

2011

The Human Color: Rooting Black Ideology in Human Rights, a Historical Analysis of a Political Identity

Milan Reed

Claremont McKenna College

Recommended Citation

Reed, Milan, "The Human Color: Rooting Black Ideology in Human Rights, a Historical Analysis of a Political Identity" (2011). *CMC Senior Theses*. Paper 103.
http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc_theses/103

This Open Access Senior Thesis is brought to you by Scholarship@Claremont. It has been accepted for inclusion in this collection by an authorized administrator. For more information, please contact scholarship@cuc.claremont.edu.

CLAREMONT MCKENNA COLLEGE

THE HUMAN COLOR: ROOTING BLACK IDEOLOGY IN HUMAN RIGHTS, A
HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF A POLITICAL IDENTITY

SUBMITTED TO

PROFESSOR LILY GEISMER

AND

DEAN GREGORY HESS

BY

MILAN JORDAN REED

FOR

SENIOR THESIS

SPRING 2011

APRIL 24, 2011

Table of Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	4
<u>Term of This Discussion</u>	8
<u>Unity in Pre-Colonial Africa</u>	12
<u>W.E.B Dubois</u>	18
<u>Kwame Nkrumah</u>	28
<u>Malcolm X</u>	33
<u>Conclusion: The future of Equality</u>	41
<u>Bibliography</u>	42

Introduction

In the 20th century the relationship between African-Americans and Africa grew into a prominent subject in the lives and perspectives of people who claim African heritage because almost every facet of American life distinguished people based on skin color. The prevailing discourse of the day said that the way a person looked was deeply to who they were.¹ People with dark skin were associated with Africa, and the notion of this connection has survived to this day. Scholars such as Molefi Kete Asante point to cultural retentions as evidence of the enduring connection between African-Americans and Africa, while any person could look to the shade of their skin as an indication of their African origins. In either case, something seems to always harken back to Africa.

However, in this modern world there is a gap between Africans and African Americans: African-Americans have achieved some great milestones in terms of liberty and equality, while many people living on the African continent still suffer poverty, political disenfranchisement, and precluded liberties. African-Americans have made great strides in dealing with these problems at home, but it is clear that they are on the whole better off than their African counterparts. The lectures and writings of W.E.B. Dubois, Malcolm X, and Kwame Nkrumah reveal that the linkages between African-Americans and Africans are political in nature and therefore do not rest solely on connections of culture or color, but on the shared struggle to achieve the unalienable rights guaranteed to all people.

The works of Dubois, Malcolm, and Nkrumah shed light on the complex political nature of the relationship between Africans and African-Americans. W.E.B. Dubois

¹ David Levering Lewis, *WEB DuBois : A Reader*, 1st Owl book ed. (New York: H. Holt, 1995), 20.

placed respect for common humanity at the core of his ideology. For Malcolm X, each person had an obligation to protect his own, and Malcolm extends his definition of compatriots beyond the borders of the United States to anyone willing to engage in what he calls “brotherhood.” Finally, Kwame Nkrumah, as an intellectual product of Dubois and contemporary of Malcolm, cherished and desired the input and support of African-Americans in the development of Ghana but fundamentally believed that Africans had to take the front seat in driving their destiny. Although these leaders seem to share an ethnic identity it was not the hinge of their cooperation, at the most basic level they agreed that every person is entitled to equal rights and freedoms regardless of race or nationality.

Major differences in time and context between these three leaders underscore the significance of their shared beliefs. Dubois was active in politics for almost 60 years, but his prime occurred approximately 30 years before Nkrumah came to prominence. He operated mostly among intellectual elites and engaged with prominent Americans and Europeans of all shades. Conversely, Malcolm X began his career in the United States as a prominent follower of Elijah Mohammed and the Nation of Islam. Up until his split with the NOI he advocated Black Nationalism; the creation of an independent Black state on American soil and the separation of the races in America. After the split he became an advocate of the universal nature of Black politics in the U.S., but he was still rooted in America and his beliefs were moderated by his faith in Islam.

