by the scale-down such as 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.

One reason these programs were able to persist is that MXLU had been successful in capitalizing on the skills of its students and resource people, particularly in service areas such as food production and electrical and mechanical engineering. For example the university's licensed electronic service center had produced many of the mechanical engineering students of MXLU who 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."[91] All of these services not only provided the students and personnel with an opportunity to assist in raising revenue to aid MXLU, but they also 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*, "The school has not stopped operation, or fallen, or anything like that. Instead we have gone on an austere footing in order to effect a major re-organization."[92] ← 249 | 250 →

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 necessary to meet the needs of the institution's annual $250,000 budget. MXLU's past financial expenditures had been met by not only by 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 for the declining Black institution.[93] 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 hotbed for Black Nationalist activity and the major epicenter of sociopolitical organizing in much of the South. The fraternal relationship MXLU shared with the now Marxist Black youth 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.

## The Struggle Continues: YOBU and the Save Black Schools Campaign

A week after MXLU publicly announced plans to reorganize the school's operations, representatives from fourteen Black colleges and universities identified by YOBU met January 13–14, 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. For YOBU, this responsibility to address the aforementioned needs of Black students and community was the responsibility of Black postsecondary institutions. YOBU took the perspective that Black postsecondary 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 ← 250 | 251 → 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 defeat, only a stall tactic. Given the circumstances surrounding the state of Black postsecondary 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 Black colleges and universities 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."[94] Due to the students' 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.[95]

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 among other Black colleges. YOBU aimed at attaining the support of one major Black college in each state or in states where predominately Black postsecondary 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 toward that end would be planning conferences on Black colleges. YOBU's selection and visitation process began November 1, 1972, and stretched to January 10, 1973. This preplanning strategy made possible the meeting of January 13–14, 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.

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, Larry Hinton of North Carolina A&T State ← 251 | 252 → 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 121 Black postsecondary 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 and planning session was finalized for March 16–18, 1973.[96]

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 campaign for Black postsecondary institutions was to increase local awareness around the aims and objectives of the national project while continuing YOBU's 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 YOBU ideology as an evolving Pan-Africanist student organization. The initial March 16–18 planning dates for the national conference were pushed back to 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, more than 320 Black students from sixty-five Black colleges and universities converged at North Carolina A&T State University to plan 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 postsecondary institutions across the nation.[97]

"The discussions and planning sessions were enriched by speeches from Dr. Herman Branson, president of Lincoln Univ., Dr. L. C. Dowdy, president of ← 252 | 253 → A&T; and Owusu Sadaukai, president of Malcolm X Liberation University."[98] The entire event received the media coverage of YOBU's news organ, *African World*, which later provided a special section of the event in the publication. The entire three-day event was also covered by *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 historically had been known to criticize 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 and social and political objectives of HBCUs, was fruitful in his analysis of the Save Black Schools campaign. He stated, "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."[99] Bennett College SGA president Sandra Neely, who had worked extensively with MXLU, YOBU, and in the efforts of ALD throughout North Carolina, commented, "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 these institutions involving all segments of the community, then there will soon be nothing left to debate."[100]

The conference's centralized three-day focus was to construct a national strategy that the participants could take back to their respective campuses nationwide, 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. ← 253 | 254 →

## Expansion of a Mass Movement: African Liberation Day, 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 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[101]

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 subcommittees to broaden 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 subcommittees further evolved at the ALSC's fourth national meeting held in Washington, D.C., on December 23, 1972.[102]

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 focus 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. Much of the forseen mobilization efforts would be accomplished by Black youth around the country. For the ALSC decided that a concerted "national appeal should be made to high school and college students to work with state and ← 254 | 255 → local committees in mobilizing people for ALD."[103] The ALSC hierarchy felt that ALD 1973'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."[104] The ALSC central committee decided that the local chapters needed to raise a minimum of $2,000 with a total minimum goal of $50,000. For persons who were willing to provide funding for ALD 1973 but were living in cities where there were no ALSC subcommittees 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 funding goals, the ALSC hoped to give 80 percent of the funds raised in the efforts of ALD 1973 to the African liberation organizations of FRELIMO (Mozambique), PAIGC (Guinea-Bissau), UNITA (Angola), and ZANU-ZAPU (Zimbabwe). The remaining 20 percent of funds raised would be set aside by the ALSC to support other liberation groups once the research committee of the ALSC identified groups in need of assistance.[105]

