

**BLACK NATIONALISM AND MALCOLM X
IN THE UNITED STATES
A SURVEY OF IDEOLOGY**

by

THOMAS SCOTT OBERHUE

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The focus of this study is to gain an understanding of the ideological development of Malcolm X over the course of his entire life. To gain an appreciation of his growth, black nationalist thought and the black nationalist movement will be examined from the early twentieth century to the 1960s; as seen in Marcus Garvey and Elijah Muhammad. Emphasis is put on the last years of Malcolm's life because of the definite growth that occurred; it was also the period when he was most active, influential, and controversial. Malcolm's ideological evolution as a black nationalist leader stands in contradiction to the one-dimension perception of Malcolm being a pro-violent, white hating black kid held by much of society while he was alive and today. At the time of his assassination in 1965, Malcolm was on the verge of creating a universal black nationalist group, the Organization of Afro-American Unity. Malcolm's complexity as a thinker has been greatly overlooked and underestimate.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TEXT

Introduction	1
Marcus Garvey	10
Elijah Muhammad	17
Malcolm X	24
Conclusion	55
Endnotes	63
Sources Consulted	68

APPENDICES

A - Declaration of the UNIA	70
B - What do Muslims What?	77
C - Statement of Aims for the OAAU	81
D - Malcolm's decision after the break	87
E - First press conference after Mecca	88
F - Inter-racial relations	89
G - Prejudice in the United States	90
H - Malcolm on black nationalism	90

Introduction

*Our political philosophy will be black nationalism. Our economic and social philosophy will be black nationalism. Our cultural emphasis will be black nationalism. . . . There can be no black-white unity until there is first some black unity. There can be no workers' solidarity until there is first some racial solidarity. We cannot think of uniting with others, until after we have first united among ourselves. We cannot think of being acceptable to others until we have first proven acceptable to ourselves.*¹

Malcolm X
March 12, 1964

Throughout history there have been individuals who have become synonymous with events and movements. Malcolm X played that role for the Black Nationalist movement in the United States during the early 1960's. Mainstream America today, both black and white, sees Malcolm X and black nationalism in a vague light; there is much uncertainty and confusion as to what Malcolm was really about. Although he remains an icon of militant black protest in the 1960s, Malcolm X and black nationalism is largely misunderstood and incomplete. However, Malcolm's evolution as a black nationalist thinker and leader shows that the misconception stemmed from a lack of desire to truly comprehend the messages and meaning behind both the man and his movement.

Malcolm X was born Malcolm Little in 1925 in Omaha, Nebraska, a child of parents who were dedicated members of the Garvey movement. Thirty-nine years later Malcolm X founded the Organization of Afro-American Unity and was brutally assassinated. Over Malcolm's lifetime

his ideological stance on the position of the African-American's situation in the United States constantly grew and expanded. Malcolm's prominence as a leader of the black nationalist movement in our country was clearly established at the time of his assassination. His status was a result of his ability to carry on the message of black nationalism in the country. It was not because he was the original creator of the black nationalist ideology; people like Marcus Garvey and Elijah Muhammad helped bring the movement to the forefront earlier in the century. Instead, Malcolm's role was significant because he refined, updated and incorporated the ideology of black nationalism into a movement which worked to liberate the African-American peoples of the United States in a period of intense racial conflict.

The focus of my study is on the ideological growth and development of Malcolm X. His beliefs were rarely stagnant, quite the contrary. Malcolm began his involvement with black nationalism with nothing more than blind rage and frustration toward the white man. That initial emotion, over the course of his life, grew into a complex and universal ideology on the African-American's situation. In order to aid in the understanding of Malcolm's significance in American history, a fundamental knowledge of black nationalism throughout the twentieth century is necessary. Thus, the black nationalists theories and movements of the period from 1915 to the 1960's will be explored. This background will provide an insightful perspective on Malcolm X.

To begin, an awareness of the dilemma African-Americans faced in the United States will be touched on. Then, a definition of "black

nationalism," from a historical perspective will be addressed. A study of the major black nationalist organization like Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association and Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam will follow. This historical background will give significant meaning to Malcolm X's ideological journey and the movements he helped pioneer. A main resource in understanding the varying degrees of ideology will be the constitutions and bylaws of the black nationalist organizations as well as speeches given by significant individuals.

There has been no other people in the history of the United States, with the exception of the Native American, that has suffered such unilateral oppression as the African-American. For over four hundred year the African-American has lived oppressed and controlled by a racist and violent American society. The issue of race and race relations have been sources of constant conflict and controversy. Yet, the quest for equality and freedom has been continual within the African-American community.

The African-Americans' situation within American society is one of confusion, conflicting interests, and contradictions. It was described quite graphically by W. E. B. Du Bois' statement on the "two-ness" of the African-American.

. . . One ever feels his two-ness -- an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, -- this longing to attain self conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He does not wish Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He does not wish to bleach his Negro blood in a flood of white

Americanism, for he believes . . .that Negro blood has yet a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon...²

This "two-ness" served to complicate every dimension of the African-American community life. From the pluralistic identity came the evolution of two distinct movements by which the African-American community expressed its desire for equality, liberty, freedom and integration into America. Integration and assimilation have been dominant themes in the African-American community; the belief that gradually white society will recognize the basic equality of African Americans. Whereas, separatism, racial pride and black nationalism were theories that did not have the same amount of faith in white society to recognize the African-Americans' basic rights and felt that they had to be taken. These ideologies declare that the black man is being wrongly oppressed by white society and the only way in which to solve the problem is complete separation, independence from white society, and the demanding of personal rights through revolt. Each ideology, integration and black nationalism, placed its belief in a different part of the "two-ness"; integration placed the American characteristic as a higher priority than race, and black nationalism placed the priority on African heritage over identity as an American.

The central claim of all black nationalists, past and present, is that black people are primarily Africans and not Americans. Unlike integrationists, nationalists do not define their significance and purpose as people by appealing to the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, or even the

white man's religion of Christianity. On the contrary, nationalists define their identity by their resistance to America and their determination to create a society based on their own African history and culture.³

Gary Peller, a professor of law at Georgetown, points out in his article "Race Against Integration," that nationalist movements are valuable because their aim is to maintain a unique culture and ethnicity within a people. He goes on to analyze the concept of how integration has evolved in today's society and concludes:

Our contemporary image of integration as the inevitable means to racial justice reflects the institutionalization of a *particular* understanding of racism, and the marginalization of not only white supremacists, but also Black nationalists such as Malcolm X. . . . today racial integration is neither controversial nor threatening. Conservatives and Liberals argue over how widely to enforce integrationist norms . . . this constant and repetitive struggle over implementation obscures a critical fact: the entire argument is waged within the confines of a shared set of beliefs that comprehend racism as a form of 'discrimination.' Civil rights itself has been integrated into dominant the culture's discourse.⁴

Peller contends that the "dominant" culture controls integration. As a result, integration serves to perpetuate the existing power structure and its prejudices rather than bring real change toward equality. He believes that integration, as it applies to the United States, is not a mutual and unilateral blend of cultures, but instead, one group having to assimilate into the other. (An example: black children are always bussed to predominantly white schools, but white students are rarely bussed to predominantly black schools.) Peller goes on to point out that if African-Americans do not keep any nationalistic element within their

community they will soon lose any semblance of authentic racial identity.

He states:

Rather than imagining that people exist as autonomous individuals who create social relations out of acts of private will, nationalists viewed Blacks in terms of traditions and communities that provide the historical context for individual identity.⁵

Peller's argument is that the dominant society is so overwhelming that its opinions and attitudes are institutionalized and inherent in all aspect of that culture. Thus, when a minority group tries to integrate into that society, it is forced to conform to dominant society just on the basis of association. The function of black nationalist ideology is to preserve and strengthen the cultural ethos of African-Americans while creating of a society free of individual, institutional, and societal racism. Peller's observations serve to give greater depth to the worth and function of black nationalism in the United States.

Yet, the philosophy of integration and the desire to assimilate into American society has always been more popular among both white- and African-Americans, at least publicly. Numerically there is no doubt that integration was, and still is, a much more popular and supported ideology by both blacks and whites throughout history. However, black nationalism served as an ideological-counter balance by offering an alternative to the African-American community. Also, there are specific times in history when nationalist movements were able to swell to enough prominence actually to compete with the integration movement in size and impact. Typically, the periods when black nationalism experienced popularity was during the 1880s, 1890s, 1920s and 1960s when

there was exceptional oppression and/or disillusionment within black America.

Whether or not to put an end to the oppression and brutality of white America has not been an issue of dispute within the African-American community. However, the means by which to achieve freedom has been one of great debate. The struggle has been between the ideologies of integration and separation, accommodation and protest, citizenship verses black pride, which has served to split the African-American community.

The term black nationalism has, through the course of history, been used to describe a wide range of movements within the African-American populous. According to historians Bracey, Meier, and Rudwick:

The term "black nationalism" has been used in American history to describe a body of thought, attitudes, and actions ranging from the simplest expressions of ethnocentrism and racial solidarity to the comprehensive and sophisticated ideologies of Pan-Negroism or Pan-Africanism. Between these extremes lie many varieties of black nationalism, of varying degrees of intensity.⁶

It is evident that black nationalism is a term with considerable depth of meaning. In the most general terms, it is the belief that African-American people share a commonality among each other in perspective, history and present experiences. Black nationalism is the belief that black people share a common culture and world view, have a common destiny, and have had a common experience: slavery, oppression, and exploitation.⁷ However, within that loose definition there lies a wide spectrum of black nationalist ideologies and practices. Thus, it is

important to identify clearly the type of black nationalism being discussed and its context. Under the title of "black nationalism" sits a wide range of unique ideological perspectives within the greater issue: racial solidarity, cultural nationalism, religious nationalism, economic nationalism, political nationalism, emigration nationalism, territorial nationalism, and Pan-Africanism.⁸ Much of black nationalism revolves around the issue of control over community and life. Its goal is to empower the African-American communities of the United States with the control of their own affairs. Coupled with this concept of control is the importance of self-pride and self-worth as a people and culture. Nationalism promotes a sense of belonging and identity to an ethnic group that works to address special needs and perspectives as well as serving as a support system.

Racial solidarity is the mildest form of nationalism, and has no specific ideology premise except that all people of color have some general experiences in common. It is not a formal movement or group, but rather a general mood or consensus. In contrast, the creation of Afro-centric cultural, religious, economic, and political dimensions in the United States, from an African American's perspective, is the main intent of such forms of nationalism. The African-American community would no longer tolerate defining themselves through the dominating European American's criteria and power structure.

Race pride and the feeling of self-worth as a member of the African-American community have always been issues of concern and priority among black nationalist. The self-hate that blacks felt toward themselves,

as seen in the "black doll" experiments, reflects the psychological effects of racism and oppression. The lack of self-identity and esteem was most directly a result of the African-American being completely severed from the cultural and historical significance of the African continent. The African-American had no history according to the text books of the United States except that of enslavement and labor to the white race. Race pride was an attempt to establish the worth of the African-American peoples and their contribution as human beings.

The complete separation of races in order to gain true freedom was fundamental in both the ideologies of emmigrationalism and territorialism, just on varying scales. Pan-Africanism is a complex term, for it focuses on the complete development of all dimensions of society in conjunction with the uniting of all black peoples of the world. Pan-Africanism works to create a common bond and unity among all black peoples of the world. Through this union will come the end of oppression and suffering.

It is no coincidence that at the times when the African-American community's status was declining or their expectations rising that black nationalism emerged to a high point. There is a direct relationship between the standard of living in the African-American community and its acceptance of militant ideology. In the period after the Great Migration and World War I, in the early 1920s, when African-Americans' expectations were high for a better standard of living and the opportunity to participate fully in the democratic process. Marcus Garvey, using that sentiment, played a considerable role in establishing the fundamentals of

black nationalism for the twentieth century during the early 1920s.

Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association

. . . we are determined to solve our own problems, by redeeming our Motherland Africa from the hands of alien exploiters and found there a Government, a nation of our own, strong enough to lend protection to the members of our race scattered all over the world, and to compel the respect of the nations and races of the earth.⁹

Marcus Garvey

The spirit expressed in this quote was the driving force behind Marcus Garvey's movement of black nationalism. His intent was to make the African peoples of the world self-sufficient, respected, and in control of themselves.

Marcus Garvey can be credited with being one of the major leaders of the ideology of Pan-Africanism throughout the world in the 1920s. By means of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), an organization that Garvey founded, he was able to involve more people of African descent in one world-wide movement than ever witnessed before or since in the history of the modern world. Garvey's dedication to the freedom of the African peoples from the white imperialist was very clear; he felt that there was no nobler cause than to fight for the freedom of a suppressed people. His story is one of great glory and disappointment. Above all, Garvey ultimately laid the ideological foundation for nearly every civil rights and black nationalist movement from the 1920s on.

Marcus Mosiah Garvey was born 17 August 1887 on the island of Jamaica. By 1910 Garvey had toured Europe, an experience that had a very powerful effect on his outlook on life and the world. Upon his return from traveling in July 1914, Garvey was certain that some action was needed to advance the liberation of colored peoples throughout the world. Garvey quickly formed the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities League. He commented at the time:

For the last ten years I have given my time to the study of the condition of the Negro, here, and everywhere, and I have come to realize that he is still the object of degradation and pity the world over, in the sense that he has no status socially, nationally, or commercially . . .¹⁰

Garvey began by setting up the world headquarters in the West Indies and commencing the founding of his international movement.

On 23 March 1916 Marcus Garvey arrived in the United States, a year later than he had planned. Originally he was to visit the United States and tour under the sponsorship of Booker T. Washington; he was a strong supporter of Washington's self-help and uplift philosophies. Unfortunately, Booker T. Washington passed away just prior to Garvey's arrival and all plans were postponed. Garvey spent his first year in the United States traveling on a thirty-eight state lecture tour where he spoke to African Americans about his international movement.