Kwame Nkrumah was the quintessential African leader, he was born and raised in a small town in Ghana and educated there until he left for upper level studies in the

United States and Europe. In the ten years after Nkrumah returned to Ghana with a small group of West-educated Ghanaian reformers known as the United Gold Coast Convention he was able to liberate the country from British rule using a combination of political maneuvering within the colonial government and the mass movement of the Ghanaian population. Nkrumah held the office of president for six years where he worked to stabilize the new country and secure its liberty against future threats from the West and the Eastern Bloc. Throughout his career Nkrumah developed his defense in Pan-Africanism as the guiding ideology for his administration of Ghana, and also for the liberation of the rest of Africa. Pan-Africanism held that although several states in Africa were gaining their liberty from colonial law, they were only free in name because the African economies were still geared toward serving the former colonial masters, severely limiting the self-determination of the African people. Pan-African ideology asserted that the only way to stop this neo-colonial exploitation and protect the rights of the people was to leverage the greater bargaining power that a politically and economically unified Africa could generate. These vast distinctions in the origins of the three leaders indicates that the sense of obligation to Africans and African-Americans they demonstrated was the result of a shared ideology that stood for equality under the law for all people, self-determination in society and economics, and freedom from any and every kind of coercion or discrimination. The discussion of Dubois will show that these values are the core of the Black political identity.

These leaders shared the Black political identity that drove them toward the same goals. Pan-Africanism is utterly coherent with Black ideology in that the core beliefs that

led to Black ideology are very similar to those that led to Pan-Africanism, both strove to achieve legal equality, self-determination and fair economic opportunity for all people regardless of their race. African-Americans sought to gain their rights through direct action and mass movement, and in Africa these methods along with armed resistance were used. These cases show that the Black ideology was the unifying factor between Dubois, Malcolm, and Nkrumah. These three leaders demonstrate the universality of Black ideology, and imply that those who subscribe to it must also support the same rights and freedoms for all people. Dubois showed this through his Pan-African conferences, Malcolm by speaking on the similar status of all oppressed people, and Nkrumah by fighting for African unity. The beliefs and actions of Dubois, Malcolm and Nkrumah demonstrate the parity of Pan-African and Black ideology and thereby offer an explanation for the mutual obligations felt between Africans and African-Americans.

This discussion depends heavily on the distinctions of a few key terms including Black, African, and African-American, Negro, colored and Pan-African. Dubois, Malcolm, Nkrumah and others used these terms with many different meanings throughout their work. Dubois seemed to use Negro and black interchangeably for dramatic effect, while Nkrumah occasionally refers to his people as Africans although they more readily identify as Ghanaians, while Malcolm used Negro for the sake of clarity with the general public while he believes that Afro-American is a more accurate descriptor. Clarifying these terms at the outset will help to elucidate the later discussion of the respective beliefs of Dubois, Malcolm and Nkrumah.

Terms of This Discussion

A variety of terms including colored, negro, Afro-American, African-American, African, black, Black and Diasporan have referred to a specific group of people in America and in Africa. This group is sometimes referred to as the Black race, although the borders of this term are vague and arbitrary, and the concept of race is dubious at best, making its terminology unusable. This breadth of terms points to a general lack of consensus among scholars and uncertainty in the American population about what people with a particular set of features should call themselves. This section explains the general meanings of these terms as well as the specific definitions that will apply to this paper.

All modern discussion of the terms mentioned above are based in a racial subtext, while race is a political construct that was used to perpetrate injustice. “White” and “black” are deeply racial terms with roots reaching back to before the founding of the United States. However, modern science has shown that the standard conception of race is deeply flawed. There is no genetic basis for the differences historically associated with the different races, and there is no inherent genetic similarity among the population of any single race.² Facial features and skin color vary in response to environmental climactic pressures, and they have no bearing on the temperament, intelligence or beliefs of the people who poses them.³ Even still, Dubois, Nkrumah and Malcolm operated in times when the concept of race was much firmer than it is today. This is demonstrated through the famous 1896 Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* that upheld the

² Guy P. Harrison, *Race and Reality : What Everyone should Know about our Biological Diversity* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2010), 57.

