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**Malcolm X's 83rd Birthday
Worrill's World
By Dr. Conrad W. Worrill
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The celebration of African Liberation Day (ALD) in the United States began in May 1972 in Washington, D.C. More than 60,000 people participated in this historic event. Since the untimely assassination of Malcolm in 1965, movement forces throughout the world have consistently commemorated his birthday. Malcolm X was born on May 19, 1925 in Omaha, Nebraska.

It was on February 21, 1965 that Malcolm X was assassinated at the Audubon Ballroom in Manhattan, New York by forces that were trying to stop his impact on our movement. They were not successful. He will forever remain our "Shining Black Prince."

Malcolm X is a man that should be studied carefully in our efforts to examine a critical period in our history— the 1960s. For, it was during this period that Malcolm X became an internationally known and respected African in America leader, whose ideas were widely discussed and debated.

It was through the Nation of Islam, under the leadership of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, that Malcolm X was given an opportunity to develop his tremendous talents as a teacher, researcher, orator, and organizer.

Malcolm X joined the Nation of Islam while in prison in 1952. After his release in the mid 1950s, Malcolm X became a full-time minister for the Nation of Islam that

became one of the most important organizations in the history of African in America, people. From his main base in Harlem, at Mosque Number 7, he launched his talents on the world.

Malcolm X was a revolutionary who presented a model of Black manhood that shook the world. When Malcolm X finally left the Nation of Islam, because of internal differences, he decided to take his first trip to Mother Africa. Malcolm spent five weeks in Africa, from April 13th to May 21st, 1964.

This trip helped reestablish our links with the movement to reclaim "Africa for the Africans." Malcolm met many of the leaders and people of Africa. He visited Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Lebanon, Nigeria, Ghana, Monrovia, Liberia, Senegal, Tanzania, Guinea, Morocco, and Algeria.

This trip and subsequent trips abroad helped Malcolm sharpen his understanding of the worldwide system of white supremacy as the number one enemy of African people throughout the world. This has not changed.

After leaving the Nation of Islam, Malcolm began to broaden his organizing strategies by attempting to reach out and work with many of the more established civil rights organizations and movement tendencies to a common organizational vehicle. Malcolm began building this vehicle through his establishment of the Organization for Afro-American Unity (OAAU).

Malcolm felt that a United Front was the necessary mechanism by which the political consciousness of African people in America could be raised. Also, he felt that this United Front would be the common voice we needed to represent the Black Liberation movement in this country. Many of us are still working to build this United Front concept of organizing toward our liberation in America.

In the spirit of Malcolm, let us summarize his contributions:

1. Malcolm X was a concrete example that if you discipline yourself and find a new outlook on life you can transform your behavior.
2. From 1952 - 1963, Malcolm X helped the Honorable Elijah Muhammad build the Nation of Islam into a powerful force.
3. During this same period, Malcolm became the spokesman for the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam, and thus, became a spokesman for the Black Nationalist Movement in one of the most important periods in our history— the period of the mid 1950s through the 1960s.
4. In this role, Malcolm articulated many important concepts and ideas that helped strengthen the Black Nationalist Movement in this country, as well as, the Civil Rights Movement. His speech, "The Ballot or the Bullet," still rings in our ears. His conception of the role of "House Negroes" vs. "Field Negroes" is still with us today. And his coining the phrase, "By Any Means Necessary" are just a few of the ideas and concepts that concretely impacted the Black movement.

5. Malcolm X defined Black Nationalism in simple terminology that appealed to the Black masses when he said, "the political philosophy of Black nationalism is that Blacks should control the politics and politicians in our own community... The economic philosophy of Black Nationalism must be designed to re-educate our community to the importance of controlling the economy in which we live by owning and operating the businesses. The social philosophy of Black nationalism is we must become socially mature enough to realize the responsibility on us to elevate the conditions and standards of our community to a higher level."

6. Malcolm X linked the Black struggle in this country with the struggle of African people around the world.


7. Malcolm helped shape Black peoples pride in themselves and by so doing, he exposed, by teaching that the greatest crime of white people was they taught us to hate ourselves. It was Malcolm's spirit that generated the Black Pride, Black Studies, and Black Power phases of our movement.


So, on the one hand, Malcolm helped internationalize our struggle and on the other hand, he linked it up to the mass struggle and issues that faced our people in America. By taking this approach, Malcolm was able to provide a basis for the continued historical efforts to build worldwide African unity.

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