Garvey, like much of the world, saw Harlem as the center of black culture of the United States and the world. As a result, he decided to base his movement out of Harlem. On 2 July 1918 he incorporated the

Universal Negro Improvement Association under the laws of the state of New York. Less than a year later, Garvey's prominence as a black leader and figure head was definite, confirmed by the fact that the UNIA was recorded to have had about thirty branches and over two million members.¹¹

The sociopolitical environment was favorable for Garvey and the UNIA for a number of significant reasons. The Great Migration transplanted hundred of thousands of African Americans from the rural south to the urban north, resulting in a dynamic change in the black community. Never before had such large density of African Americans ever lived in such close proximity of each other. Those who came north were searching for a better life, both financially and socially. Instead, most found the same discrimination found in the south, only it was expressed in more deceptive ways. Also, with the north gradually becoming aware of the repercussions of the Great Migration, outright hostility began to increase accordingly, resulting in such blood shed as the Red Summer of 1919.

At the same time World War I, had left many black soldiers believing that they had proven their worth and valor as American soldiers and had earned their full rights and privilege as an American citizen. Such expectations were met with a white-backlash of violence upon the return of the black soldiers to the United States. The disenchanted black soldiers saw great pride and glory in Garvey and his Black Legion.

The white backlash, which resulted from both the migration and

the post-World War I period, served to bring the oppression of the African-American by society to a severely high level. Such disillusionment led many to lose hope completely in the existing structure and take a stand against it, and the UNIA served as a great vehicle in which to do this.

By the end of 1918 the UNIA began to publish its own paper, the *Negro World*, which became the medium for the organization members to communicate throughout the world. The paper was deemed as being dangerous and outlawed by many of the imperial governments in Africa at the time, for it called for the overthrow of all imperial governments and the uprising of the oppressed masses. Such ideas sat in direct conflict with the imperial African governments of the day.

The First Convention of the Negro Peoples of the World was held in 1920 in New York. The convention brought together over two thousand delegates representing twenty-five countries from four continents. Most of the delegates represented the working masses of black people.¹² At the convention, the Declaration of Rights for the Negro Peoples of the World was ratified to "protest against the wrongs and injustices they (African Americans) are suffering at the hands of their white brethren, and state what they deem their fair and justice rights."¹³ (See Appendix A). The Declaration contained twelve complaints of the black race and fifty-four demands. The complaints were primarily against the unequal treatment received by blacks for "no other reason than our race and color." Never before had the world been witness to such a

doctrine of black nationalism.

The Declaration, which became the platform of the UNIA, clearly stated the six main grievances of the black peoples of the world. It called for full civil and political rights, an end to colonial rule in Africa, free traveling privileges for colored people, an end to segregation, industrial discrimination, and the incorporation of African culture and history to all people of African descendency in their school curriculum. The demands also made direct connection between all the black people of the world and Africa, which was deemed as "the Motherland of all Negroes." The significance of designating Africa as the home land of all black peoples is that it gave the movement a focal point and a symbol.

A creed, entitled "What We Believe," described the UNIA's fundamental beliefs by summarizing the spirit of the Declaration:

The Universal Negro Improvement Association advocates the unity and blending of all Negroes into one strong, healthy race. It is against miscegenation and race suicide. It believes that the Negro race is as good as any other, and therefore should be as proud as others are. It believes in the purity of the Negro race and the purity of the white race. It is against rich blacks marrying poor whites. It is against rich or poor whites taking advantage of Negro women. It believes in the spiritual Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.¹⁴

According to the data (mostly compiled from about 1925 through 1928) there were 725 UNIA branches in the United States and 271 outside the United States, making for a world-wide total of 996.¹⁵

Garvey was a race man. He believed that one's race should hold priority over all other issues as a black person. It is important to note that

Garvey did not go a step further in his ideology of racial pride and awareness by preaching race superiority. He deliberately stated that, "all beauty, virtue and goodness are the exclusive attributes of no one race. All humanity have their shortcomings; hence no statement of mine, at any time, must be interpreted as a wholesale praise of, or attack upon any race, people or creed."¹⁶ To believe strongly in one's own race and ethnicity does not always signify a superiority complex, but instead, could represent a strong belief in racial pride and awareness.

Garvey also concluded that by increasing the education of the black community, it would eventually put them in direct competition with whites and the white power structure for jobs. Garvey saw this as a sign of inevitable race conflict which would end disastrously for the African-American community. As a result, Garvey was a strong advocate of racial separation and self-dependency.¹⁷

A corollary to race first was self-reliance, economic, education, political, etc. Garvey: "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 the 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 make an independent racial contribution to the world and civilization."¹⁸

Garvey saw integrationists as being blacks who desired to conform and adapt to be white, while at the same time completely ignoring the

socioeconomic well-being of poor blacks at the bottom. His criticism of such organizations as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was clear and constant -- they were selling-out. Another fundamental reason Garvey opposed integration was the belief that in order for integrationists to become apart of the "system" they were forced to compromise their self-respect and dignity as an African descendent.

Unfortunately, Garvey was making a considerable number of enemies within both the white and black sectors of society. Whites did not like Garvey for the obvious reason that he was posing a threat to the white power structure. The colonial government of Africa and their European homelands all wanted Garvey to be silenced due to the unrest and opposition he was posing; he was inciting revolution. Americans felt threatened by the rapidly growing organization that promoted the rights of black people. Among the black community, opposition came from those who were being challenged by the UNIA's success and threatened by Garvey's growing power. Garvey was eventually silenced by his conviction on charges of mail fraud, where he spent four years in federal prison, and was then exiled from the United States. He never set foot in the country again.

The UNIA tried to continue even though Garvey was no longer in Harlem, but was simply unable to maintain its international prominence without a strong leader to keep the people of the world inspired in a vision. Ultimately, due to poor management, over-commitment, factionalism, and financial disarray the UNIA crumbled at the onset of

the Great Depression.

Garvey and the UNIA did a lot for the African-American community as well as African descendents throughout the world. Its numerical success is a clear sign that many people believed and supported the ideology of Marcus Garvey. The UNIA and Garvey fell victim to those who felt threatened and the consequences of running an international organization without a clear understanding of how to organize such a complex movement. Nonetheless, the credit for laying the foundation of black nationalist thought for the rest of the twentieth century must go to Garvey.

Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam

No black nationalist movement has ever gained the mass involvement or popularity of the UNIA. Yet, the black nationalism did not cease to exist with the fall of Garvey and the UNIA, it simply took other form, such as the Nation of Islam.

*Judging Black Americans to be intellectually, spiritually, and culturally dead, the Nation of Islam held that they were victims who had lost their humanity.*¹⁹

*Islam dignifies the black man and it gives him the desire to be clean, internally and externally, and to have for the first time a sense of dignity.*²⁰

Elijah Muhammad

The Lost-Found Nation of Islam, more commonly known simply as the Nation of Islam, was founded in the early 1930s by W. D. Fard. According to the theology of the Nation of Islam, Fard was Allah in the

form of a human being. It was said that Fard was originally from Arabia and had come to America to awaken his oppressed people, the African-Americans. However, in 1933 Fard strangely disappeared and was never heard from again. Elijah Muhammad assumed the role as leader for the Nation of Islam. He quickly acclaimed himself the messenger to Allah and the spokesperson on Allah's behalf. The Nation of Islam slowly grew to have temples in such cities as Chicago, Milwaukee, and Washington, D. C., but none challenged the size of Detroit's congregation. During the heart of the depression the newly formed group was primarily located in Detroit and reached a maximum membership of 8000.²¹

However, in 1942, the membership slumped to only a few hundred due to the fact that Muhammad and many of followers were imprisoned for refusing to submit to the Selective Service Act. The period between 1954 and the early 1960s, in contrast, was a time of planned and deliberate expansion which saw an emphasis placed upon reaching the masses of lower class urban African-Americans and the disproportionately higher number of African-Americans in prison. By the early 1960s the membership had grown to an estimated quarter of a million followers nationally.²²

The Nation of Islam is best described as a organization that used a blend of ideologies: the religion of Islam coupled with an injection of cultural black nationalism. Muhammad commented about the founding of the Nation of Islam and his experience with "Allah in the Person of Master Wallace Fard Muhammad":

. . .[Fard] in 1930 and for the following three years explained to him [Muhammad] the history and significance of the "Black Nation." He taught Muhammad his beliefs concerning the Caucasian race, the religions of Islam and Christianity, as well as the "truth" about the beginning of creation, the "impending" destruction of the Caucasian race and its civilization, and the final overthrow of white rule over the black peoples.²³

The ideological foundation of the Nation of Islam, according to Muhammad, comes from three sources: the religion of Islam, Noble Drew Ali of the Moorish-American Science Temple, and Marcus Garvey. Muhammad expressed his appreciation to the ideological guides and explained his movement's purpose relative to those previous groups:

I have always had a very high opinion of both the late Noble Drew Ali and Marcus Garvey and admired their courage in helping our people (the so-called Negro) and appreciated their work. Both of these men were fine Muslims. The followers of Noble Drew Ali and Marcus Garvey should now follow me and co-operate with us in our work because we are only trying to finish up what those before us started.²⁴

The Nation strongly believed that African-Americans were still enslaved in mental shackles of inferiority and deep self-doubt. The African-American had been robbed of its culture, history, and identity. Christianity was not an African religion but the white man's, which was used to keep the black mass under the white power structure. The Nation of Islam worked to generate moral uplift by creating definite structure to one's life and existence.

Elijah Muhammad orchestrated both the Islamic religion and black nationalism to create a very powerful ideological hybrid. It is important to note that Muhammad was not practicing orthodox Islam, but a

derivative of the religion. It is also significant to note that the Nation of Islam was not deliberate in labeling their ideology. Therefore, the religion of the Nation of Islam was simply that, it did not divide its teachings into a "black nationalist" section or a "Islamic" section, but presented it all as one theology. It was implicit in the term Nation of Islam that black nationalism was being incorporated into the gospel.

A central concept of the Nation of Islam was the Myth of Yakub. Without a clear understanding of the myth, the significance of the Nation of Islam cannot be seen. According to the myth, the first peoples on the planet were said to be black peoples who made up what was known as the Black Nation. A very famous scientist of the Black Nations, Yakub, discovered that through a "mutation" process he could give black people brown, red, and yellow complexions. He kept working on the process until he finally was able to create a white person. Therefore, white persons were grafted from the black people. When Yakub's experiments were found out by the people of the Black Nation he was banished from paradise (Asia) for trying to create the devil. According to Essien-Udom, the author of the book *Black Nationalism: A search for an Identity in America*, the myth's significance lies in the fact that:

Yakub, the black scientist, is the man the Bible refers to as Adam; he is the father of the Caucasian race. Yakub, however, was really acting according to the will of God, who wanted the 'devils' to rule 6,000 years in order to test the mettle of the Black Nation and see whether they could rule with justice. The 'pale-face, blue eyed' people have demonstrated that they are incapable of giving justice to black people. Their allowed time is up or will be up at the end of the sixth millennium.²⁵

According to the Myth of Yakub, the end of the sixth millennium is when the end of white rule will occur, which translates to the year 2000 A. D. It is believed by the Nation of Islam, that when the date arrives, it will be a time of judgment and destruction. The judgment, which will be done by Allah, is clearly addressed in the Book of Revelations as the War of Armageddon. The destruction will not destroy the entire planet or even all of mankind, but it does apply directly to "the destruction of the devils (the Caucasians) and their religion (Christianity)." The Messenger Elijah Muhammad suggested the year 1970 as the the fall of the white race, although the "exact date is known only by Allah."²⁶

It was believed that the judgment by Allah will come in two phases. The first phase is the "spiritual sounding of the trumpet," which was the Nation of Islam's function -- to try to awake spiritually the so-called Negro of America to its true religion and its biblical significance. Elijah Muhammad commented about his role as the Messenger and the Nation of Islam's role as the trumpet:

My Mission -- I have been risen to raise my people here (the so-called Negroes), and to help them into the knowledge of Self, and their God Allah (Who is a Person among them) and the devils (their open enemy). *My Objective* -- I am doing all I can to make the so-called Negroes see that the white race and their religion (Christianity) are their open enemies, and to prove to them that they will never be anything but the devil's slaves and finally go to hell with them for believing and following them and their kind.²⁷

The second phase will be the day of Apocalypse. It was believed that Allah would give advance notice in order for the righteous to escape the

destruction.

Stemming from the Myth of Yakub is the belief that the white race is inferior both mentally and physically to the "Original Man," the so-called Negro. In accordance with the superiority/inferiority concept came the belief that in order to preserve the strength, beauty, and potential of the black people, the mixing of blood was not allowed.

The myth of Yakub represents two important concepts of the Nation of Islam. First, the Nation believed in the racial superiority of the black people over the Caucasian people. Secondly, the belief that they are the chosen people of Allah was a religiously powerful charge which acted as a major point of inspiration. This radical theology served to make the Nation of Islam very appealing to some and very fanatical to others. Also, this very challenging doctrine substantiated the strict discipline and morality code of the Nation of Islam.

Authority in the Nation of Islam on all matters of ideology, theology, and policy resides solely in the Messenger of Allah.²⁸ The Nation was not a democracy and was by no means run by consensus. Such centralized control over all aspects of the movement made conflict within the Nation intolerable.

The Nation of Islam developed a ten-point program that served as a platform for its black nationalist beliefs. Although Muhammad was very clear on the fact that the Nation of Islam was solely a religious organization and would not practice any type of political activism, the political nature of the program cannot be denied. (See Appendix B) It called for immediate freedom, justice and equality of African-Americans.

The separation of the blacks and whites was stated as a necessity in order to assure the black person's basic rights, freedoms, and opportunities.

The fundamental principles of the Nation were strikingly similar to that of the UNIA, with the addition of a religious dimension. The fact that Elijah Muhammad created a document with such a political message seems to indicate that the Nation had political objectives in mind.

Ironically, Muhammad refused to allow the Nation to have any type of politically active dimension to it, for he believed that the true salvation for African-Americans was through religious devotion. Therefore, it is correct to say that the Nation did not participate in bettering the African American's condition through political means, but it is incorrect to state that the Nation did not have a political agenda. The Nation had very definite goals as to what it wanted to achieve for the African-American.