³ *Ibid.*, 248

constitutionality of legalized racial separation. In order to address the paradigm shift away from race it is necessary to address formerly racial beliefs in terms of politics, ethnicity, and culture. The problems of race in large part defined the Black political discourse in the United States through the 20th century, so the term carries with it inherently political notions of unity and identity. Ethnicity can be described as common heritage or ancestry, while culture is the set of shared attitudes, values, and behaviors of a group. These terms more accurately reflect the nuance and divergence present within the false monolith of “race.”

W.E.B Dubois used the terms “Negro” and “black man” in his writings to identify the same group of people. His definition extends to include people of African descent living in America as well as the people living on the African continent. Throughout his 1896 monograph *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade* he referred to the continents involved as Europe, America, and Africa, while the residents of Europe and America are only “white men” and the residents of Africa are both “Negro” and “black men.” The monograph discussed the slave trade at points on both sides of the Atlantic but neither term is exclusively reserved for one group.⁴ Negro and Black man seem to apply equally to the same group of people, while there is no corollary to “Negro” for what he refers to as the “white man.” This becomes confusing when compared to his usage of “Negro” in *The Souls of Black Folk* written seven years later. There he famously said of the Negro: “After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the

⁴ W. E. B. 1963 Du Bois and Nathan Irvin Huggins, eds., *Selections 1986; Writings* (New York, N.Y.: Literary Classics of the United States : Distributed to the trade in the U.S. and Canada by Viking Press, 1986), 105.

Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil...”⁵ The duality of the Negro that he describes is only associated with the American born Negro, and not those that remained in Africa. This distinction implies that it is marginally inappropriate for the label Negro to apply to Africans as well as American born Africans because the peculiar dual reality Dubois describes is only found in America. Thus, Negro seems to be more appropriately understood as only applying to Americans because of their particular history. This paper will no longer use the term Negro because it is outdated and the meanings behind it are better reflected in two other terms: African and African-American.

The term “African” has been used to refer to all people living on the African continent, as well as those living beyond the continent regardless of the length of time of their separation. Scholar Molefi Kete Asante states that he is a child of several generations of Africans that were born in America, and he also refers to himself and others as Africans living in America or Africans born as American citizens.⁶ There is a whole school of thought that shares this perspective called Afrocentrism that places primacy on the Africanness of black people in America. This perspective draws the same sort of confusion illustrated by Dubois’ use of “Negro.” Dubois shows that there are significant peculiarities unique to people of African descent that were born in America, so it seems highly inappropriate to refer to both groups as Africans. In this paper “African” will refer solely to those people, ethnicities and cultures that are geographically located on the African continent. It is important to note here that “African” is convenient shorthand, but

⁵ Ibid., 364

⁶ Molefi Kete Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto : Toward an African Renaissance* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 9.

it is also an obscuring misnomer. On the African continent there are dozens of countries, hundreds of ethnic groups and hundreds of languages spoken.⁷ It is hard to make any generalization about such a diverse group of people unblinkingly. That said, Nkrumah used “African” in his work to refer to the people and countries within the geography of the African continent without drawing false generalizations about the people living there. African will be used in a similar manner here.

“African-American” is similar to “African” in that it has an element of geography, but nationality is also present in its definition. As the term indicates, it refers to people of African descent, but also adds that they were born in the United States. However, African-American is a cultural term, while African is not. The specifics of African-American culture are by no means universal or monolithic, but the presence of a unique African-American culture demonstrates the differences between the terms “African” and “African-American.” The first refers to a purely geographically unified group, and the second identifies a more significant association of the actions and beliefs of a group of people. As with all cultural identities it is not totally clear when it obtains. There are people with dark skin who will not call themselves African-American even if they are born in the United States, and the reverse is also true. African-American culture is associated with people who look a certain way, but that is a false perception based on race, when in fact those who participate in any given culture do not have to share the arbitrary markers of a certain race.