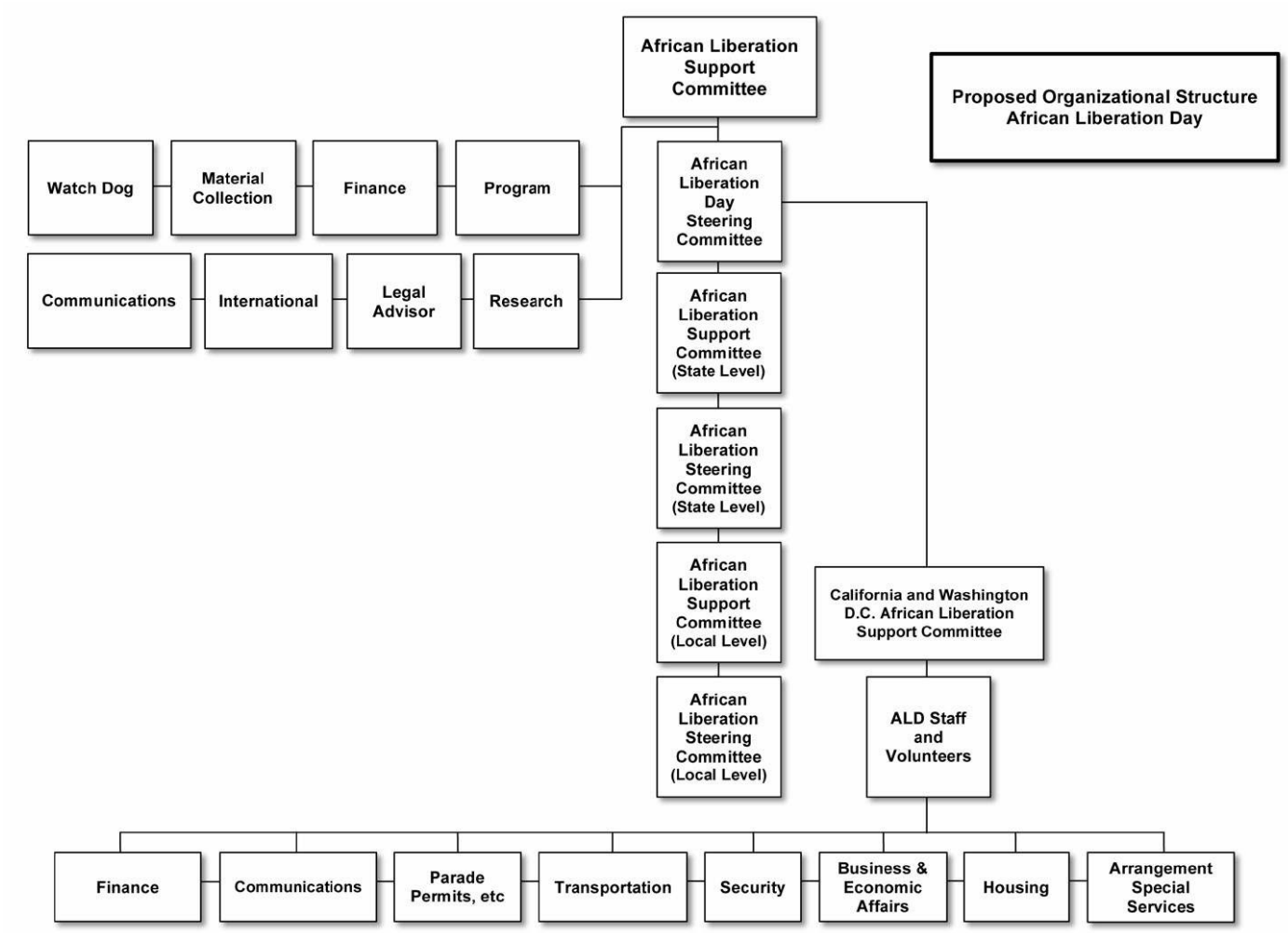


Figure 7.2 Proposed Organizational Structure for African Liberation Day 1973.[106]

The ALSC's intentions for the impending 1973 ALD demonstration were to increase the educational consciousness of Black people by highlighting the interconnected ← 255 | 256 → significance of Africans struggling on the continent. The general theme 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 U.S. government, the ALSC "announced a drive to boycott products of U.S. corporations operating in Southern Africa."[107]

One of the most significant factors of the ALD 1973 mobilizations was the intention to pay tribute to Amilcar Cabral. Cabral, who had been assassinated in January 1973, had become a muse of anti-imperialist struggle for Black militants and Pan-Africanist revolutionaries of the early 1970s. Cabral was also a major ideological figure for MXLU and SOBU as the two organizations continued to develop and mature as Pan-

Africanist organizations.[108] As a revolutionary freedom fighter for the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands (PAIGC), Cabral's fight against Portuguese colonialism of Guinea and worldwide imperialism resonated with many Black activists in the United States. This was made more than evident when the PAIGC leader made one of his last visits to the United States on October 20, 1972. Hosted by the Africa Information Service, Cabral met with more than 120 persons representing some of the most influential Black radical organizations in the United States. Those present were provided with the opportunity of dialogue with Cabral and to further their intentions of continuing their support for liberation struggles on the African continent. For many of those present, Cabral became a symbol of what was to come in the fight against imperialism.[109] Upon Cabral's return to the African continent, he began the year of 1973 with a New Year's message full of African pride and passion for the continued fight against colonialism and imperialism.

> Nothing, no criminal action or deceptive maneuver by the Portuguese colonialists can hinder our African people, master of its own destiny and aware of its rights and duties, from taking this transcendent and decisive step toward the achievement of the fundamental aim of our struggle: the winning of national independence and the creation of its true progress in regained peace and dignity.[110]

Consequently, the assassination later that month of the PAIGC leader was a blow of the greatest magnitude for those fighting against racism and imperialism. However, the unwavering objectives of Cabral and the freedom fighters of the ← 256 | 257 → PAIGC were carried out in the coming months after his death. Moreover, the outcome of this tragic and shameful act resulted in a collective agreement of the ALD organizers to increase work output to ensure that the outcomes of ALD 1973 were even greater than that of the previous year.