Muhammad felt that it was essential that the African-American community have a strong code of ethics and morals by which to live. The necessity of this was to compensate for what he felt was a terribly degenerated morality in the black masses. He stated, "you cannot find any other people in the world whose morals are so low." As a result, the Nation had definite "do's" and "don'ts" for literally every facet of ones life. The purpose of following the protocol set by the Nation was to aid the followers in the quest for purity. As one became more pure, they would be able to communicate better with Allah and understand his message. Therefore, there were very strict rules regarding hygiene, food, sex, family practices, and religious obligations and rituals.

The Nation of Islam offered the African-American an alternative to

the philosophies of integration and accommodation in which he/she could pursue both person and community betterment. The Nation coupled religious and cultural nationalism together and presented it in one ideology. This ideology complimented the Nation's mission, which was to re-awaken the black mass to their true religion and culture. The concepts were controversial, radical, and empowering -- the white man was the devil, racial superiority, and Islam being the original religion of black people -- which explains why the Nation experienced the most successful in lower class black communities and prisons. Muhammad was able to take the movement, over a twenty-five year period, from a small beginning to a group with as many as a quarter of a million members. However, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad cannot be given all the credit for the growth of the Nation's membership, much of it must go to the sole individual who not only came to symbolize the Nation of Islam but also brought it national recognition, Malcolm X.

Malcolm X

*No, I'm not an American. I'm one of the 22 million black people who are victims of Americanism. One of the . . . victims of democracy, nothing but disguised hypocrisy. So, I'm not standing here speaking to you as an American, or a patriot, or a flag-saluter, or a flag-waver -- no, not I! I'm speaking as a victim of this American system. And I see America through the eyes of the victim. I don't see any American dream; I see an American nightmare!*²⁹

Malcolm X
3 April 1964

The popular images of the "radical" Malcolm X captured by the media of the 1960s were only snapshots of his ideas and philosophies. The impact of these snapshots on Malcolm's image and significance to mainstream American society were substantial, because they detracted from the overall content and complexity of Malcolm's ideology. Was he a racist, a separatist, or anti-American? Malcolm X and his philosophies were constantly evolving and changing, an image contrary to the enduring one of a white-hating militant black man. Placing Malcolm X into American history based upon a fragmented and incomplete knowledge is absurd, yet to a large degree Malcolm is victim of such wrong doing. By only analyzing the snapshots, instead of taking a comprehensive overview of his career, many people are guilty of gross generalizing and perpetuating myths about Malcolm X. This translates into the misunderstanding of Malcolm by the majority of American society. In order to understand his evolving ideologies, we must view the complete photo album. I will present a comprehensive overview of Malcolm's changing nature and shed light on his ever-evolving principles.

To bring structure to this investigation, I have divided Malcolm's life into segments. I will address each one independently and then give an overall analysis of all the segments and their importance in regards to Malcolm's life. The segments are as follows:

- 1) Life through prison
- 2) Finding of Nation of Islam
- 3) Rising in the Nation of Islam

- 4) Break from the Nation of Islam
- 5) Trip to Mecca
- 6) The last nine months

Due to the great uncertainty about Malcolm's ideology during the last eighteen months of his life (segments 4, 5, and 6), more attention will be given to that period of his life. The last eighteen months was a period of great ideological transition and growth; making the understanding of it essential to gaining a complete picture of Malcolm's ideology development.

A deeper analysis of Malcolm's beliefs will help move us beyond the accepted generalities of his life. By reexamining material, combining it with popular notions regarding him and his mission, and finding Malcolm's place in the history of black nationalism in the United States the complete story of Malcolm X and his philosophy will be fully understood.

LIFE THROUGH PRISON

*People are always speculating -- why am I as I am? To understand that of any person, his whole life, from birth, must be reviewed. All our experiences fuse into our personality. Everything that ever happened to us is an ingredient. . . . I think that an objective reader may see how in the society to which I was exposed as a black youth here in America, for me to wind up in a prison was really just about inevitable.*³⁰

Malcolm X
1965

Contemplating his survival, Malcolm X, as a twenty-one year old, sat in prison looking back on his life. It was a miracle he was still alive. His background and childhood were surrounded by hardship, brutality,

and violence. This segment of his life left a strong impression on him, which would later affect his outlook on life . He would use these early experiences to confirm theories about the white man presented to him by the Nation of Islam. He would also use his childhood as an example to convince others of the truth of the Nation of Islam's theories. Reflecting on his youth while in prison, Malcolm came to the realization that African-Americans face brutal realities in America society.

Malcolm X was born Malcolm Little on 19 May 1925 in Omaha, Nebraska. One of seven children, Malcolm had three step-siblings and three immediate siblings. Malcolm's father, the Reverend Earl Little, was a Baptist minister, a position which held respect and power within the black community. Reverend Little was also a dedicated organizer for Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, (UNIA). Because of his involvement in the Garvey movement, Reverend Little was a constant focus for white harassment. Just prior to Malcolm's birth, the Little home was raided by the Ku Klux Klan. Malcolm later found out about this event from his mother:

When my mother was pregnant with me ... a party of hooded Ku Klux Klan riders galloped up to our home ... one night ... The Klansmen shouted threats and warnings at her that we had better get out of town because "the good Christian white people" were not going to stand for my father's "spreading trouble" among the "good" Negroes of Omaha with the "back to Africa" preachings of Marcus Garvey.³¹

White violence and aggression towards blacks would become a part of Malcolm's life early on. By 1925, the time of Malcolm's birth, Reverend Little had already seen four of his six brothers violently killed by white

men, including one who had been hung. Only one of the brothers would die in bed of illness. Shortly after Malcolm was born his family moved to Lansing Michigan. When Malcolm was six his father was murdered.

My father's skull, on one side, was crushed in, I was told later. Negroes in Lansing have always whispered that he was attacked, and then laid across some tracks for a street car to run over him. His body was cut almost in half. He lived two and a half hours in that condition.³²

After his father's death, the welfare system took Malcolm away from his mother and placed him in a foster home. His mother worked as hard as she could to prevent the state taking her children, but eventually broke down under the grim reality that a woman was not able to earn enough money to support four children and watch after them too. She was eventually placed in a mental institution. Malcolm felt very strongly about the fact that the state had destroyed both his family and his mother.

Despite the violence, his father's death, and the breaking-up of his family Malcolm did very well in school. He was at the top of his class most of the time. Yet, Malcolm was taught and encouraged to be a black man in a racist society; second class and obedient. Malcolm remembered vividly when a teacher had asked him after class one day what he wanted to be when he grew up. Malcolm had replied that he wanted to be a lawyer. The teacher then explained to Malcolm that black people could not become lawyers, because only whites could be lawyers. However, since he was smart, he would make a good carpenter, which was a position of respect among blacks. Malcolm was deeply embittered and depressed as a result of this incident. Despite his success in school, he

ended up dropping out after the eighth grade. His leaving school was largely due to lack of family support, encouragement from teachers, incentive to succeed from the community, and the knowledge that the highest station in life he could achieve was as a member of the working class.

Malcolm went to live with his older step-sister, Ella, in Boston at the age of fifteen. In Boston, Malcolm received his indoctrination into street life. He got a job shining shoes at Roseland State Ballroom, which served to be very educational about the realities of the street. He learned how to be the stereotypical "black man" and how to survive. He also learned that most of his money was not earned shining shoes, but by supplying the customers with such commodities as liquor, reefer, and prostitutes. While in Boston, Malcolm got his first conk (the painful process of straightening his hair), had his first reefer, bought his first zoot suit, perfected his dance steps, and mastered the jargon of the streets. Malcolm would use these experiences as examples as to how before he found the Nation of Islam he tried to be like the white man and escape from his African heritage.

Malcolm wanted to live in the center of the action, so he moved to Harlem. The size, the number of black people, the brilliance, the money, and the violence -- everything was extreme and dangerous. While living in Harlem, Malcolm had a premonition that he would die violently, realizing that he was a creature of a violent society. (He would come back to this theme of a violent society throughout his life) Nonetheless, he thrived in the environment, because he was smart, competitive, and a

quick learner. Malcolm, in attempts to improve his economic situation decided to set up a robbery system with some of his friends. He, being the leader of the group, designed the scheme. While trying to sell the hot property as a pawn shop Malcolm and his group were arrested and put in jail. Only much later in life did Malcolm realize how fortunate it was that he was caught because going to jail probably saved him from being killed on the streets, as well as changing the rest of his life.

Malcolm was a thief, a drug user, and believed that anything was rightfully his if he could take it. Malcolm remarked about that era of his life:

Ella (Malcolm's step-sister) couldn't believe how atheist, how uncouth I had become. I believed that a man should do anything that he was slick enough, or bad enough, to do and that a woman was nothing but another commodity.³³

He was a survivor, and had built a respectable reputation on the streets. His world consisted of drugs, gambling, theft, and violence.

Malcolm's life epitomized the philosophy presented by Julius Lester's in, *Look out, Whitey! Black Power's Gon' Get Your Mama*:

Today resistance manifests itself in what whites can only see as "social ills" of the ghetto, i.e., crime, high school dropouts, unemployment, etc. In actuality, many blacks have consciously rebelled against the system and dropped out. After all, why waste your life working at a job you hate, getting paid next to nothing, when you can make more money with half the effort. So a new class is created, the hustler who gambles, runs numbers, pushes drugs, lives off women, and does anything to avoid going to "meet the man" five days a week, year in and year out. It is a dangerous, rough, and none too beautiful life, but it has some compensation; a modicum of self-respect and the respect of a good segment of the community is gained.³⁴

After his conviction on robbery charges, Malcolm was sentenced to ten years in prison. At his entry into prison, a blind anger grew in Malcolm, earning him the nickname of "Satan" by other inmates because of his constant angered state and his contempt of religion.

Malcolm served a total of seven years in prison.³⁵ The prison experience was pivotal to his personal growth and development. He did not change into the model citizen the penal system would have hoped for; instead, the experience ignited an inner rage that would drive him throughout his life. Prison had a powerful effect on Malcolm, who, later in life, remarked on how this negative experience affected his psyche:

Any person who claims to have feeling for other human beings should think a long, long time before he votes to have other men kept behind bars -- caged. I am not saying there shouldn't be prisons, but there shouldn't be bars. Behind bars, a man never reforms. He will never forget. He never will get completely over the memory of the bars.³⁶

Malcolm had always used his mental energy to get ahead in the world of the streets. While in the Charleston Prison he began to redirect his mental energy to further his education. According to Malcolm, his interest in education was ignited by the display of general knowledge and logic by an inmate named Bimbi. Such intellectual facilities inspired Malcolm to work towards acquiring the skills to empower himself with these abilities. The effects of his prison studies served to equip Malcolm with the tools he would need later in life.

Many who today hear me somewhere in person, or on television, or those who read something I've said, will think I went to school far beyond the eighth grade. This impression is due entirely to my prison studies. . . .

It had really begun back in Charleston Prison, when Bimbi first made me feel envy of his stock of knowledge. Bimbi had always taken charge of any conversation he was in, and I had tried to emulate him.³⁷

Bimbi challenged Malcolm to use his intelligence and work to improve his knowledge and do something with himself. Malcolm took up prison education courses. He also worked on his penmanship and his vocabulary by copying the dictionary. As a result of his extensive prison studies, Malcolm compensated for his lack of a formal education.

Malcolm's perspective on the African-American's condition in the United States began to come into rough form while he studied about the great empires of ancient Africa, the terrors of the middle passage, the failures of the civil war, and the great black leaders of history. He became so obsessed with reading and learning that if he was not eating or sleeping, he was reading or finding more to read. The barbaric oppression of peoples all over the world by the white man began to come clear. Malcolm believed that the success of the black masses depended on the ability of people of today to learn from the experiences of others. Malcolm commented approximately fifteen years later, on 10 November 1963, in his speech "Message to the Grass Roots:"

Of all studies, history is best qualified to reward our research. And when you see that you've got problems, all you have to do is examine the historic method used all over the world by others who have problems similar to yours. Once you see how they get theirs straight, then you know how you can get yours straight.³⁸

This thirst for knowledge was influential in Malcolm's ability to discover new ideas and concepts and either make them a part of his ideology or

refute them all together. Some of the books that impacted Malcolm while in prison were Will Durant's *Story of Civilizations*, H. G. Wells' *Outline of History*, W. E. B. Du Bois' *Souls of Black Folks*, Carter G. Woodson's *Negro History*, J. A. Rogers' three volumes on *Sex and Race*, and many more that go unmentioned. These books opened Malcolm's mind to ideas and thoughts that he had never had the opportunity to encounter on the streets of New York or in the racist class rooms of the United States. They give him a perspective quite different than he had held prior to his entering prison.

Book after book showed me how the white man had brought upon the world's black, brown, red, and yellow peoples every variety of the sufferings of exploitation. . . . I read, I saw, how the white man never has gone among the non-white peoples bearing the Cross in the true manner and spirit of Christ's teachings - meek, humble, and Christ-like perceived, as I read, how the collective white man had been actually nothing but a piratical opportunist...³⁹

FINDING THE NATION OF ISLAM

At the same time Malcolm was working to educate himself, but still incarcerated, he became acquainted with a religious movement known as the Nation of Islam through the letters he received from both his brother Philbert and Reginald. This was 1948. One of the letters that Malcolm received from his brother, Reginald, contained these 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."⁴⁰ Malcolm's immediate response was thinking that the advice was a scheme to fool the prison

physicians into releasing him. As a result, he followed the instructions enthusiastically; he wanted nothing greater than to get out of prison. Reginald was working to purify Malcolm of the white man's vices by instilling in him the rigid protocol of the Nation of Islam.