⁷ Inc NetLibrary and United States. Central Intelligence Agency, eds., *1993 World Factbook* (Champaign, Ill. Boulder, Colo.: Project Gutenberg ; NetLibrary.

A term that is often used interchangeably with African-American is “black” with a lowercase “b.” This has come to have the same meaning as African-American, and seems to be in use by the majority of America today.⁸ By capitalizing the letter “b” in the term “Black” a distinction is drawn between it’s cultural and political understanding. Cultural “black” can be understood as “African-American” while political “Black” will be addressed in greater detail as this paper develops but centrally involves a set of beliefs that affirm the equality of all people. This paper will avoid the convention of using “black” as a synonym for African-American for the sake of clarity, all uses of “Black” will be in the political sense, and any cultural references will use the term “African-American.” The history of West Africa before the advent of the Atlantic slave trade perfectly demonstrates that Black unity is not the product of ethnic or cultural ties, but must be a political construct.

Unity In Pre-Colonial Africa

Sociologist W.D. Wright shows that there is little inherent cultural similarity between dark skinned people in the United States and Africans, but that does not damage the authenticity of the Black identity, nor does it divorce Black Americans from their connection to Africa. In fact it does just the opposite and further solidifies the political nature of the term “Black” in the United States. The people who subscribe to Black ideology come from a wide variety of ethnicities, nationalities, and economic statuses that would render any apolitical understanding incoherent. In order to identify the inherent incongruities in associating African-American politics with a retained

⁸ Robin DG Kelley, *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional! : Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997), 46.

connection to Africa it is important to understand the general disharmony in purely African politics and culture before the American Diaspora was created. In other words, it is difficult to imagine that African retentions are at the root of Black politics in America because there was no unity or mutual understanding to be found there. Looking at West Africa from the 1450s to the end of the Atlantic slave trade we find a consistent theme of diversity rather than a specific “African personality” for African-Americans to trace back to. The lack of cultural connection between Africa and black Americans coupled with the absence of a distinct “African personality” demonstrate the inherent political nature of Black identity.

Before the Treaty of Tordesillas and the concurrent papal edict in 1494 that preserved the Americas for the Spanish, the Portuguese were already making journeys along the West coast of Africa. The Portuguese encountered several cultures that they traded with in order to support the European demand for gold, spices, and ivory that soon became demand for enslaved people.⁹ The Portuguese first began to have a large impact on African societies in the region between the Gambia and Senegal Rivers, known as the Senegambia. In what is present day Senegal there were two kingdoms, Jolof and Kaabu that traded along the coast, with Portuguese, and also used trans-Saharan routes to trade with the Muslim polities to the North. Before the slave trade became central to Portuguese economy these kingdoms participated in mutually beneficial trade agreements, and also engaged in their own political upheavals without the influence of guns or tribal instigation that later characterized European interaction. Three other kingdoms, the Waalo, Baol, and Kajor, sprouted from the Jolof empire in the mid

⁹ Christopher Ehret, *The Civilizations of Africa : A History to 1800* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002), 351.

1500's because of their differing access to sea trade, while the Fula pastoralists broke off from the Jolof center of power in 1495 to move 400 kilometers south to the Jallon Mountains of the Susu kingdom. The leaders of the Fula then clashed with the Susu and departed again to form their own kingdom of Futa Toro characterized by patronage of large land holdings for the aristocracy and small family tracts for the peasantry.¹⁰

The cases above are not unique, there were hundreds of kingdoms sprouting, fighting and reforming all over Africa during the time period just before European dominance, and there seems to be no unifying characteristics between them that cannot also be generalized to all humans. The outline of the growth and changes of the political units in West Africa imply that ethnicity is not a major factor for the people who would later become enslaved. All of the kingdoms above were products of the Niger-Congo language family and yet they continued to oppose each other. The shifts in dominion in West Africa can be attributed to economic needs and political maneuvering. The three kingdoms that broke away from the Jolof empire left to take advantage of the economic opportunities of their emerging sea trade, while the leaders of the Fula clashed with the Susu rulers, leading to their continued migration. These same pressures can be seen acting on human populations all over the world, while no distinct or unified African-ness kept them from occurring in the Western part of the continent. African-Americans are the descendants of not just one, but most likely all of these peoples, so it follows that it is more likely that they would experience the same sort of divisions when transplanted to America.