Exceeding the planned expectations for demonstration participation on May 26, 1973, ALD mass mobilizations were held in more than thirty cities in the United States, Canada, Caribbean islands, and the African Continent. Between seventy-five thousand and eighty-five thousand Black people participated in the mass mobilization efforts and raised the monetary goal of $50,000 to provide financial support to African liberation efforts. ALD 1973 did not boast as many prominent Black political figures as speakers for the day's events as had ALD 1972. 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."[111]

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 1972. 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!" For example in Houston 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 $45 million to the Portuguese government out of which 50 percent of those monies went to the military budget that fought and oppressed the Angolan people.[112]

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."[113] As the demonstrations were given little to no media coverage before or after May 26, the drive to announce the importance of the event rested solely in the motivations and energy of grassroots organizing ← 257 | 258 → by Black people. Owusu Sadaukai, national chairman for the ALSC, who set the tone for the ideological and physical expansion of ALD activities in 1972, commented on the growth of the 1973 national demonstrations:

> 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 of our people.[114]

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 anticolonialism 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-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 progressed? Most important, were the ever-increasing ideological tensions that began to pervade the Movement affecting MXLU and, if so, would the conflict be enough to aid closing operation of the University? In the subsequent month following ALD 1973, these inquiries were brought to conclusion as the MXLU family announced that the school would be finalizing operations for the independent Black university. ← 258 | 259 →

## The Closing of MXLU: Lessons Learned and 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 125 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 that 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 sociopolitical 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 among 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 direction 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 three-part explanation of why MXLU's mission as an educational institution came to completion after four years of providing a space for a model self-reliant curriculum couched in Pan-Africanism. Sadaukai cited that the reasons MXLU was closing was due to the following accumulating deficiencies:

1. The overemphasis 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 overemphasis on the African continent. This caused MXLU to gain a greater tendency to alienate the local Black community, which eventually led to an eventual loss of contact with the surrounding Black community. Though MXLU students took part in the Skilcraft 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. ← 259 | 260 →

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.[115]

In spite of Sadaukai's ability to trim the school's budget by $418,000 in its first year, 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 ensured from the Episcopal Church grant controversy. Episcopal Church members were angered to the point that 138 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 closing. 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, "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 had been 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 much needed technical training to Black people.

Another product of MXLU's success materialized by the University's being able to

send Black American students to the African continent to provide their physical and intellectual talents as resources to 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 remain open. ← 260 | 261 →

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 and 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 the totalitarianism in American government, which he referred to as an oppressive structure continuing to oppress Black people. Advancing 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.[116]

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 development shifted away from the now defunct MXLU, the ALSC geared itself for a changing of the organizational guard. The day after the MXLU administration held its 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 since the Pan-Africanist collective had experienced its second successful ALD demonstration. The ALSC began to assume the responsibilities of a vanguard 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 developing a route forward for the Black Liberation Movement. At the meeting, the ALSC unanimously decided that the organization needed to form a united front (one undoubtedly rooted in the legacy of Malcolm X and the OAAU) for the purpose of addressing the problems of all segments of the Black community. The Frogmore meeting also addressed 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.[117]

This new direction would prove to be pivotal in the transnational struggles that ensued for Blacks in America. The ALSC continued to gain momentum as the freedom struggles on the continent moved forward. Sadaukai, seeing the need for fresh leadership, relinquished his position as ALSC national chairman and joined the

organization's executive committee. Helmed by Dawolu Gene Locke, the ALSC spent the latter part of 1973 strengthening its alliances with African ← 261 | 262 → liberation groups by sending a delegation consisting of Sadaukai, Locke, and ALSC national secretary Brenda Paris to the Continent. The delegation had a threefold purpose: (1) to deliver $33,000 of the $42,000 that was raised from the ALD demonstrations; (2) to hold meetings with government officials in Tanzania, Zambia, and Guinea; and (3) to talk with representatives of various liberation groups about the activities of the ALSC in the greater context of African liberation struggles.

The African tour would help cement ALSC's place as the vanguard of the Pan-Africanist Movement of the 1970s. [118] However, in a more subtle and elegant sense, it also marked the completion of an earlier journey—the one taken by Malcolm X, the one that defined him as not only as an African American leader but also as a global teacher.

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23 “African Liberation Day Plans Set,” *TWPTH*, May 10, 1972, B3; “Blacks Set Parley on Africa Aid,” *TWPTH*, May 24, 1972, A29; “Africans and Black Americans Open Conference in Washington,” *NYT*, May 26, 1972, 3; “African Conference Asks Sanctions on White Rule,” *TWPTH*, May 27, 1972, A26.

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32 “ALD March Orderly and Enthusiastic,” *TAW*, June 10, 1972.

33 Ibid.; “12,000 Blacks March to Support Africa,” *TWPTH*, May 28, 1972.

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35 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,” *NTY*, May 28, 1972, 3.

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# Epilogue

## Synthesis and Conclusions: Examining Ideological and Historical Threads

Explicating a Malcolm X philosophy of education as it relates to the Black Student Movement is an intricate process. Part of the challenge lies in understanding and tracing Malcolm's pedagogical influence, which was and continues to be expressed by scores of individuals within and outside of the movement. Those individuals who benefited from having personal contact with Malcolm have revealed segments of his educational philosophy through their work. Younger freedom fighters who came to know Malcolm through his recorded speeches and his autobiography are also stewards of his didactics. Malcolm has so many acolytes working in so many diverse and sometimes divergent fields that his pedagogic strain is now a generational web—for good and ill.