A few days later Malcolm was in the cafeteria and they were serving pork. In accordance with the instructions, Malcolm did not take any. By that evening the word was around the prison that Satan was not eating pork. Malcolm looked back on that incident saying:

It made me very proud, in some odd way. One of the universal images of the Negro, in prison and out, was that he couldn't do without pork. It made me feel good to see that my not eating it had especially startled the white convicts. Later I would learn, when I had read and studied Islam a good deal, that, unconsciously, my first pre-Islamic submission had been manifested. I had experienced, for the first time, the Muslim teaching, "If you will take one step toward Allah -- Allah will take two steps toward you."⁴¹

Reginald, who visited regularly, would talk to Malcolm about the coming of Allah to America, the Messenger Elijah Muhammad, and the common enemy of all black peoples, the white man. At first, Malcolm had a hard time digesting these new and very unorthodox ideas and tried to find ways to find fault in them. However, as he had time to think about his personal experience and those of other African-Americans, it began making sense. It all began to click for Malcolm, because he began realizing that events throughout his life were all related by the fact that the white race was still oppressing him and others of his race. After the initial shock about the unusualness of this foreign religion, Malcolm's

interest increased and he began wanting to know more about its philosophies and how he could become a part of this religion for black people.

What attracted Malcolm the most about the religion was its philosophy, because it not only identified the black man's problem but it helped the black man help himself. The religion claimed that the devil to black people was the white man. At first, Malcolm did not know how to respond. Then he began to think about his life and what the white man had done to him. He realized who was responsible for his anger and fury: the white man. The deaths of his father and five uncles, the separation of his family by the welfare system, and his failure to succeed in public education, were all a result of the actions of white society.

Malcolm received much support from his family and eventually began to receive and send mail every day to his brothers and sisters in Detroit. Malcolm felt very honored when he began receiving letters regularly directly from Elijah Muhammad. In them Muhammad stated:

. . . the black prisoner symbolized white society's crime of keeping black men oppressed and deprived and ignorant, and unable to get a decent job, turning them into criminals.⁴²

Such philosophies struck Malcolm intensely. Not because he did not know or experience racism, but because the magnitude of the oppression and loss of identity of the African-American had never been so clearly identified to him before. Much of his past feelings of confusion and anger were explained for Malcolm through these theories.

The reason Malcolm believed in the Nation of Islam was because he felt as though he was being told the realities -- one that he had experienced since birth -- of black suppression. The religion addressed his frustrations and spoke to his concerns.

. . . almost none of us black people have thought that maybe we were making a mistake not wondering if there wasn't a special religion somewhere for us - a special religion for the black man. Well there is

such a religion. It's called Islam ... *Islam!* ⁴³

With other religions, there was always a sense of hypocrisy when concepts like brotherhood, virtue, and harmony were discussed. Malcolm also felt as though, through the Nation of Islam, he was working to free himself from the shackles of white society.

With the philosophies of the Nation of Islam came a resolution to Malcolm's life. By the time Malcolm left prison he was not only able to read and write well, but he was knowledgeable about African and African-American history, and a devout follower of the Nation of Islam.

RISING WITHIN THE NATION OF ISLAM

Brothers and sisters, the white man has brainwashed us black people to fasten our gaze upon a blondhaired, blue-eyed Jesus! We're worshiping a Jesus that doesn't even look like us! Oh, yes! Now just bear with me, listen to the teachings of the Messenger of Allah, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. Now just think of this. The blond-haired, blue eyed white man has taught you and me to worship a white Jesus, and to shout and sing and pray to this God that's his God, the white man's God.

*The white man has taught us to shout and sing and pray until we die, to wait until death, for some dreamy heaven-in-the-hereafter, when we're dead, while this white man had his milk and honey in the streets paved with golden dollars here on this earth!*⁴⁴

Malcolm,
Harlem, New York
June 1954

Malcolm was released in 1952. He moved to Detroit in order to live with his family and continue pursuing the Nation of Islam. He was very enthusiastic about getting involved and learning as much as possible about the Nation of Islam and Elijah Muhammad. The special environment of the Nation of Islam and the feeling of worth Malcolm experienced were very healing.

I had never dreamed of anything like that atmosphere among black people, who had learned to be proud they were black, who had learned to love other black people instead of being jealous and suspicious.⁴⁵

With Malcolm's increasing commitment to the Nation of Islam came proportionally more responsibility. His official application for membership was accepted and Malcolm received the "X". The "X" was the way in which the Nation of Islam symbolized the true African family name that African-Americans could never know. To Malcolm it meant, ". . . my 'X' replaced the white slave-master name of 'Little' which some blue-eyed devil named Little imposed upon my paternal forebears."⁴⁶

Within a year he was named "Detroit Number One's Assistant Minister."⁴⁷ Due to having no recruiting program, in 1950, the total national membership of the Nation of Islam was less than one thousand

people.²⁵

Malcolm was a very sincere and dedicated member to the Nation of Islam. He came to look upon the Honorable Elijah Muhammad as not only a spiritual leader, but as a father figure. Malcolm commented numerous times, even after his break from the Nation, that he believed in Muhammad more than anyone or anything. In an introduction for Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm had the following to say:

I have sat at our Messenger's feet, hearing the truth from his own mouth! I have pledged on my knees to Allah to tell the white man about his crimes and the black man the true teachings of our Honorable Elijah Muhammad. I don't care if it costs my life. . .⁴⁸

Malcolm's commitment increased to a feverish pace as he learned more about the potential power within the philosophies of the Nation of Islam. The fact that in America there were twenty-two million "brainwashed" black citizens, who needed to be told the truth about the white man serving to inspire Malcolm to work for the growth of the Nation with a sense of urgency.

Malcolm's rise to prominence in the Nation was rapid. This was not due to selfish agenda, but simply, his service and loyalty to Elijah Muhammad. Elijah knew that Malcolm possessed the ability to serve the Nation well, and capitalized on his abilities by assigning Malcolm the job of establishing new temples in cities throughout the country. Malcolm's ability to speak the language of the streets, his passion, and the power of his words made "fishing" for new members very prosperous for the Nation of Islam. A lot of the Nation's success was due to Malcolm's

presentation of the Nation as a religion for black people that considered them important and good people. Inversely, the Nation answered a lot of the frustrations poor urban blacks faced on a day to day basis.

When Muhammad decided to have Malcolm establish the mosque in New York, Malcolm began to be visible on a national level. With Malcolm's dedicated involvement and dependable work in the Nation of Islam, Elijah Muhammad came to depend on Malcolm greatly. He quickly evolved into the official spokesman of the Nation because of his powerful appearance and his devastating speaking ability. His purpose was to represent Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam to the world. With all the experience Malcolm had with public speaking and with the teachings of the Nation, there was no one more qualified or willing.

It is important to note that as the public spokesman of the Nation of Islam, Malcolm was speaking on behalf of an organization, not as an individual. Attallah Shabazz, Malcolm's oldest daughter, stated that while her father was with the Nation of Islam he was speaking only the beliefs of the Nation and not his own personal beliefs.⁴⁹ Evidence supports this statement, but it must also be recognized that Malcolm must have agreed with a large percentage of what he was saying or he would not have continued being such an active and influential role in the movement.

By 1961, the Nation of Islam had started attaining membership numbers of significance. Mosques existed in cities all over the country, from New York to Los Angeles. With the rapid growth of the Nation of Islam came alarm on the national level. The alarm came as a reaction to

very drastic ideological stance of the Nation of Islam, for mainstream American society had a difficult time understanding its seemingly fanatical message.

Malcolm's definite commitment to the Nation of Islam and the religious fight to re-awaken the African-American community in America did not go unrecognized. In 1963 Muhammad granted the title of "National Minister" to Malcolm, an honor that had never been given before in the Nation. Muhammad commented about Malcolm at the time, "This is my most faithful, hardworking minister. He will follow me until he dies."⁵⁰ Ironically, the relationship between Malcolm and Muhammad would be in conflict within only a few months.

BREAK FROM THE NATION OF ISLAM

I am and always will be a Muslim. My religion is Islam. I still believe that Mr. Muhammad's analysis of the problem is the most realistic, and that his solution the best one. This means that I too believe the best solution is complete separation, with our people going back home, to our own African homeland.⁵¹

12 March 1964
New York
Malcolm X

The above quote is from Malcolm's first press conference after his break from the Nation of Islam, he expressed his situation. Malcolm felt that he was given no other options but leave the Nation of Islam. The statement reflects Malcolm's perspective as an individual for the first time, as opposed to the fourteen odd years that he had spoken on the Nation's behalf.

There was much controversy and uncertainty as to why Malcolm X, a person of such prominence and prestige in the Nation of Islam, was banished from the flock in 1964. Only a few months earlier he had received the Nation's highest honor second only to the status of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. The break began on 1 December 1963 at a speech that Malcolm was giving entitled "God's Judgment of White America." This was nine days after the assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas. Elijah Muhammad had notified all his ministers to not comment at all about the President's death. However, in the question and answer period Malcolm was asked what he thought about Kennedy's death. Malcolm responded, "Being an old farm boy myself, chickens coming home to roost never did make me sad; they've always made me glad."⁵² Malcolm's reference was to the climate of hate in America, which he contended was the result of, "the seeds that America had sown - in enslavement, in many things that followed since then -- all these seeds were coming up today; it was harvest time."⁵³ This society of hate is the same one he had grown-up in and predicted would kill him. The media took this quote and preyed on what they viewed as Malcolm's gross disrespect and seemingly vindictive attitude regarding the President's death. As a result of Malcolm's comment, Elijah Muhammad took immediate steps to disassociate it from the Nation by silencing Malcolm for ninety days.

It was not long before Malcolm began to realize that Elijah Muhammad was not planning to allow Malcolm back into the Nation

due to doubt and conflict within the Nation itself. It was a period of great emotional upheaval and personal reevaluation for Malcolm. To a large degree, Malcolm considered himself the spiritual child of Elijah Muhammad. By being cut-off from Muhammad, Malcolm began to question himself, the Nation, and his relationship with Muhammad. Malcolm intended to dedicate his life to the Nation of Islam and the following of Elijah Muhammad. However, as a result of events, and Muhammad's interpretation of those events, Malcolm fell out of favor completely.

Possible motives for the break are Elijah Muhammad feeling threatened by Malcolm's public fame, a philosophical clash over the future direction of the Nation between Malcolm and Muhammad, the comment Malcolm made about Kennedy's assassination, and Malcolm's own desire to split from the Nation to lead his own social movement. Unfortunately an understanding of why Malcolm was forced from the Nation of Islam will probably never be known.

Nonetheless, some observations can be made regarding the dramatic break. As the national representative of the Nation of Islam, Malcolm was very well aware of what was perceived as the weakness from the outside. One such weakness was the fact that the Nation talked tough, but did not really do anything. It became evident that Malcolm wanted to make the philosophies and teachings of the Nation of Islam more tangible. He was very interested in making the Nation's tactics and programming more politically directed and active in order to help the black masses fight their immediate problems. This was something Elijah

Muhammad was decidedly against; the Nation of Islam was solely a religious movement. Malcolm believed completely that the Nation of Islam gave the theological backing necessary to save the African-American community from its oppression and suffering, but he saw the ability to increase its ability to improve the current situation by getting involved in the political dimension of society. Malcolm commented:

I was convinced that our Nation of Islam could be an even greater force in the American black man's overall struggle -- if we engaged in more action. By that, I mean I thought privately that we should have amended, or relaxed, our general non-engagement policy. I felt that, wherever black people committed themselves, in the Little Rocks and the Birminghams and other places, militantly disciplined Muslims should also be there -- for all the world to see, and respect, and discuss.⁵⁴

There also seems to be some evidence that others ministers in the Nation of Islam were jealous of Malcolm's power and prestige. These minister, primarily from the Chicago area -- according to Wallace Muhammad, Elijah Muhammad's son -- were working to discredit Malcolm's work within the Nation and the direction he was trying to take the nation.

Another possible cause may have been Malcolm's growing disillusionment with Elijah himself because of accusations that the Honorable Messenger to Allah, Muhammad, had impregnated more than one of his secretaries. The act of adultery was strictly forbidden according to the Nation's code of conduct. Malcolm refused to confront the reality that this might be true of the man he so vigorously tried to emulate. Yet the rumors and accusations kept surfacing. Finally,

Malcolm confronted Muhammad with the question, and Muhammad replied:

I am David. When you read about how David took another man's wife. I'm that David. You read about Noah, who got drunk -- that's me. You read about Lot, who went and laid up with his own daughters. I have to fulfill all of those things.⁵⁵

Needless to say, Malcolm's entire moral and religious foundation was rocked and put into question. Malcolm had based his entire belief system in Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. What specifically drove Malcolm from the Nation of Islam is not clear, but it is clear that he was expelled against his will.

Initially, Malcolm was not sure what his next step was going to be. He was not sure if he should continue fighting for the black man's cause by himself, or to remain silent as a banished, obedient, member of the Nation. Malcolm decided that his mission was to fight the oppression African-Americans were forced to live with regardless of what organization he was affiliated with. [See Appendix D] The issue was one of conflict and loyalty, but due to the support and trust Malcolm had established with the black communities and ghettos, he felt as though he needed to keep on stating their case to before America. He dreamed of creating an organization that would truly aid the black man and empower him in his struggle against white American society.

After Malcolm personally committed himself to continue being a leader in the fight for black power, he worked to create a vehicle to accomplish his mission. He wanted to form a base on which the foundation of a sociopolitical movement could rest. With a strong

foundation, the movement would be able to mobilize the twenty-two million blacks in America and network with the hundreds of millions in the world. With that type of community effort, the effectiveness of Malcolm's message would be dramatic and substantial.

First, Malcolm created a new religious organization, the Muslim Mosque Inc. Its intent was to be a spiritual and moral influence to the black community. He claimed that although this group had a religious foundation of Islam, it was open to any and all black person who were interested. Malcolm did not abandon the main ideals and principles of the Nation of Islam because he no longer was a part of that organization. He believed that its analysis of the situation in America was the most accurate. Malcolm made the philosophy of the organization public -- black nationalism with a religious foundation of Islam. However, Malcolm quickly realized that he had limited his potential and that of his movement by creating the Muslim Mosque Inc. The Muslim Mosque Inc. had a very strong religious connotation to it, which served to distance much of the mainstream black population just as much as the Nation did. From the time of the break to the middle of 1964 Malcolm's priorities switched from being focused on creating a primarily religious based organization to creating a primarily political based organization.