¹⁰ Ibid., 361

While the fluid political situation in West Africa implies that there was no widely unifying African personality to be found there, the history of the names applied to the continent offers a further demonstration of the vacuity of the “African” identity. From the time of the Greeks the continent was intermittently been referred to as Guinea, Negroland, Libya, and Ethiopia, while the people were called Ethiopians, Guineas, Moors and Negroes.¹¹ These naming conventions are the long term products of the Greeks and Romans, and their definitions differ from those used in the modern era. For the Greeks, “Ethiopian” was used to describe people we would today call Africans as well as brown-skinned people from the Indian subcontinent.¹² W.D Wright asserted that the claim of an African identity is retrospective history and does not accurately reflect the divergences on the continent.

The etymological root of the word “Negro” is “Niger,” referring to the African river. The word picked up additional meaning when Rome took over North Africa and thus began to interact more heavily with the rest of the continent. The word found its way into Latin and superseded the term “ater” for black. As cultures developed and merged negro picked up the myriad of negative connotations of black in all Latin rooted languages of Europe only as recently as the 13th century.¹³ After leaving the Niger River for more than a millennia the term came back with new weight to label the people and the continent. It is important to note that the people of the continent did not originally use the term Niger or any other to refer to themselves as a whole. Each nation or ethnicity had a self generated term like Kemet, now known as Egypt, while Negro and African were

¹¹ WD Wright, *Black History and Black Identity : A Call for a New Historiography* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002), 94.

¹² *Ibid.*, 96

¹³ *Ibid.*, 100

imports from Europe. Even though Niger has etymological roots in West Africa when the term was applied to the people of the whole continent it was far removed from its origins. This lack of a natural African term to identify all Africans demonstrates the artificial nature of the term African-American. There is no specific African civilization it can be related to because the idea is the product of a European generalization that does not correspond to the realities of state, culture and society on the continent. This understanding of the term African makes it all the more clear that it could not be a shared ethnicity that bonded African-Americans together in the United States because enslaved African people were from all different ethnic groups and they did not have any conception of a united African identity as demonstrated by their lack of a word for Africa. Finally, not only did people living on the continent not consider themselves African, people of African descent in America considered themselves primarily American.

Enslaved African people were put through a horrendous experience when they were stolen from their homes and families, and although they were forced into close contact with different cultures from Africa this did not result in the distillation of a particular African identity, but in the creation of a new cultural group. Wright describes this as a holocaust experience that separated these people from their homeland and put them on the path towards developing a new culture that was not African, and was not distinct to any African ethnicity, but was the result of the amalgamation of several African cultures and strong European influences from their forced new homes.¹⁴ He said that as the generations progressed the enslaved people were not struggling to hold on to

¹⁴ Ibid., 126

“African culture” but were struggling to hold on to his own particular origins. The similarities between African-Americans and the particular ethnicities of their genesis waned as the first few generations passed on, while at the same time enslaved African people were contributing to the development of American culture. The Africans now residing in America were quickly becoming Americans, and as the civil rights movement and its predecessors demonstrated they were fighting for the right to participate fully in the society in which they found themselves. By Wright’s analysis there was almost no mention of Africa in black historical writing including letters, folklore and personal documents of non-slave black people, lending credence to the conclusion that there was almost no African identity in the population, and there seemed to be little desire to form one.¹⁵

The following discussion shows that the political climate of the United States was the main factor that pushed the African descendants together into a single unit. When the enslaved Africans arrived in America they were mixed and forced together based on wherever they were sold. Furthermore, the laws of the United States did not differentiate between Africans of one nation or another; they were all Negroes under the constitution and treated as a single block of people. Even through emancipation political pressures from segregation and discrimination reinforced African-American unity. The African-American identity was a result of this forced legal unity and the fading of distinguishing African cultural ties. As the later discussions indicate the problems faced by Africans and African-Americans are political in nature so they demand political unity in order to be met. The challenges of discrimination, disenfranchisement, and inequality transcend

¹⁵ Ibid., 129

racial and geographic distinctions so the three leaders' responses to these problems must do the same.