This web, with its many spires and tangles is, perhaps, best represented by the factionalism of organizations that sought and seek to advance divergent interpretations of a "Malcolm X brand" of Black Nationalism. William L. Van Deburg reflected on this phenomenon: ← 269 | 270 →

> 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.[1]

Malcolm's intellectual hegira out of NOI's confining fundamentalism and into the vast and challenging promise of global Black Nationalism was invariably reflected in the shifting ideological stances of SNCC, RAM, Donald Freeman, Max Stanford, and others who would ultimately emerge as arbiters of Malcolm's nascent pedagogy. Invariably, this influence infused the rise of Black Power, imbuing it with both intellectual currency and inevitably conflictive tenor. In any case, to view that movement as a spontaneous and sporadic development, isolated from Malcolm's ideological sway, is not only incorrect, it also ignores the pedagogic dynamic that undergirds all historical phenomena.

SNCC's Malcolm-inspired shift away from traditional civil rights activism brought about the second wave of the Black Power era and helped spawn Pan-Africanism, a development that Stokely Carmichael referred to as the natural evolution of Black Power.[2] This evolution brought forth SNCC veterans who were not only seeking political refuge from the clandestine activity of the FBI's COINTELPRO, but who also were seeking to recast themselves as mentors for younger Black radicals. This mentorship gave the younger activists—many of whom were centered in the urban North—a fresh appreciation for the Southern struggle and its place in global Black Nationalism.[3] As independent educational and student organizations, MXLU and SOBU were critical in the shift of Black radicalism back to its nexus in the South.

The new appreciation for Southern radicalism was deepened in late 1971 when MXLU and SOBU agreed to combine their efforts, heightening the public profile of both groups. Although ideological in-fighting would eventually compromise the joint effort, for a time the combined work of MXLU and SOBU/YOBU fostered the type of international awareness that Malcolm seemed to have been envisioning for the South before his death. In fact, as MXLU students advanced their understanding of Pan-Africanism, they increasingly adopted the anti-imperialist stance that Malcolm had promulgated in his post-NOI speeches and ← 270 | 271 → debates. 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 on workers in the United States. SOBU, which had become YOBU by 1973, signaled the gradual evolution of the organization's core leadership.

> 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 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 anti-

imperialist student movement.[4]

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, conflicts emerged between the institution's traditional Pan-Africanists and younger leaders 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."[5] Since MXLU as an institution had begun fundamentally as a Black Nationalist–Pan-Africanist educational institution, the shift in late 1972 through early 1973 met a considerable amount of resistance. Roz Pelles, then Roz Bailey, worked with MXLU until its close in 1973 and recalls the reaction to the school's growing Marxist strain:

> 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.[6]

The conflict detailed by Pelles was also intensified by a growing rift between MXLU leaders and students who remained centered in Durham and those who had visited Africa. For example, MXLU's Owusu Sadaukai had spent time on the continent with the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO). In Guinea-Bissau, MXLU leader Sadaukai had interacted with Amilcar Cabral and the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC). The advantage of experiencing another face of struggle through the lens of those in Africa ← 271 | 272 → 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 sociopolitical factors that shaped local struggles, be they work conditions, the effects of racial and class discrimination, or the imposition of the abusive political philosophy of a government on a people.

Former 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,

> 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 are refined through struggle, an ideology is created.[7]

As MXLU attempted to harmonize its divergent ideological voices, the Institution's involvement with the people of Durham and Greensboro dwindled. In turn, MXLU's financial and moral support from those communities waned. In a press conference announcing the closing of the school after four years of operation, Sadaukai cited MXLU's alienation from the larger Black community as a contributing factor. A year later on May 23–24, 1974, at the ALSC National Conference on Racism and Imperialism held at Howard University, Sadaukai echoed this message again even more vehemently than at the closing of MXLU. Sadaukai informed conference goers of the importance of physically engaging Black people in the community by staying involved in the day-to-day struggle of change for the people. Almost chiding those in attendance, Sadaukai in his speech told the attendees that since the closing of MXLU, he planned to remain in Durham and work for the people "because too many of us who claim to be revolutionaries and speechmakers haven't visited Black people lately."[8]

YOBU national chairman Nelson Johnson provided a retrospective analysis of the two organizations' practice of Pan-Africanism and YOBU's eventual transformation into a full communist organization. In Signe Waller's work, *Love and Revolution*, the Rev. Nelson Johnson of Greensboro offered this telling analysis of the ideological snare that strangled MXLU: ← 272 | 273 →

> 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 we could do here, the pull of Pan-Africanism had some detrimental influence. The local struggle became secondary.[9]

The collapse of MXLU raised questions not only about how nontraditional Black educational institutions manage ideological dissonance but how they manage the needs and expectations of the Black communities they are called to serve. In other words, can any institution that purports to work for the social and political progress of Black people claim to have validity if it adopts a political philosophy that fails to directly address the salient concerns of the Black underclass: food, clothing, shelter, and the means to pay for them?