By focusing on the creation of a primarily black nationalist movement, Malcolm was hoping to garner the support from a large part of the African-American community. He created the Organization of Afro-America Unity (OAAU), to fighting for the black community's behalf in the political arena. It had a broader focus than the Muslim

Mosque, Inc. The OAAU was an organization was open to all interested blacks regardless of their religion. Its function was to give black people a means of confronting societal oppression and discrimination, while at the same time promoting black culture within and among the black communities of the country and the world. Malcolm observed in the charter of the OAAU:

. . . culture is an indispensable weapon in the freedom struggle. We must take hold of it and forge the future with the past. . . We must recapture our heritage and our identity if we are ever to liberate ourselves from the bonds of white supremacy. We must launch a cultural revolution to unbrainwash an entire people.⁵⁶

TRIP TO MECCA

During this period of uncertainty and reevaluation, Malcolm took the opportunity to leave the country and travel to Mecca; the pilgrimage site of every devout Muslim. His trip to Mecca and its impact has been an issue of continual debate. Some sources contend that Malcolm did not experience any fundamental change as a result of the trip to Mecca, and such myths about substantial change were the result of the white media trying to alter the real Malcolm. Reverend Albert Cleage, a black nationalist minister from Detroit, claimed that it was a myth that, ". . . in Mecca. . . [Malcolm's] whole concept of white people changed . . . [a]nd that he rejected his former position that the white man is the enemy." George Breitman, the author of the book *The Last Year of Malcolm X*, reinforced Cleage's statement by saying,

Reverend Cleage is absolutely correct when he labels as a myth the story that Malcolm became an 'integrationist' as a result of his trip to Mecca. Until the day of his death he remained an opponent of what is generally or popularly understood, or misunderstood, as "integration."⁵⁷

(Note: there is considerable difference between viewing the white man as an enemy and the philosophy of integration.) However, others contend that Malcolm did alter his philosophical stance, and that Mecca had a drastic influence on the change. John Henrik Clarke, a historian, believes that the trip to Mecca was pivotal in Malcolm's ideological development. Clarke notes that upon Malcolm's return, he no longer arbitrarily opposed black-white brotherhood or progressive whites. Malcolm's newfound mental freedom and political awareness no longer allowed him to make sweeping indictments against white people. These two diametrically opposite statements embody the controversy and contradiction Malcolm X's philosophies represent to society.

I contend that Mecca was a dramatic turning point for Malcolm, because he made the transition from simply believing and communicating an ideology to critiquing and universalizing that ideology. Malcolm was not a creator of ideology as a follower of Muhammad's Nation of Islam, but instead was an editor. He spoke to the United States populace on the behalf of the suppressed black masses. Mecca gave Malcolm a broader base from which to work. His experience presented him with his first encounter with orthodox Islam, which he found to be different than Elijah Muhammad's version of Islam. Out of Malcolm's comparison of the Nation of Islam with the Orthodox Islam of

Mecca, he came away with two very definite resolutions.

The first resolution, and the most misunderstood, concerned Malcolm's beliefs regarding race. Malcolm had always been told and believed the Nation of Islam doctrine that the white man was the devil and the black man was superior. However, this theory came into great conflict when Malcolm met white people who were Muslims, on his way to and at Mecca. Malcolm described one incident with an Arabic diplomat:

Dr. Omar Azzam came straight to the airport. . . . He had an extremely polished manner. In America, he would have been called a white man -- it struck me, hard and instantly -- from the way he acted, I had no *feeling* of him being a white man. . . . I was speechless at the man's attitude, and at my own physical feeling of no difference between us as human beings.⁵⁸

Malcolm had never been in an environment where the color of one's skin had absolutely no bearing on how one is judged or treated as an individual. With the realization that Malcolm could be treated as an equal by someone of white skin, Malcolm began to think about the differences between people with varying skin color.

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.⁵⁹

We see that a distinction has been made in Malcolm's mind between having white skin and having a white (American) attitude. With such a belief, it is inaccurate to call Malcolm a racist. He was anti-America - a

country that was predominantly white population - not because of the white people; but because of their supremacist and oppressive attitudes and brutal treatment of African-Americans.

The second resolution is one of perception. Prior to Malcolm's trip to Mecca he had restricted his theories and philosophies to only the United States. What he quickly realized while in Mecca was that he could translate his theories into an international framework -- giving his message a more universal theme. By taking this global approach, Malcolm was making the transition from demanding equal civil rights to demanding undeniable human rights.

Malcolm was never afraid to change or alter his stance on something if he believed change was warranted, an attitude, which came from his belief that everyone is constantly learning. In a letter home from Africa to friends, Malcolm wrote:

You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to *re-arrange* much of my thought-patterns previously held, and to *toss aside* some of my previous conclusions. This was not too difficult for me. Despite my firm convictions, I have been always a man who tries to face facts, and accept the reality of life as new experience and new knowledge unfolds it. I have always kept an open mind, which is necessary to the flexibility that must go hand in hand with every form of intelligent search for truth.⁶⁰

Malcolm's lack of fear to change his stance on an issue if presented with substantial evidence proves his courage to grow and his desire to work towards the truth. Many criticized him for changing his position, but what should be acknowledged is that the changes were Malcolm's attempt to present the most progressive and truthful solution to the oppressed

people of the world.

THE LAST NINE MONTHS

*We are not fighting for integration, nor are we fighting for separation.
We are fighting for recognition as human beings.*⁶¹

Malcolm X
New York City
8 April 1964

The most appropriate place to begin speaking of Malcolm's last months is the press conference that took place on 21 May 1964 as he got off the plane from his trip to the Middle East. Malcolm had just turned thirty-nine two days before. [Appendix E] This encounter caught Malcolm completely by surprise, but since his departure the issues of race, equality, and the civil rights movement had become prominent in America. It was the largest press conference he had ever had.

I knew I was back in America again, hearing the subjective, scapegoat-seeking questions of the white man. New York white youth were killing victims; that was a "sociological" problem. But when black youth killed somebody, the power structure was looking to hang somebody.⁶²

The content of Malcolm's statement was simple: he was not anti-white, but he was opposed to the American attitude -- an attitude which happened to be held by a large percentage of the white population.

The white man is not inherently evil, but America's racist society influences him to act evilly. The society has produced and nourished a psychology which brings out the lowest, most base part of human beings.⁶³

The difference between the two philosophies was ignored by the media, which meant that the American society was unaware of the change. This theory was stated in more graphic terms by Malcolm:

It's smarter to say you're going to shoot a man for what he is doing to you than because he is white. If you attack him because he is white, you give him no out . . . [because] he can't stop being white...the white man is not inherently evil...⁶⁴

Malcolm's fundamental goal was to destroy the myth about black inferiority and white superiority. Malcolm viewed his role as a communicator of the black struggle in America to the world.

He [Malcolm] clarified this purpose by stating that his goal was to rid the black America "of the mirage that the white race was made up of "superior beings". . ."never again look in the the same fearful, worshipping way at the white man."⁶⁵

This is different from trying to perpetuate the Myth of Yakub.

His purpose, carried even further, was to instill into the black population a sense of nationalism: pride, dignity, and sense of worth. Malcolm claimed that the African American had been stripped of his fundamental essence -- losing his personal dignity, racial pride, and sense of history.⁶⁶ Malcolm stated his perspective on the African-American's struggle in the United States in his speech "The Black Revolution," on 8 April 1964:

. . . America's strategy is the same strategy as that which was used in the past by the colonial powers: divide and conquer. . . . All our people have the same goals, the same objectives. That objective is freedom, justice, equality. . . . Our people have made the mistake of confusing the methods with the objectives. . . . We have to keep in mind that we are not fighting for integration, nor are we fighting

for separation. We are fighting for recognition as human beings. We are fighting for the right live as free humans in this society.⁶⁷

Just as Mecca had served to alter Malcolm's view about race, so did it alter his positions on integration and intermarriages. [See Appendix F] In both instances, when Malcolm was a part of the Nation of Islam, he would have spoken strongly against them. After his pilgrimage, he would state that the issue is between the two human beings -- color has nothing to do with it -- if they are living in a humanitarian society. Malcolm would then state that he had more than just serious doubts about American society being able to support such an interaction. He tied these issues into fair and just education. [See Appendix G] To have Malcolm remotely condone interracial relationships is a very definite and radical ideological switch from his prior stance while being a member of the Nation of Islam.

The fact that Malcolm brought up the issues of inter-racial relationships and fair education served to be beneficial to the black community, because it touched on topics that had been denied and hidden away; as they were painful and embarrassing. In dealing with these issue, Malcolm's intent was to redefine the relationship between blacks and whites. He used black nationalism and other tactics to, ". . . mitigate the hold that whites had on blacks by downgrading, dehumanizing, and demystifying white Americans, while it resurrected blacks from their personal abyss of servitude and degradation."⁶⁸

Malcolm experienced a philosophical explosion on his trip Africa and Mecca, which combined with his new found freedom to create an explosive combination. After that experience, Malcolm began to create a solution to the African-Americans' situation that was uniquely his own. Malcolm's approach became multi-dimensional, incorporating varying threads to form the fabric of his black movement: nationalism, Islamic regeneration, community unity, community organization, redefinition of the struggle, third world solidarity, Pan-Africanism, accent on youth, and freedom by any means necessary.⁶⁹ Thus, Malcolm used his disassociation from the Nation of Islam and his newly acquired perspectives in constructive and progressive ways, while never losing sight of his original vision of true freedom, equality and justice for African-Americans.

Prior to his trip to Mecca, Malcolm called his philosophy black nationalism. However, upon his return, Malcolm expressed concern as to whether or not the term was encompassing enough to capture his complete ideology. [See Appendix H] Malcolm himself was focusing more on the revolutionary element of black nationalism and how it forced change upon existing power structures, which added a more politically revolutionary element to the term. However, at the same time, he commented on the fact that he was unable to find a better word that existed to describe his ideology.

One way of gaining a clear perspective of Malcolm's beliefs during the last year of his life is to closely study the contents of the OAAU's Constitution. For, even though the OAAU was run democratically, it was

heavily influenced by Malcolm's personal beliefs. It is evident that Malcolm was attempting to universalize the African-Americans oppression with all the oppressed colored peoples of the world, and thereby create a large global organization designed to overwhelm individual societies who were not supporting the human rights of African descendents. To support the concept that OAAU should be an organization with universally appeal, it was not religious based, like the Nation and the Muslim Mosque Inc. had been. Malcolm's intent was to make the OAAU a group where the focus of the twenty-two million African-Americans members was on the common goal of ending their oppression, rather than having theological conflicts that would only result in factionalism. His agenda, which had become very politically based, moved from civil rights to human rights. He began seeing the core principles of oppression that need to be addressed as racism, imperialism, and capitalism.

Unfortunately, the OAAU never had much of an opportunity to get organized and functioning because of Malcolm's trips to Africa, lack of support funds, the struggle to clearly define the groups objectives, and hesitation on many peoples parts to become associated with a group in which Malcolm was involved. Malcolm was in the midst of presenting his new ideology and the OAAU to the world in a three week series of lectures at the Audubon Auditorium in Harlem. On the third week Malcolm was to present the complete mission statement and constitution of the OAAU. As he began his talk for the evening a scuffle broke out, enough to cause a diversion. In a matter of seconds Malcolm was being

pumped full of bullets from four different gunmen; his prophecy was fulfilled. With the death of Malcolm came the end of the OAAU, largely due to the fact that it was in such a rough state of creation that no was capable of picking up where Malcolm had left off.

Malcolm died on 21 February 1965, killed by members of the organization that responsible for his rebirth, the Nation of Islam. How his philosophy would have continued to developed is unclear, largely because of the constant evolution of Malcolm's ideology. However, it was clear that Malcolm was looking to make his agenda and philosophies global issues, instead of simply domestic ones. He was looking to organize the twenty two million African descendents in America plus with those of Africa, Asia and South America via the OAAU. By uniting such a force, Malcolm intended to have the world oppression of Africans and their descendents addressed in the international arena and taken seriously by the powers that be or face the consequences of world revolt. Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing what might have actually happened if Malcolm would have lived another two, five, or ten years.

Conclusion

Malcolm X and his ideology were often grossly misunderstood during his life time, at the time of his death, and still today. The labeling of Malcolm's philosophy prematurely was done most certainly by the media, but also by civil rights leaders, politicians, and both white and black American society. Malcolm was a constant victim of sensationalism. In the article "The Evolution of the Attitude of Malcolm

X Toward Whites," by Raymond Rodgers and Jimmie Rogers, they state:

Even though Breitman himself was guilty of the charge, he pinpointed the major reason for the disparity among the writers who were interpreting 'the angriest black man in America': What they do is chop Malcolm up, keeping the parts they like, the parts that suits their purposes to remember, and discarding as unimportant or irrelevant the other parts, where they don't deny their existence altogether. This attempt to preserve only part of Malcolm, the part they find useful, while ignoring or denying the other parts that are needed if you want to see the real Malcolm, the whole Malcolm, is of course bound to result in myths, even if they are presented in the name of opposing myths.⁷⁰

As a result of such a phenomena, Malcolm was seen by conservative white America as a "reverse" racist, ex-convict, trouble-making, pro-violence hood. Others looked to Malcolm to endorse their belief in violence, such as the Black Panthers did in the late 1960s. To gain a complete and just perspective on Malcolm and his ideology it is essential to survey all of his dimensions unilaterally and gain a clear understanding of his life experiences.

Another reason for the uncertainty about Malcolm's philosophy lies in the fact that he was in a constant state of growth throughout his life. Malcolm spent his life in search of the *truth* and because that was his primary concern, he was never afraid to change his philosophical stance when enlightened with new knowledge or insight.

Malcolm was a significant leader in the black nationalist movement during the 1960s; that is evident, but the ideological growth he went through over the course of his life is not. I contend that Malcolm's journey through the ranks of black nationalist ideology began at the most

basic and raw level -- that of survival and hate -- and concluded on the verge of universal and revolutionary concepts -- a point very similar to Garvey some forty years prior.