W.E.B. Dubois

For almost 60 years W.E.B. Dubois was a prominent actor in the affairs of the American Negro and Black Africans. His life began in Massachusetts in 1868 and ended in Ghana 95 years later. His place of birth and death mirrored the trajectory of his beliefs in that he began by working toward enfranchisement and equality for Black people in America and soon expanded his scope to include all people of African descent, including those living on the African continent. He first entered mainstream prominence in 1903 with the publication of *The Souls of Black Folks*, a collection of essays that set the tone for discussions of all things Black for the majority of the century.¹⁶ He soon followed with the Niagara Movement in 1905, an organization that issued a list of demands for change that were the central issues of the American Civil Rights movement and later led to the founding of the NAACP.¹⁷ In the next decade Dubois participated in the Pan-African Congress of 1900 and initiated a Pan-African Congresses held in Paris in 1919 that solidified his position as an advocate for Black people as well as Africans.¹⁸

¹⁶ David Levering Lewis, *WEB DuBois--Biography of a Race, 1868-1919*, 1st Owl book ed. (New York: H. Holt, 1994), 277.

¹⁷ Harlan, Elliott M Rudwick With a new pref Louis and an epilogue author, *W E B Du Bois, Propagandist of the Negro Protest*, (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 96.

¹⁸ Milfred C. Fierce, *The Pan-African Idea in the United States, 1900-1919 : African-American Interest in Africa and Interaction with West Africa* (New York: Garland Pub., 1993), 208.

Through his work as a writer Dubois developed and promulgated the three main points of the Black political identity. Primarily he argued for African-American equality in political, industrial, and social life on the basis of the shared humanity of all people. Second, he advocated economic freedom and education as the means of maintaining this liberty, and finally he opposed any practice that limited self-determination as antithetical to the true meaning of liberty. Dubois spoke in terms of the rights of Black people as humans, not just as Americans. He believed in the Declaration of Independence when it said “all men are created equal,” and this belief translated into his work on Pan-Africanism. By 1920 Dubois demonstrated that his desires for the enfranchisement and liberty of African-Americans extended to Africans based on the same grounds of common humanity. As one of the founding fathers of Black politics the attention Dubois paid to injustices in Africa demonstrates the centrality of universal rights rather than solely national liberty to Black political thought. Dubois’ work laid the foundations for Nkrumah and Malcolm to continue the work of securing equality for all, not just Black people.

Dubois entered the Black political mainstream when he called together the meeting of the Niagara Movement in 1905.¹⁹ A group of the most prominent Black thinkers and professionals of the day attended the Niagara meeting, where they laid down the principles that would guide the American civil rights movement. Five years later

¹⁹ Thomas R. comp Frazier, *Afro-American History: Primary Sources Edited Thomas R Frazier Under the Generalship of John Morton Blum* (New York,: Harcourt Brace & World Inc., 1970), 209

many of the Niagara attendees founded the NAACP, and although that marked the end of the Niagara Movement per se, the demands expressed there lived on through the political actions of the following decades. Dubois was the author of the demands that the Movement released at the end of its term, and in it he expressed some of the central ideas of Black ideology in four articles of the document titled Protest, Color-Line, Oppression and Agitation.

The protest article said in part “We refuse to allow the impression to remain that the Negro-American assents to inferiority...”²⁰ The article also said that the oppressed people in America could never be silent as long as injustice persisted. Dubois believed that the only way for Black people to achieve equality was by identifying and attacking prejudice wherever it was found. This was in direct contrast with the beliefs of Booker T. Washington, a prominent contemporary of Dubois. Washington held that the best way to combat injustice was by working to gain economic affluence and using that power to cause change. Protest in the face of injustice has proven to be one of the central attributes of the Black struggle. The mass sit-ins, boycotts and marches that Black people engaged in in the 1950’s and 1960’s exemplify the persistence of this ideal in Black political thought.