This question must have certainly been on the minds of ALSC leaders as they positioned their organization to enter the vanguard of the Black liberation struggle in the mid-1970s. Emerging from the successes of ALD, the ALSC saw its own effectiveness and ability to mobilize a mass and diverse range of the Black community. However, those community people that the Black students and youth came in contact with in their mobilization efforts were asking a basic question: 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 of Blacks in America was not given more critical engagement prior to mobilization efforts for struggles on a different continent.

The divisions resulting from a difference in ideology and practice between 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 a complete end of their activities, one thing remained clear: an institution that had endeavored to serve the needs of Black youth and the community had closed. And nothing was being done to replace it. At MXLU's final press conference, Sadaukai commented that MXLU had fulfilled the needs of the movement for that time. What this investigation has proven is 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. ← 273 | 274 → MXLU provided a location for which theorists, activists, and students could come and either learn or sharpen their steel for the benefit of the academy and the community. No matter the season, an educational institution that fills a void in the community should not have to close even amid the turmoil of ideological contention. If anything, such conflict—when it arises out of a spirit of respectful inquiry—should spur the sort of heightened investigation and advanced critical analysis that Malcolm X sought to inspire in his followers. Indeed, the story of MXLU might have had a different outcome had the institution followed the example of its namesake, for Malcolm, the prodigious teacher, was also a prodigious student. Over the course of his short but many-layered life, Malcolm learned to meld divergent ideologies into a single vision and to direct conflicting impulses toward a unified purpose. For MXLU (and any other institution seeking to inspire purposeful scholarship and dynamic activism), there could have been no better lesson.

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# Illustrations

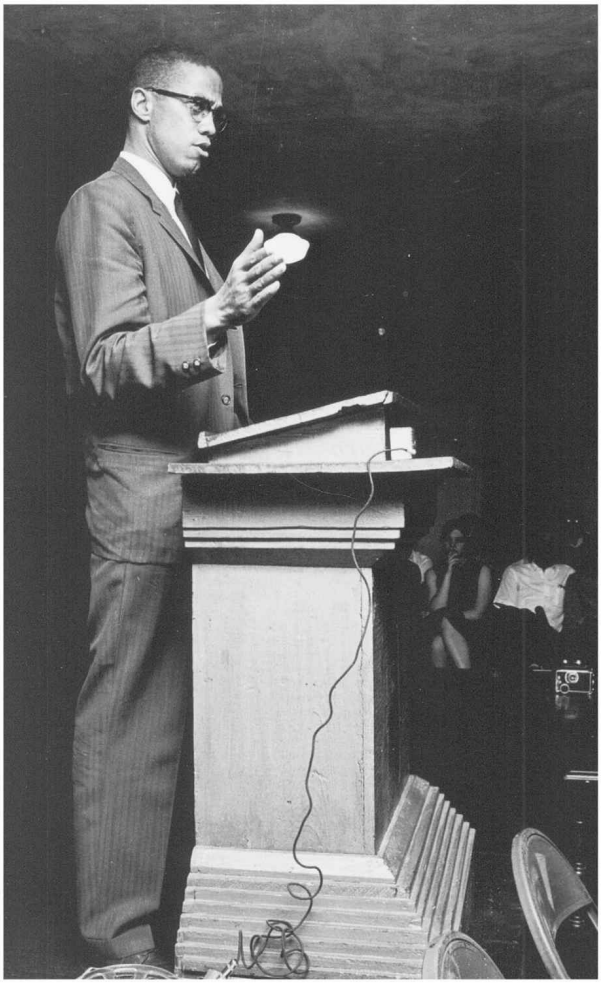

Figure 1. Malcolm X speaking in a Durham, North Carolina lodge hall on April 18, 1963. Originally scheduled at North Carolina Central University, his speech was moved after university officials denied the controversial former Black Muslim permission to appear on campus. (Photograph by Harold Moore, courtesy of the *Herald-Sun*). ← 275 | 276 →


Figure 2. January 11, 1969. Some of the 65 Black students who seized control of Ford Hall at Brandeis University are holding a banner with a picture of Malcolm X and legend reading “Malcolm University”. In front of the building Lloyd Daniels (C) reads a statement concerning their demands. He is flanked by Reginald Sapp (L) and Randal Bailey. The students are demanding more Black representation in the academic community. (AP Images). ← 276 | 277 →