Initially, Malcolm found interest in the Nation of Islam for three reasons: he believed with the anti-white message, found strength in the racial superiority of the Myth of Yakub, and was inspired by the biblical importance placed on black people. These feelings were reflective of Malcolm's bitterness with white society, his belief in the blatant hypocrisy of America, and his lack of racial awareness and pride. The Nation of Islam espoused a theology that Malcolm wanted to believe as well as empowering him to feel as though he could overcome his oppressor at the same time.

Simultaneously, Malcolm's interest in education and his thirst for knowledge were essential elements to his philosophical development. Without such a characteristic, he might have been content to believe only one perspective on life and leave it unchallenged. If Malcolm had not placed such a strong emphasis on knowledge and the importance of personal growth, he may have never been more than a loyal member of the Nation of Islam. However, Malcolm worked to understand the Nation's doctrines as completely and quickly as possible. In so doing, he realized that the African-American community was suffering from a psychological enslavement which he considered as bad, if not worse, than chattel slavery -- for both were types of oppression by the white power structure over those of African blood, but the psychological oppression perpetuated itself to the present.

As his status within the Nation of Islam increased, he began to gain a better understanding of the theology of the Nation and the basic concepts of black nationalism. While being the designated representative of the Nation, Malcolm not only gained national recognition, but an intense awareness of the politics of race, weaknesses in the Nation's philosophy, the media's power, and the political geography of America. Such information made Malcolm a better defender of the Nation and more attuned to the African-American's reality. After twelve years with the Nation of Islam, Malcolm was not dissatisfied with Elijah Muhammad or the Nation enough to consider leaving. Quite the contrary, Malcolm had recently been promoted and there was no evidence that Muhammad and Malcolm had any type of arguments or disagreements prior to their falling-out in December of 1963. It seems clear that Malcolm was forced to leave the Nation, because of the unusual and uncharacteristic dismissal of Malcolm after his strong record of involvement and belief in the organization.

It is important to note that from 1952 until 1963 Malcolm was speaking on behalf of this organization and not for himself as an individual. Therefore, there is a possibility that Malcolm was saying things for the Nation of Islam that did not represent his personal convictions. This point is significant when looking at Malcolm's first speeches of 1964; his ideas seem to quickly leave the Nation's ideology behind. Much of this is due to the fact that he had never spoken on only his behalf before and he began to separate himself from the stances of the Nation.

Just as prison served to be a pivotal experience in Malcolm's overall life, so was this tearing away from the Nation's doctrine. For the doctrines of the Nation of Islam gave him his strong foundation from which to grow. Malcolm had ideas on how the Nation could do more for the black community and therefore be more powerful and efficient. These improvements were not meant to give Malcolm personal power, but to allow the Nation to better fulfill its pursuit of liberating the black masses. The desire to move the Nation to a more politically active approach reflects Malcolm's intent to make an immediate impact on the African-American's situation, which seems like a logical continuation on the ideology of the Nation of Islam. Yet, it is clear that Muhammad had a different interpretation of what the Nation's purpose should be.

Malcolm's immediate reaction to being independent of the Nation of Islam was to create a structure around himself and enact his ideas of improving an organization's effectiveness. The Muslim Mosque Inc. was created and functioned as a derivative of the Nation. In retrospect, the Muslim Mosque Inc. was an incomplete or half-thought on Malcolm's part, since it was probably done as an immediate response to the situation in which Malcolm found himself. However, after he had time to gain new insight because of his trip to Mecca, Malcolm created the Organization of Afro-American Unity. Only after the break from the Nation of Islam and his trip to Mecca did Malcolm truly become a critical thinker and begin to create his own ideology of black nationalism. Whereas before, in the Nation, his ideology was prescribed by Elijah Muhammad, after mid-1964 Malcolm was following his own vision and

living by his own unique beliefs.

The significance of the OAAU can not be understated in regards to Malcolm's ideological development. The movement reflected Malcolm's desire to create a vehicle for the entire African-American community's benefit and not his own personal self-greed. The OAAU's statement of basic aims described its function as being:

*Conscious of the fact that freedom, equality, justice and dignity are essential objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the people of African descent here in the Western Hemisphere, we will endeavor to build a bridge of understanding and create the basis of the Afro-American unity . . .*⁷¹

Malcolm was sensitive to the fact that if the OAAU was to be a true success it had to be an inclusive organization. Religious beliefs, economic status, or one's background had no bearing on their membership in the OAAU, if you agreed with the movement's intentions then you were a member. Malcolm was beginning to seriously evaluate the question of economics and the value of a socialist system. He was not able to produce a clear opinion of it prior to his assassination, but he was analyzing the question. It is also significant to note that Malcolm was speaking on human right issues and not civil rights issue after Mecca in the OAAU. The statement of basic aims has a lot of similarities to the declaration draft by the UNIA forty years before. This is a credit to both Garvey, for being such a visionary, and Malcolm, for being able to evolve from such a limiting ideology, the Nation of Islam, to such a universal perspective. Unfortunately, the OAAU was unable to generate much of anything because it was just beginning to get off the ground at the time of Malcolm

death.

In the scope of black nationalism in the United States, Malcolm represents a fusion and regeneration of previous ideologies. At the end of his life, Malcolm had created a unique blend of cultural and political revolutionary nationalism. The two concepts are not original but the way in which he was beginning to merge them into a powerful combination was. The direct and indirect effects of Garvey and Muhammad on Malcolm can be seen within the ideology of the OAAU and the last speeches of Malcolm's life. Unfortunately, that combination was too threatening to too many people -- the Nation of Islam, other civil rights leaders, the government, and the members of the oppressive power structure.

The effect societal attitudes have had on black nationalism throughout the twentieth century has been substantial. When Garvey began the UNIA the world had never witnessed such a large black nationalist movement. However, when the threat of black nationalism and the UNIA became apparent, there was definite action taken by a number of sources to put as quick an end as possible to the livelihood of such an organization. Due to the Nation of Islam's low profile, however, it had few problems until the late 1950s when the membership began to increase substantially. Malcolm's message of the early 1960s was pivotal in aiding the the increased militancy of the late 1960s, causing conflict and unrest. Malcolm is worthy of a place of distinction in the history of black

nationalism for perpetuating the ideology as well as working to make it more universal, powerful, and effective.

Malcolm's philosophical evolution is complex, but through observing his entire life, the complete experience can be captured and analyzed. To look at Malcolm X at one point in his career and compare him to himself at a later point may show two different people with contradicting beliefs. But, by surveying Malcolm's complete journey, an understanding of his philosophical development and growth will result, giving understanding to Malcolm's perspective and motives. He never altered his fundamental mission: to better the black community's condition in America by instilling it with a sense of pride, culture, history, and dignity. Malcolm fought with passion for those who were being oppressed and throughout all his changes, from his emphatic ideological beliefs in the Nation of Islam to the universal perspective of black nationalism as seen through the Organization of Afro-American Unity, he never compromised his vision of equality, justice, and freedom for African-Americans.

Endnotes

¹Malcolm X Speaks (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1965), 21-22.

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³James H. Cone, Martin & Malcolm & America: A Dream or a Nightmare (New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 9.

⁴Gary Peller, "Race Against Integration" Tikkun, Volume 6, Number 1, 1991, 56.

⁵Ibid., 60.

⁶Bracey, Meier, and Rudwick, xxvi.

⁷Mary Frances Berry, Long Memory: The Black Experience in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 388.

⁸Bracey, Meier, and Rudwick, xxix.

⁹Tony Martin, Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal NegroImprovement Association (Westport: Greenwood, 1976), 41.

¹⁰Ibid., 6.

¹¹Ibid., 15-16.

¹²Theodore G. Vincent, Black Power and the Garvey Movement (San Francisco: Ramparts Press, 1972), 109.

¹³Ibid., 257.

¹⁴Martin, 22.

¹⁵Ibid., 15.

¹⁶Ibid., 32.

¹⁷Ibid., 24.

¹⁸Ibid., 37.

¹⁹Joseph K. Henry, "The Public Spiritual and Humanistic Odyssey of Malcolm X: A Critical Bibliographical Debate," The Western Journal of Black Studies 9 (1985): 118.

²⁰E. U. Essien-Udom, Black Nationalism: A search for an Identity in America (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), 83.

²¹Ibid., 4.

²²Ibid., 4.

²³Ibid., 5-6.

²⁴Ibid., 63.

²⁵Ibid., 134.

²⁶Ibid., 139.

²⁷Ibid., 131.

²⁸Ibid., 143.

²⁹Cone, 1.

³⁰Ibid., 38.

³¹Alex Haley, ed., The Autobiography of Malcolm X, (New York: Grove Press, 1966), 2.

³²Ibid., 10.

³³Ibid., 134.

³⁴Julius Lester, Look Out, Whitey! Black Power's Gon' Get Your Mama! (New York: The Dial Press, 1968), 37.

³⁵Haley, 153.

³⁶Ibid., 152.

³⁷Ibid., 171.

³⁸Malcolm X Speaks (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 8.

³⁹Haley, 176-177.

⁴⁰Ibid., 155.

⁴¹Ibid., 156.

⁴²Ibid., 169.

⁴³Ibid., 220.

⁴⁴Cone, 151.

⁴⁵Haley, 194.

⁴⁶Ibid., 199.

⁴⁷Ibid., 201.

⁴⁸Ibid., 210.

⁴⁹Attallah Shabazz, Malcolm X's oldest daughter, interview by author, 21 January 1991, Travel form Eugene to Portland Airport.

⁵⁰Cone, 183-184.

⁵¹Malcolm X Speaks, 20

⁵²Cone, 184.

⁵³Ibid., 184.

⁵⁴Haley, 289.

⁵⁵Ibid., 299.

⁵⁶M. Ron Karenga, "The Socio-Political Philosophy of Malcolm X," The Western Journal of Black Studies 3 (1979), 254.

⁵⁷Jimmie N. Rodgers and Raymond Rodgers, "The Evolution of the Attitude of Malcolm X Toward Whites," Phylon 44 (June 1983), 108.

⁵⁸Haley, 331.

⁵⁹Ibid., 333.

⁶⁰Ibid., 340.

⁶¹Cone, 181.

⁶²Haley, 361.

⁶³Karenga, 253.

⁶⁴Henry, 122.

⁶⁵Hank Flick, "Malcolm X: The Destroyer and Creator of Myths," Journal of Black Studies 12 (December 1981), 172.

⁶⁶Ibid., 172-173.

⁶⁷Malcolm X Speaks, 51.

⁶⁸Flick, 170.

⁶⁹Karenga, 254-262.

⁷⁰Rodgers, 109.

⁷¹George Breitman, The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary (New York: Pathfinder, 1967), 105.

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Appendix A

THE DECLARATION OF RIGHTS OF THE NEGRO PEOPLES OF THE WORLD

The following declaration was drafted and adopted at the 1920 UNIA convention in New York. The declaration was signed by 122 convention delegates.

PREAMBLE

Be it Resolved, That the Negro people of the world, through their chosen representatives in convention assembled in Liberty Hall, in the City of New York and the United States of America, from August 1 to August 31, in the year of our Lord, one thousand nine hundred and twenty, protest against the wrongs and injustices they are suffering at the hands of their white brethren, and state what they deem their fair and just rights, as well as the treatment they propose to demand of all men in the future.

We complain:

I. That nowhere in the world, with few exceptions, are black men accorded equal treatment with white men, although in the same situation and circumstances, but on the contrary, are discriminated against and denied the common rights due to human beings for no other reason than their race and color.

We are not willingly accepted as guests in the public hotels and inns of the world for no other reason than our race and color.

II. In certain parts of the United States of America our race is denied the right of public trial accorded to other races when accused of crime, but are lynched and burned by mobs, and such brutal and inhuman treatment is even practised upon our women.

III. That European nations have parcelled out among them and taken possession of nearly all of the continent of Africa, and the natives are compelled to surrender their lands to aliens and are treated in most instances like slaves.

IV. In the southern portion of the United States of America, although citizens under the Federal Constitution, and in some states almost equal to the whites in population and are qualified land owners and taxpayers, we are, nevertheless, denied all voice in the making and administration of the laws and are taxed without representation by the state governments, and at the same time compelled to do military service in defense of the country.

V. On the public conveyances and common carriers in the Southern portion of the United States we are jim crowed and compelled to accept separate and inferior accommodations, and made to pay the same fare charged for first-class accommodations, and our families are often humiliated and insulted by drunken white men who habitually pass through the jim-crow cars going to the smoking car.

VI. The physician of our race are denied the right to attend their patients while in the public hospitals of the cities and states where they reside in certain parts of the United States.

VII. We are discriminated against and denied an equal chance to earn wages for the support of our families, and in many instances are refused admission into labor unions, and nearly everywhere are paid smaller wages than white men.

VIII. In Civil Service and departmental offices we are everywhere discriminated against and made to feel that to be a Black man in Europe, America and the West Indies is equivalent to being an outcast and a leper among the races of men, no matter what the character and attainments of the Black man might be.

IX. In the British and other West Indian Islands and colonies, Negroes are secretly and cunningly discriminated against, and denied those fuller rights of government to which white citizens are appointed, nominated, and elected.

X. That our people in those parts are forced to work for lower wages than the average standard of white men and are kept in conditions repugnant to good civilized tastes and customs.

XI. That the many acts of injustice against members of our race before the courts of law in the respective islands and colonies are of such nature as to create disgust and disrespect for the white man's sense of justice.

XII. Against all such inhuman, unchristian and uncivilized treatment we here and now emphatically protest, and invoke the condemnation of all mankind.

In order to encourage our race all over the world and to stimulate it to a higher and grander destiny, we demand and insist on the following Declaration of Rights:

1. Be it known to all men that whereas, all men are created equal and entitled to the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and because of this we, the duly elected representatives of the Negro peoples of the world, invoking the aid of the just and Almighty God do declare all men women and children of our blood throughout the world free

citizens, and do claim them as free citizens of Africa, the Motherland of all Negroes.

2. That we believe in the supreme authority of our race in all things racial; that all things are created and given to man as a common possession; that there should be an equitable distribution and apportionment of all such things, and in consideration of the fact that as a race we are now deprived of those things that are mortally and legally ours, we believe it right that all such things should be acquired and held by whatsoever means possible.