Besides protest, Dubois and the Niagara Movement’s Declaration of principles condemned the American Color-Line. The document said that differences based solely on

²⁰ Thomas R. comp Frazier, *Afro-American History: Primary Sources Edited Thomas R Frazier Under the Generalship of John Morton Blum* (New York,,: Harcourt Brace & World Inc., 1970), 211.

race are barbarous, and that these discriminations are "...relics of an unreasoning human savagery which the world is and ought to be thoroughly ashamed."²¹ The article makes it clear that there are discriminations that they do support, such as those that preclude the liberties of immoral criminal persons, so there is case for legitimate discrimination in society, but to use race alone as a factor is reprehensible. The article continued saying that custom, expediency, prudence cannot be given as reasons to support racial discrimination, that would be baseless and barbarous.

The next article, titled Oppression, described how the oppressor in America was completely sovereign regarding the rights of the oppressed. Dubois asserted that this was simply wrong; there could be no rationale for situations when Black people needed help and the authorities appointed to help them instead responded by perpetuating injustice. Furthermore, the article invoked the name of God, saying that the United States would never stand justified before the Lord unless the oppressive situation was righted.²² For the discourse of the time this was a very serious claim. It appealed to the sovereignty of a power higher than the Nation as the arbiter for cause of Black people in America. This move condemned the oppression Black people experienced in the strongest possible way by denying the validity of any possible support of oppression because no argument made in earthly terms could stand up to the condemnation of God.

Finally, the Niagara movement calls for agitation, saying: "Of the above grievances we do not hesitate to complain and to complain loudly and insistently..."

²¹ Ibid., 211

²² Ibid., 211

persistent manly agitation is the way to liberty, and toward this goal the Niagara Movement has started and asks the cooperation of all men of all races.²³ This article is like the previous on protest, but the important difference can be found in the last line where they ask for the cooperation of all men of all races. This point exemplifies the underlying theme of common humanity that is present throughout all the articles. At no point does the Niagara movement compare the rights of African-Americans to the rights of whites as the goal to be achieved, but the articles demonstrate a conception of the ideal liberties that should be guaranteed to all persons. This leaves room to acknowledge that oppression and prejudice is not the sole burden of African-Americans, but a problem that needs to be addresses for all people. Take for example the article regarding the Color-Line. It said that distinctions based solely on race are barbarous, but it does not say that these distinctions only apply negatively to African-Americans, or that the declaration only applies to injustice perpetrated on African-Americans. The articles of the Niagara Movement condemned any action of discrimination regardless of the race of the perpetrator. The specifically open construction of the articles of the Niagara movement demonstrates that Dubois, the author, was operating from a perspective that held all humans equal rather than the belief that African-Americans needed to be raised to the level of whites. In other words, the Declaration of the Niagara Convention asserted that all people were entitled to justice, equality and the means to achieve them both, while even white America had not yet achieved these goals for itself. In a 1915 essay from *The Crisis* Dubois expanded on the principles of human equality laid down in the declaration of the Niagara Convention.

²³ Ibid., 212

As the editor of *the Crisis* publication Dubois utilized the media outlet as a platform to express black ideology as well as his opinions on dozens of other topics. In an essay from April of 1915 titled *The Immediate Program of the American Negro* Dubois reiterated and expanded on the demands he authored ten years earlier for the Niagara Movement. As before, Dubois demanded equality, but this time with the caveat that equality does not imply sameness. Also, Dubois demanded industrial and social freedom so that African-Americans could enjoy the full fruits of their labor and also participate in the culture and society that they helped to create. Once again these points exemplify Dubois' belief in the common humanity of all people as the basis for Black political action.