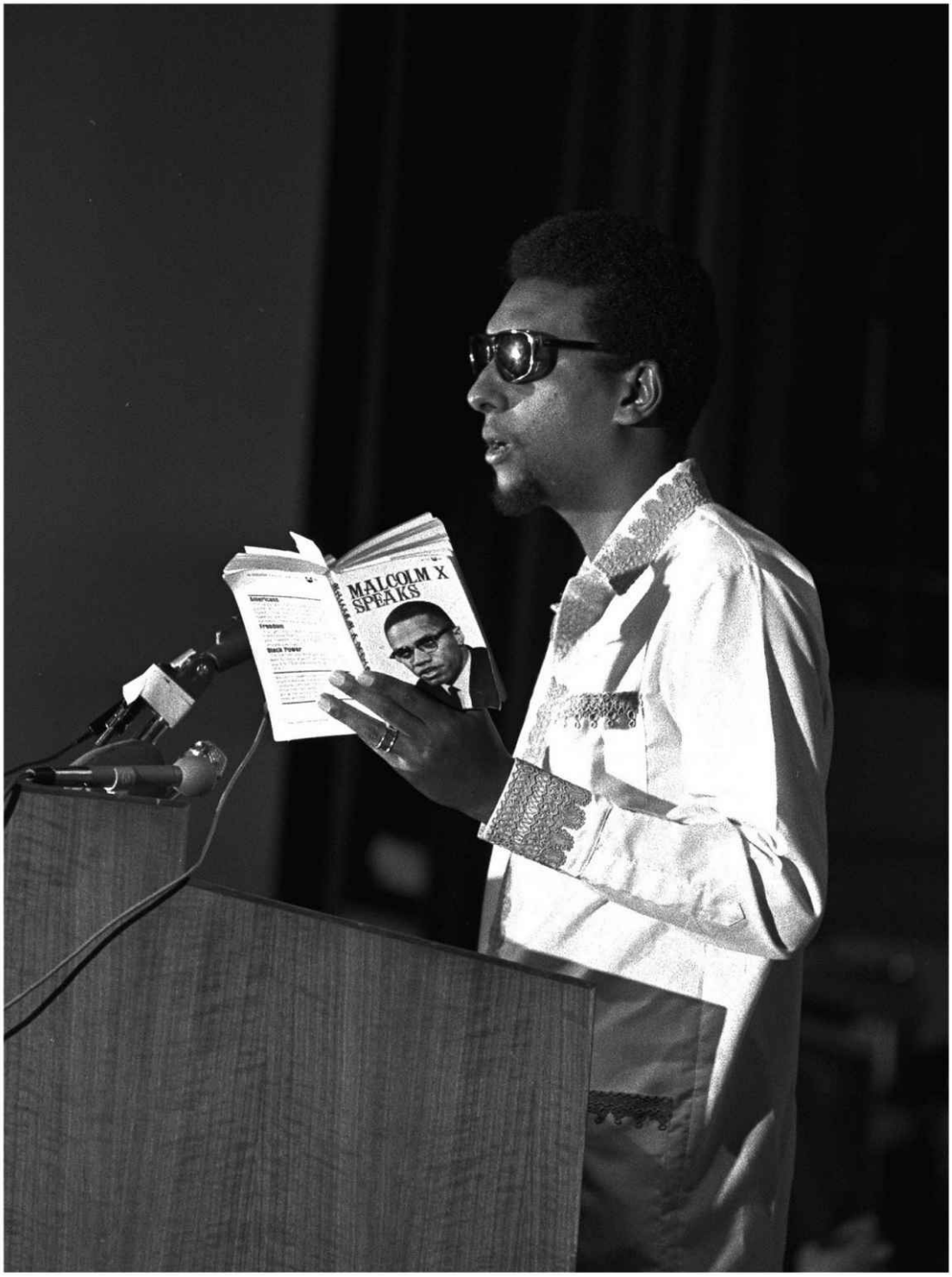


Figure 3. March 18, 1971. Stokely Carmichael quotes from the book “Malcolm X Speaks” during an address March 18, 1971 at the opening of the Third World Conference at the University of Houston in Texas. (AP Images). ← 277 | 278 →