3. That we believe the Negro, like any other race, should be governed by the ethics of civilization, and, therefore, should not be deprived of any of those rights or privileges common to other human beings.

4. We declare the Negroes, wheresoever they form a community among themselves, should be given the right to elect their own representatives to represent them in legislatures, courts of law, or such institutions as may exercise control over that particular community.

5. We assert that the Negro is entitled to even-handed justice before all courts of law and equity in whatever country he may be found, and when this is denied him on account of his race or color such denial is an insult to the race as a whole and should be resented by the entire body of Negroes.

6. We declare it unfair and prejudicial to the rights of Negroes in communities where they exist in considerable numbers to be tried by a judge and jury composed entirely of an alien race, but in all such cases members of our race are entitled to representation on the jury.

7. We believe that any law or practice that tends to deprive any African of his land or the privileges of free citizenship within his country is unjust and immoral, and no native should respect any such law or practice.

8. We declare taxation without representation unjust and tyrannous, and there should be no obligation on the part of the Negro to obey the levy of a tax by any law-making body from which he is excluded and denied representation on account of his race and color.

9. We believe that any law especially directed against the Negro to his detriment and singling him out because of his race or color is unfair and immoral, and should not be respected.

10. We believe all men entitled to common human respect, and that our race should in no way tolerate any insults that may be interpreted to mean disrespect to our color.

11. We deprecate the use of the term "nigger" as applied to Negroes, and demand that the word "Negro" be written with a capital

"N."

12. We believe that the Negro should adopt every means to protect himself against barbarous practices inflicted upon him because of color.

13. We believe in the freedom of Africa for the Negro people of the world, and by the principle of Europe for the Europeans and Asia for the Asiatics, we also demand Africa for the Africans at home and abroad.

14. We believe in the inherent right of the Negro to possess himself of Africa, and that his possession of same shall not be regarded as an infringement on any claim or purchase made by any race or nation.

15. We strongly condemn the cupidity of those nations of the world who, by open aggression or secret schemes, have seized the territories and inexhaustible natural wealth of Africa, and we place on record our most solemn determination to reclaim the treasures and possession of the vast continent of our forefathers.

16. We believe all men should live in peace one with the other, but when races and nations provoke the ire of other races and nations by attempting to infringe upon their rights, war becomes inevitable, and the attempt in any way to free one's self or protect one's rights or heritage becomes justifiable.

17. Whereas, the lynching, by burning, hanging or any other means, of human beings is a barbarous practice, and a shame and disgrace to civilization, and we therefore declare any country guilty of such atrocities outside the pale of civilization.

18. We protest against the atrocious crime of whipping, floggin and overworking the native tribes of Africa adn Negroes everwhere. These are methods that should be abolished, and all means should be taken to prevent a continuance of such brutal practices.

19. We protest against the atrocious practice of shaving the heads of Africans, especially of African women or individuals of Negro blood, when placed in prison as punishment for crime by an alien race.

20. We protest against segregated districts, separate public sonveyances, industrial discrimination, lynchings and limitations of political privileges of any Negro citizen in any part of the world on account of race, color or creed, and will exert our full influence and power against all such.

21. We protest against any punishment, inflicted upon a Negro with severity, as against lighter punishment inflicted upon another of an alien race for like offense, as an act of prejudice and injustice, and should be resented by the entire race.

22. We protest against the system of education in any country where Negroes are denied the same privileges and advantages as other races.

23. We declare it inhuman and unfair to boycott Negroes from industries and labor in any part of the world.

24. We believe in the doctrine of the freedom of the press, and we therefore emphatically protest against the suppression of Negro newspapers and periodicals in various parts of the world, and call upon Negroes everywhere to employ all available means to prevent such suppression.

25. We further demand free speech universally for all men.

26. We hereby protest against the publication of scandalous inflammatory articles by an alien press tending to create racial strife and the exhibition of picture films showing the Negro as a cannibal.

27. We believe in the self-determination of all people.

28. We declare for the freedom of religious worship.

29. With the help of Almighty God, we declare ourselves the sworn protectors of the honor and virtue of our women and children, and pledge our lives for their protection and defense everywhere, and under all circumstances from wrongs and outrages.

30. We demand the right of unlimited and unprejudiced education for ourselves and our posterity forever.

31. We declare that the teaching in any school by alien teachers to our boys and girls, that the alien race is superior to the Negro race, is an insult to the Negro race, is an insult to the Negro people of the world.

32. Where Negroes form a part of the citizenry of any country, and pass the civil service examination of such country, we declare them entitled to the same consideration as other citizens as to appointments in such civil service.

33. We vigorously protest against the increasingly unfair and unjust treatment accorded Negro travellers on land and sea by the agents and employees of railroad and steamship companies and insist that for equal fare we receive equal privileges with travellers of other races.

34. We declare it unjust for any country, State or nation to enact laws tending to hinder and obstruct the free immigration of Negroes on account of their race and color.

35. That the right of the Negro to travel unmolested throughout the world be not abridged by any person or persons, and all Negroes are called upon to give aid to a fellow Negro when thus molested.

36. We declare that all Negroes are entitled to the same right to travel over the world as other men.

37. We hereby demand that the government of the world recognize our leader and his representatives chosen by the race to look after the welfare of our people under such governments.

38. We demand complete control of our social institutions without interference by any alien race or races.

39. That the colors, Red Black and Green, be the colors of the Negro race.

40. Resolved, that the anthem "Ethopia, Thou Land of Our Fathers," etc. shall be the anthem of the Negro race.

41. We believe that any limited liberty which deprives one of the complete rights and prerogatives of full citizenship is but a modified form of slavery.

42. We declare it an injustice to our people and a serious impediment to the health of the race to deny to competent licensed Negro physicians the right to practice in the public hospitals of the communities in which they reside, for no other reason than their race and color.

43. We call upon the various governments of the world to accept and acknowledge Negro representatives who shall be sent to the dais governments to represent the general welfare of the Negro peoples of the world.

44. We deplore and protest against the practice of confining juvenile prisoners in prisons with adults, and we recommend that such youthful prisoners be taught gainful trades under humane supervision.

45. Be it further resolved, that we as a race of people declare the League of Nations null and void as far as the Negro is concerned, in that it seeks to deprive Negroes of their liberty.

46. We demand of all men to do unto us as we would do unto them, in the name of justice; and we cheerfully accord to all men all the rights we claim herein for ourselves.

47. We declare that no Negro shall engage himself in battle for an alien race without the consent of the leader of the Negro people for the world, except in a matter of national self-defense.

48. We protest against the practice of drafting Negroes and sending them to war with alien forces without proper training, and demand in all cases that Negro soldiers be given the same training as the aliens.

49. We demand that instructions given Negro children in schools include the subjects of "Negro History," to their benefit.

50. We demand a free and unfettered commercial intercourse with all the Negro people of the world.

51. We declare for the absolute freedom of the seas for all peoples.

52. We demand that our duly accredited representatives be given proper recognition in all leagues, conferences, conventions or courts of international arbitration wherever human rights are discussed.

53. We proclaim the 31st day of August of each year to be an international holiday to be observed by all Negroes.

54. We want all men to know we shall maintain and contend for the freedom and equality for every man, woman and child of our race,

with our lives, our fortunes and our sacred hearts.

These rights we believe to be justly ours and proper for the protection of the Negro race at large, and because of this belief, we, on behalf of the our hundred milion Negroes of the world, do pledge herein the sacred blood of the race in defense, and we hereby subscribe our names as a guarantee of the truthfulness and faithfulness hereof in the presence of Almighty God, on the 13th day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and twenty.

Theodore G. Vincent, Black Power and the Garvey Movement (San Francisco: Pamparts Press, 1972), 257-265.

APPENDIX B

Elijah Muhammad: "What do the Muslims What?"

The following is the ten-point program of the Nation of Islam.

1. We want freedom. We want a full and complete freedom.
2. We want justice. Equal justice under law. We want justice applied equally to all, regardless of creed or class or color.
3. We want equality of opportunity. We want equal membership in society with the best in civilized society.
4. We want our people in America whose parents or grandparents were decedents from slaves, to be allowed to establish a separate state or territory of their own -- either on this continent or elsewhere. We believe that our former slave masters are obligated to provide such land and that the area must be fertile and minerally rich. We believe that our former slave masters are obligated to maintain and supply our needs in this separate territory for the next 20 to 25 years -- until we are able to produce and supply our needs.
5. We want freedom for all Believers of Islam now held in federal prisons. We want freedom for all black men and women now under death sentence in innumerable prisons in the North as well as the South. We want every black man and woman to have the freedom to accept or reject being separated from the slave master's children and establish a land of their own.
We know that the above plan for the solution of the black and white conflict is the best and only answer to the problem between two people.
6. We want an immediate end to the police brutality and mob attacks against the so-called Negro throughout the United States.
We believe that the Federal government should intercede to see that black men and women tried in white courts receive justice in accordance with the laws of the land -- or allow us to build a new nation for ourselves, dedicated to justice, freedom, and liberty.
7. As long as we are not allowed to establish a state or territory of our own, we demand not only equal justice under the laws of the United

States, but equal employment opportunities -- NOW!

We do not believe that after 400 years of free or nearly free labor, sweat and blood, which has helped America become rich and powerful, that so many thousands of black people should have to subsist on relief, charity or live in poor houses.

8. We want the government of the United States to exempt our people from ALL taxation as long as we are deprived of equal justice under the laws of the land.

9. We want equal education -- but separate schools up to sixteen for boys and eighteen for girls on the condition that the girls be sent to women's colleges and universities. We want all black children educated, taught and trained by their own teachers.

Under such schooling system we believe we will make a better nation of people. The United States government should provide, free, all necessary text books and equipment, schools and college buildings. The Muslim teachers shall be left free to teach and train their people in the way of righteousness, decency and self-respect

10. We believe that intermarriage or race mixing should be prohibited. We want the religion of Islam taught without hindrance or suppression.

What the Muslims believe

1. WE BELIEVE in the One God Whose proper Name is Allah.
2. WE BELIEVE in the Holy Qura-an and in the Scriptures of all the Prophets of God.
3. WE BELIEVE in the truth of the Bible, but we believe that it has been tampered with and must be reinterpreted so than mankind will not be snared by the falsehood that have been added to it.
4. WE BELIEVE in Allah's Prophet and the Scripture they brought to the people.
5. WE BELIEVE in the resurrection of the dead -- not in physical resurrection -- but in mental resurrection. We believe that the so-called Negroes are most in need of mental resurrection; therefore, they will be resurrected first.
6. WE BELIEVE in the judgement; we believe this first judgement will take place, as God revealed, in America. . . .

7. WE BELIEVE this is the time in history for the separation of the so-called Negroes and the so-called white Americans. We believe the black man should be freed from the names imposed upon him by his former slave masters. Names which identified him as being the slave master's slave. We believe that if we are free indeed, we should go in our own people's names -- the black peoples of the earth.

8. WE BELIEVE in justice for all, whether in God or not; we believe as others, that we are due equal justice as human beings. We believe in equality -- as a nation -- of equals. We do not believe that we are equal with our slave masters in the status of "freed slaves."

We recognize and respect American citizens as independent peoples and we respect their laws which govern this nation.

9. WE BELIEVE that the offer of integration is hypocritical and is made by those who are trying to deceive the black peoples into believing that their 400-year-old open enemies of freedom, justice and equality are, all of a sudden, their "friends." Furthermore, we believe that such deception is intended to prevent black people from realizing that the time in history has arrived for the separation from the whites of this nation.

If the white people are truthful about their professed friendship toward the so-called Negro, they can prove it by dividing up America with their slaves.

We do not believe that America will ever be able to furnish enough jobs for her own millions of unemployed, in addition to jobs for the 20,00,000 black people as well.

10. WE BELIEVE that we who declared ourselves to be righteous Muslims, should not participate in wars which take the lives of humans. We do not believe this nation should force us to take part in such wars, for we have nothing to gain from it unless America agrees to give us the necessary territory wherein we may have something to fight for.

11. WE BELIEVE our woman should be respected and protected as the woman of other nationalities are respected and protected.

12. WE BELIEVE that Allah (God) appeared in the Person of Master W. Fard Muhammad, July, 1930; the long awaited "Messiah" fo the Christians and the "Mahdi" of the Muslims.

We believe further and lastly that Allah is God and besides HIM there is no God and He will bring about a universal governement of peace wherein we all can live in peace together.

John H. Bracey, August Meier, and Elliot Rudwick, Black Nationalism in America (Indianapolis: The Boobs-Merrill Company, 1970), 404-405.

Appendix C

STATEMENT OF BASIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRO-AMERICAN UNITY

(Dated June 28, 1964)

The Organization of Afro-American Unity, organized and structured by a cross-section of the Afro-American people living in the U.S.S., has been patterned after the letter and spirit of the Organization of African Unity established at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May, 1963.

We, the members of the Organization of Afro-American Unity gathered together in Harlem, New York:

Convinced that it is the inalienable right of all people to control their own destiny;

Conscious of the fact that freedom, equality, justice and dignity are essential objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the people of African descent here in the Western Hemisphere, we will endeavor to build a bridge of understanding and create the basis for Afro-American unity;

Conscious of our responsibility to harness the natural and human resources of our people for their total advancement in all spheres of human endeavor;

Inspired by a common determination to promote understanding among our people and co-operation in all matters pertaining to their survival and advancement, we will support the aspirations of our people for brotherhood and solidarity in a larger unity transcending all organizational differences;

Convinced that, in order to translate this determination into a dynamic force in the cause of human progress, conditions of peace and security must be established and maintained;

Determined to unify the Americans of Africa descent in their fight for human rights and dignity, and being fully aware that this is not possible in the present atmosphere and conditions of oppression, we dedicate ourselves to the building of a political, economic, and social system of justice and peace;

Dedicated to the unification of all people of African descent in this hemisphere and to the utilization of that unity to bring into being the organizational structure that will project the black people's contributions to the world;

Persuaded that the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Constitution of the U.S.A. and the Bill

of Rights are the principles in which we believe and these documents if put into practice represent the essence of mankind's hopes and good intentions;

Desirous that all Afro-American people and organizations should henceforth unite so that the welfare and well-being of our people will be assured;

Resolved to reinforce the common bond of purpose between our people by submerging all of our differences and establishing a non-religious and non-sectarian constructive program for human rights.

Do hereby present this charter.

I - Establishment

The Organization of Afro-American Unity shall include all people of African descent in the Western Hemisphere, as well as our brothers and sisters on the African Continent.

II - Self-Defense

Since self-preservation is the first law of nature, we assert the Afro-American's right to self-defense.

The Constitution of the U.S.A. clearly affirms the right of every American citizen to bear arms. And as Americans, we will not give up a single right guaranteed under the Constitution. The history of the unpunished violence against our people clearly indicates that we must be prepared to defend ourselves or we will continue to be a defenseless people at the mercy of a ruthless and violent racist mob.

We assert that in those areas where the government is either unable or unwilling to protect the lives and property of our people, that our people are within their rights to protect themselves by whatever means necessary. A man with a rifle or club can only be stopped by a person who defends himself with a rifle or club.

Tactics based solely on morality can only succeed when you are dealing with basically moral people or a moral system. A man or system which oppresses a man because of his color is not moral. It is the duty of every Afro-American and every Afro-American community throughout this country to protect its people against mass murderers, bombers, lynchers, floggers, brutalizers and exploiters.

III - Education

Education is an important element in the struggle for human rights. It is the means to help our children and people rediscover their identity and thereby increase self-respect. Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people whoe prepare for it today.

Our children are being criminally shortchanged in the public school system of America. The Afro-American schools are the poorest run schools in New York City. Principals and teachers fail to understand the nature of the problems with which they work and as a result they cannot do the job of teaching our children. The textbooks tell our children nothing about the great contributions of Afro-Americans to the growht and development of this country. The Board of Education's integration program is expensive and unworkable; and the organization of principals and supervisors in the New York City school system has refused to support the Board's plan to integrate the schools, thus dooming it to failure.

The Board of Education has said that even with its plan there are ten per cent of the schools in the Harlem-Bedfore-Stuyvesant community they cannot improve. This means that the Organization of Afro-American Unity must make the Afro-American community a more potent force for educational self-improvement.

A first step in the program to end the existing system of racist education is to demand that the ten per cent of the schools the Board of Education will not include in its plan be turned over to and run by the Afro-American community. We want Afro-American principals to head these schools. we want Afro-American teachers in these schools. We want textbooks written by Afro-Americans that are acceptable to us to be used in these schools.

The Organization of Afro-American Unity will select and recommend people to serve on local school boards where school policy is made and passed on to the Board of Education.

Through these steps we will make the ten per cent of schools we take over educational showplaces that will attract the attention of people all over the nation.

If these proposals are not met, we will ask Afro-American parents to keep their children out of the present inferior schools they attend. When these schools in our neighborhood are controlled by Afro-Americans, we will return to them.

The Organization of Afro-American Unity recognizes the tremendous importance of the complete involvement of the Afro-American parents in every phase of school life. Afro-American parents must be willing and able to go into the schools and see that the job of educating our children is done properly.

We call on all Afro-Americans around the nation to be aware that the conditions that exist in the New York City public school system are as deplorable in their cities as they are here. We must unite our efforts and spread our program of self-improvement through education to every Afro-American community in America.

We must establish all over the country schools of our own to train our children to become scientists and mathematicians. We must realize the need for adult education and for job retraining programs that will emphasize a changing society in which automation plays the key role. We intend to use the tool of education to help raise our people to an unprecedented level of excellence and self-respect through their own efforts.

IV - Politics - Economics

Basically, there are two kinds of power that count in America: economic and political, with social power deriving from the two. In order for the Afro-American to control their destiny, they must be able to control and affect the decisions which control their destiny: economic, political and social. This can only be done through organization.

The Organization of Afro-American Unity will organize the Afro-American community block by block to make the community aware of its power and potential; we will start immediately a voter-registration drive to make every unregistered voter in the Afro-American community an independent voter; we propose to support and/or organize political clubs, to run independent candidates for office, and to support any Afro-American already in office who answers to and is responsible to the Afro-American community.

Economic exploitation in the Afro-American community is the most vicious form practiced on any people in America; twice as much rent for rat-infested, roach-crawling, rotting tenements; the Afro-American pays more for foods, clothing, insurance rates and so forth. The Organization of Afro-American Unity will wage an unrelenting struggle against these evils in our community. There shall be organizers to work with the people to solve these problems, and start a housing self-improvement program. We propose to support rent strikes and other

activities designed to better the community.

V - Social

This organization is responsible only to the Afro-American people and community and will function only with their support, both financially and numerically. We believe that our communities must be the sources of their own strength politically, economically, intellectually and culturally in the struggle for human rights and dignity.

The community must reinforce its moral responsibility to rid itself of the effects of years of exploitation, neglect and apathy and wage an unrelenting struggle against police brutality.

The Afro-American community must accept the responsibility for regaining our people who have lost their place in society. We must declare an all-out war on organized crime in our community; a vice that is controlled by policemen who accept bribes and graft, and who must be exposed. We must establish a clinic, whereby one can get aid and cure for drug addiction; and create meaningful, creative, useful activities for those who were led astray down the avenues of vice.

The people of the Afro-American community must be prepared to help each other in all ways possible; we must establish a place where unwed mothers can get help and advice; a home for the aged in Harlem and an orphanage in Harlem.

We must set up a guardian system that will help our youth who get into trouble and also provide constructive activities for our children. We must set a good example for our children and must teach them to always be ready to accept the responsibilities that are necessary for building good communities and nations. We must teach them that their greatest responsibilities are to themselves, to their families and to their communities.

The Organization of Afro-American Unity believes that the Afro-American community must endeavor to do the major part of all charity work from within the community. Charity, however, does not mean that to which we are legally entitled in the form of government benefits. The Afro-American veteran must be made aware of all the benefits due him and the procedure for obtaining them. These veterans must be encouraged to go into business together, using G. I. loans, etc.

Afro-Americans must unite and work together. We must take pride in the Afro-American community, for it is home and it is power.

What we do here in regaining our self-respect, manhood, dignity and freedom helps all people everywhere who are fighting against oppression.

VI - Culture

"A race of people is like an individual man; until it uses its own talent, takes pride in its own history, expresses its own culture, affirms its own selfhood, it can never fulfill itself."

Our history and our culture were completely destroyed when we were forcibly brought to America in chains. And now it is important for us to know that our history did not begin with slavery's scar. We come from Africa, a great continent and a proud and varied people, a land which is the new world and was the cradle of civilization. Our culture and our history are as old as man himself and yet we know almost nothing of it. We must recapture our heritage and our identity if we are ever to liberate ourselves from the bonds of white supremacy. We must launch a cultural revolution to unbrainwash an entire people.

Our cultural revolution must be the means of bringing us closer to our African brothers and sisters. It must begin in the community and be based on community participation. Afro-Americans will be free to create only when they can depend on the Afro-American community for support and Afro-American artists must realize that they depend on the Afro-American for inspiration. We must work toward the establishment of a cultural center in Harlem, which will include people of all ages, and will conduct workshops in all the arts, such as film, creative writing, painting, theater, music, Afro-American history, etc.

This cultural revolution will be the journey to our rediscovery of ourselves. History is a people's memory, and without a memory man is demoted to the lower animals.

Armed with the knowledge of the past, we can with confidence charter a course for our future. Culture is an indispensable weapon in the freedom struggle. We must take hold of it and forge the future with the past.

* * *

When the battle is won, let history be able to say to each one of us: "He was a dedicated patriot: *Dignity* was his country, *Manhood* was his government, and *Freedom* was his land." (from *And Then We Heard the Thunder*, by John Oliver Killens George Breitman, *The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary* (New York: Pathfinder, 1967), 105 -111.

Appendix D

Malcolm's decision to continue as a leader of the black struggle and why. Took place after the break from the Nation of Islam but prior to his trip to Mecca.

In the end, I reasoned that the decision already had been made for me. The ghetto masses already had entrusted me with an image of leadership among them. I knew the ghetto instinctively extends that trust only to one who had demonstrated that he would never sell them out to the white man. I not only had no such intention -- to sell out was not even in my nature.

I felt a challenge to plan, and build, an organization that could help to cure the black man in North America of the sickness which had kept him under the white man's heel.

The black man in North America was mentally sick in his cooperative, sheeplike acceptance of the white man's culture.

The black man in North America was spiritually sick because for centuries he had accepted the white man's Christianity -- which asked the black so-called Christian to expect no true Brotherhood of Man, but to endure the cruelties of the so-called Christians. Christianity had made black men fuzzy, nebulous, confused in their thinking. It had taught the black man to think if he had no shoes, and was hungry, "we gonna get shoes and milk and honey and fish fries in Heaven."

Source: The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Edited by Alex Haley, [New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1966], 312-313.

Appendix E

Excerpt of Malcolm's press conference at Kennedy Airport, in New York, upon his arrival from the Middle East, May 21, 1964.

... I hope that once and for all my Hajj to the Holy city of Mecca has established our Muslim Mosque's authentic religious affiliation with the 750 million Muslims of the orthodox Islamic World. And I *know* once and for all that the Black Africans look upon America's 22 million blacks as long-lost *brothers*! They *love* us! They *study* our struggle for freedom! They were so happy to hear how we are awakening from our long sleep -- after so-called 'Christian' white America had taught us to be *ashamed* of our African brothers and homeland!

Yes -- I wrote a letter from Mecca. You're asking me 'Didn't you say that now you accept white men as brothers?' Well, my answer is that in the Muslim

World, I saw, I felt, and I wrote home how my thinking broadened! Just as I wrote, I shared true, brotherly love with many white-complexioned Muslims, who never gave a single thought to the race, or to the complexion, of another Muslim.

My pilgrimage broadened my scope. It blessed me with a new insight. In two weeks in the Holy Land, I say what I never had seen in thirty-nine years here in America. I saw all *races*, all *colors*, -- blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans -- in *true* brotherhood! In unity! Living as one! Worshiping as one! No segregationists -- no liberals; they would not have known how to interpret the meaning of those words.

In the past, yes, I have made sweeping indictments of *all* white people. I never will be guilty of that again -- as I know now that some white people *are* truly sincere, that some truly are capable of being brotherly towards a black man. The true Islam has shown me that a blanket indictment of all white people is as wrong as when whites make blanket indictments against blacks.

Yes, I have been convinces that *some* American whites do want to help cure the rampant racism which is on the path to *destroying* this country!

It was in the Holy World that my attitude was changed, by what I experienced there, and by what I witnessed there, in terms of brotherhood -- not just brotherhood toward me, but brotherhood between all men, of all nationalities and complexions, who were there. And now that I am back in America, my attitude here concerning white people has to be

governed by what my black brothers and I experience here, and what we witness here -- in terms of brotherhood. The problem here in America is that we meet such a small minority of individual so-called "good," or "brotherly" white people. Here in the United States, notwithstanding those few "good" white people, it is the *collective* 150 million white people whom the *collective* 22 million black people have to deal with!

Why, here in America, the seeds of racism are so deeply rooted in the white people collectively, their belief that they are "superior" in some way is so deeply rooted, that these things are in the national white subconsciousness. Many whites are even actually unaware of their own racism, until they face some test, and then their racism emerges in one form or another.

Listen! The white man's racism toward the black man here in America is what has got him in such trouble all over this world, with other non-white peoples. The white man can't separate himself from the stigma that he automatically feels about anyone, no matter who, who is not his color. And the non-white peoples of the world are sick of the condescending white man!

Source: The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Edited by Alex Haley, [New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1966], 361-363.

Appendix F

Intermarriage and a Black State

Pierre Berton: Now before you left Elijah Muhammad and went to Mecca and saw the original world of Islam, you believed in complete segregation of the whites and the Negroes. You were opposed both to integration and to intermarriage. Have you changed your views there?

Malcolm: I believe in recognizing every human being as a human being -- neither white, black, brown or red; and when you are dealing with humanity as a family there's no question of integration or intermarriage. It's just one human being marrying another human being, or one human being living around and with another human being...

George Breitman, Malcolm X Speaks (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 196.

Appendix G

Question: What do you think is responsible for race prejudice in the U.S.?

Malcolm: Ignorance and greed. And a skillfully designed program of miseducation that goes right along with the American system of exploitation and oppression.

If the entire American population were properly educated -- by properly educated, I mean given a true picture of the history and contributions of the black man -- I think many whites would be less racist in their feelings. They would have more respect for the black man as a human being. Knowing what the black man's contributions to science and civilization have been in the past, the white man's feelings of superiority would be at least partially negated. Also, the feeling of inferiority that the black man has would be replaced by a balanced knowledge of himself. He's feel more like a human being. He's function more like a human being, in a society of human beings.

So it takes education to eliminate it. And just because you have colleges and universities, doesn't mane you have education. The colleges and universities in the American educational system are skillfully used to miseducate.

From interview on January 18, 1965, printed in Young Socialist, March-April, 1965

George Breitman, *Malcolm X Speaks* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 196.

Appendix H

On Black Nationalism

Question: How do you define black nationalism, with which you have been identified?

Malcolm: I used to define black nationalism as the idea that the black man should control the economy of his community, and so forth.

But, when I was in Africa in May, in Ghana, I was speaking with the Algerian ambassador who is extremely militant and is a revolutionary in the true sense of the word [and has his credentials as

such for having carried on a successful revolution against oppression in his country.] When I told him that my political, social and economical philosophy was black nationalism, he asked me very frankly, well, where did that leave him? Because he was white. He was an African, but he was Algerian, and to all appearances he was a white man. And he said if I define my objective as the victory of black nationalism, where does that leave him? Where does that leave revolutionaries in Morocco, Egypt, Iraq, Mauritania? So he showed me where I was alienating people who were true revolutionaries, dedicated to overturning the system of exploitation that exists on this earth by any means necessary.

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

From interview, Young Socialist, March-April, 1965

George Breitman, Malcolm X Speaks (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 212.