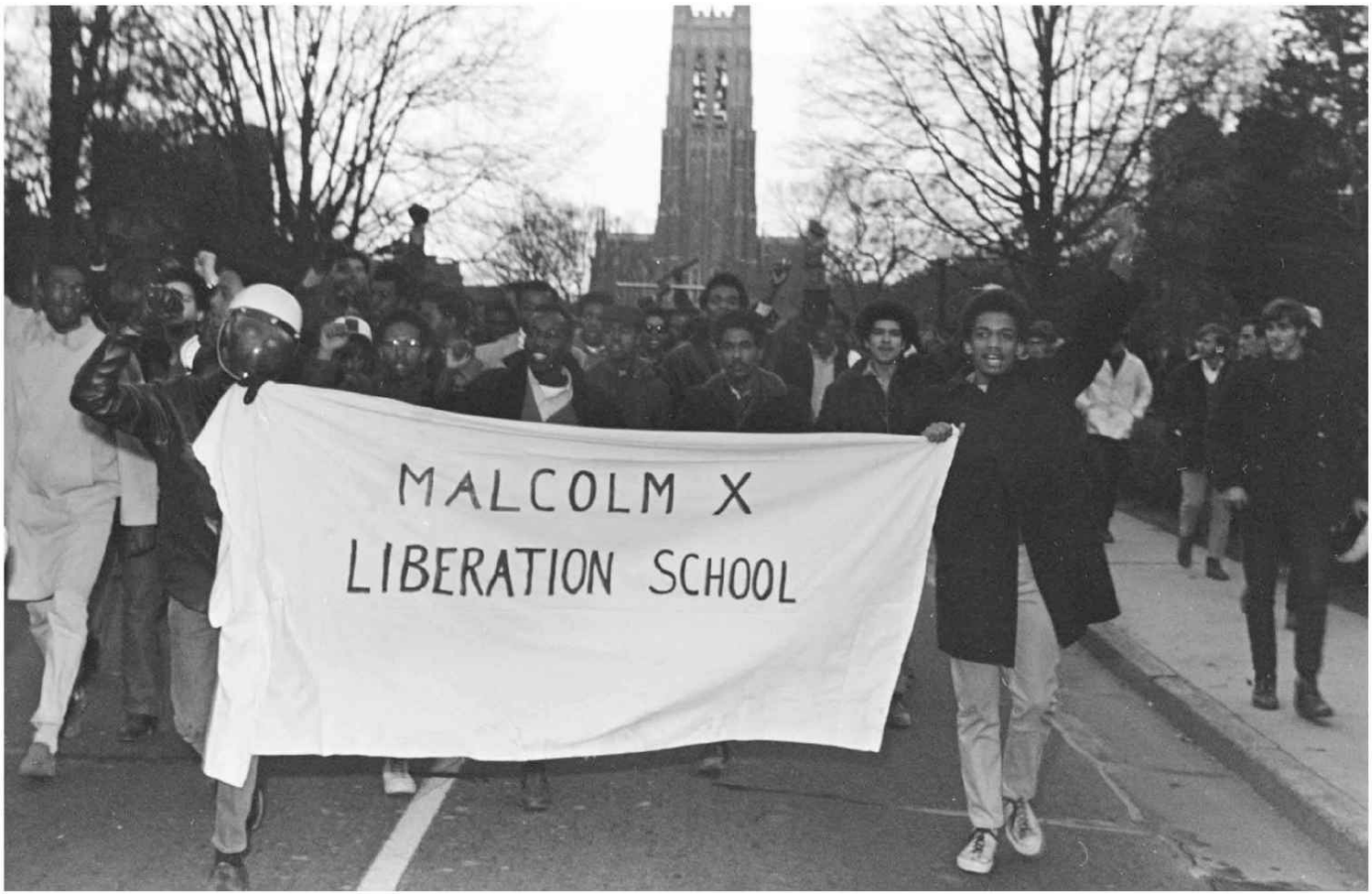


Figure 4. Black students leave the campus after vacating the Allen Administration Building in the wake of its takeover to protest the campus racial climate. (Photograph by Harold Moore, courtesy of the *Herald-Sun*). ← 278 | 279 →

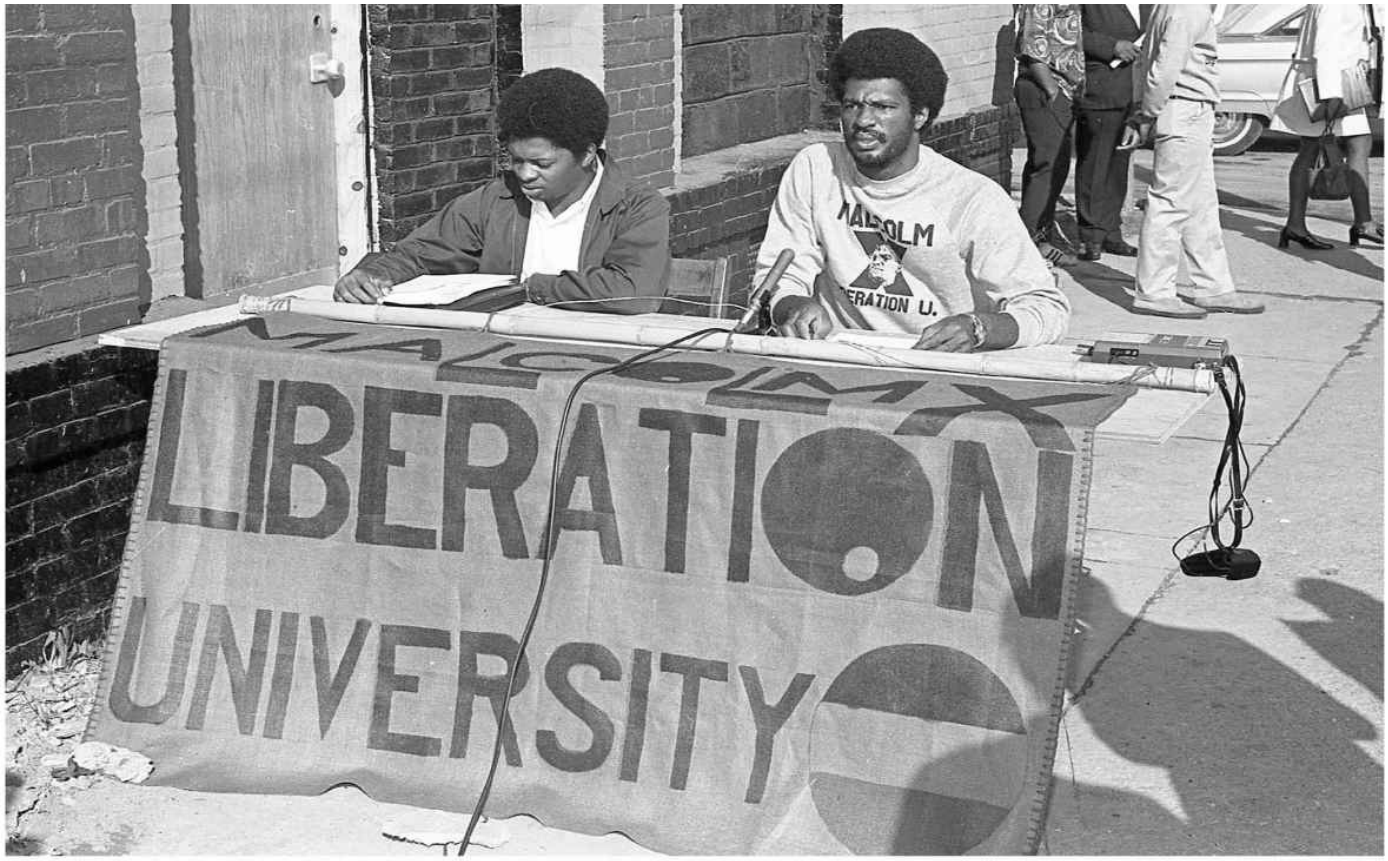


Figure 5. Community organizer Howard Fuller (right) and an unidentified man sit at the registration table for the Malcolm X Liberation University in Durham, spring 1969. (Photograph by Harold Moore, courtesy of the *Herald-Sun*). ← 279 | 280 →

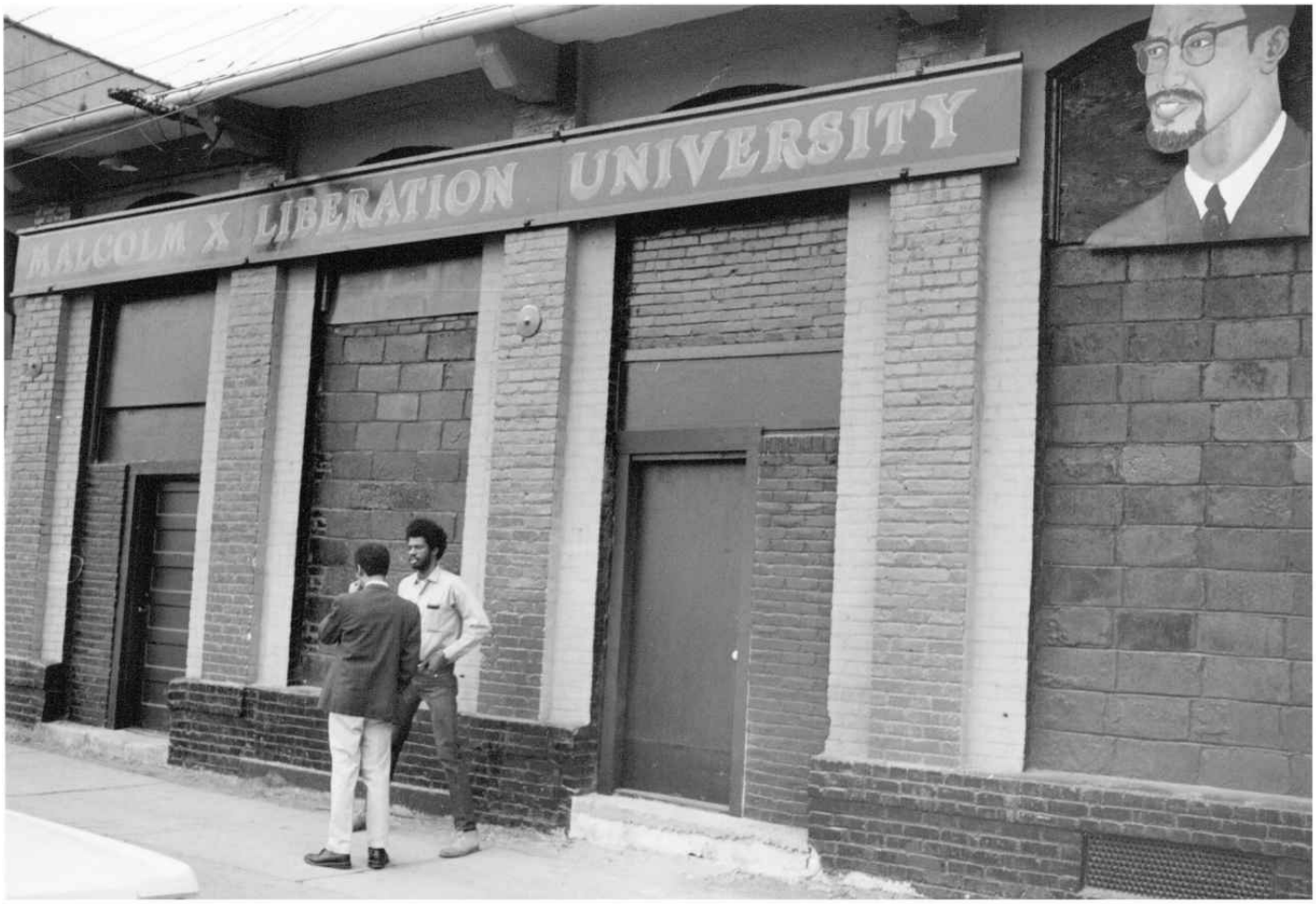


Figure 6. Founder Howard Fuller talks to a student in front of Malcolm X Liberation University in downtown Durham, North Carolina. (Photograph by Bill Boyarsky). ← 280 | 281 →


Figure 7. African Liberation Day, May 27, 1972. Photo of the African Liberation Day activities held in Washington D.C. The inaugural ALD demonstrations drew worldwide support of over sixty thousand demonstrators. (*Washington Post*; reprint by permission of the D.C. Public Library). ← 281 | 282 →

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