Dubois began the article by saying: "The American Negro demands equality... in no spirit of braggadocio and with no obsequious envy of others, but as an absolute measure of self defense."²⁴ By this understanding equality is not just a lofty ideal that societies should try to strive for, but also a palpable, useful value that can be seen to benefit the lives of people. Dubois said that equality is the only defense that "the darker races"²⁵ have on earth; otherwise they will continue to be exploited and ground down until they are forced into extinction. This may at first seem a theatrical representation of the value of equality, but then recall the situation of enslaved African people in North America, how they were often abused, neglected and worked to death. Placing this sort of

²⁴ W. E. B. 1963 Du Bois and *The Crisis*, eds., *The Emerging Thought Of W E B Du Bois* (essays and editorials from *The Crisis*. N. Y., Simon & S., 1972. 440 p. 74.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 75

tangible value on equality helps to put it into the proper context as an integral part of human society, not a luxury that can be withheld from one group of people by another.

Dubois goes on to say “For any group, nation or race to admit for a moment the present monstrous demand of the white race to be the inheritors of the earth... is for the race to write itself down immediately as indisputably inferior in judgment, knowledge and common sense.”²⁶ This strong claim reflects Dubois’ opposition to hegemonic claims of dominance made by any race. He said that the white race did not create the culture or society that it claims to own, it was equally a product of the labors of African-Americans, but he also does not assert that African-Americans have a far greater claim, Dubois advocated balance and moderation, not the reversal of white dominance. Finally, Dubois said that the lack of equality leads to a lack of self-respect among the oppressed in the society. Lack of self-respect then perpetrates even more inequality regardless of ethnicity. Thus he believed that any group of people must secure its equality and self respect in order to maintain its very existence on the earth.

The important caveat that Dubois introduced to his calls for equality is the distinction between political, industrial and social equality and sameness. Sameness would hold that each person must have the exact same standing in society as well as the same rights. However Dubois said that his calls for equality are in fact a call for diversity; it is the insistence on the right of a human being to be treated as such despite any

²⁶ Ibid., 75

superficial differences he may exhibit.²⁷ He also said that equality does not entail absolute equality of opportunity because there are natural differences between people that make them more suited to one pursuit or another. He would however strongly hold that race is not one of these natural differences. To expand on this point Dubois said "...there is a more and more clearly recognized minimum of opportunity and maximum of freedom to be, to move and to think, which the modern world denies to no human being which it recognizes as a man."²⁸ This is the most explicit example of Dubois' basic belief in the equality of all human beings. His conception of equality included the essence of the Declaration of the Niagara Convention, and it also recalled the American Declaration of Independence when it said, "all men are created equal." All of his arguments for the equality of African-Americans are rooted in this belief of basic human equality, and it is no far stretch for Dubois to shift the application of this belief from America to Africa and Pan-Africanism.

In *The Crisis* of October 1927 Dubois recounts the history of the Pan-African congresses and shares the resolutions reached by the Fourth Congress in August of that same year. Dubois initiated the first Pan-African congress in 1917 and continued to be the driving force of the gathering in its next three iterations. He acted as general chairman of the proceedings of the fourth Congress and also made a presentation illustrating the condition of people of African descent all over the world. Present at the congress were representatives from several of the American states, the islands of the Caribbean, South America, Liberia and British West Africa. Together the constituency adopted a list of six

²⁷ Ibid., 75

²⁸ Ibid., 75

general resolutions regarding the needs of African descendants worldwide and an extensive prescription for reform in each of the states represented. The content of the general resolutions reflects Dubois' perspective on the universal equality of all human beings.

The sixth resolution of the Pan-African Congress called for "The treatment of civilized men as civilized despite differences of birth, race or color."²⁹ Just like Dubois' assertions with the Niagara Movement and in *the Crisis*, the Congress supports equality based on mutual humanity, not race. Dubois' influence is clearly visible here in the emphasis of humanity over rectifying the wrongs of racial injustice. The difference is that mutual humanity can generate the same rights for all people, while a position that advocated the reversal of racial power dynamics would only perpetrate injustice, if from a different direction. Likewise, the fourth resolution mirrors Dubois' perspective on the position of African-Americans. This item calls for "The development of Africa for the Africans and not merely for the profit of Europeans."³⁰ In just the same way that Dubois denied the validity of the white claim to all the profits of American society, this resolution denies the European claim to the profits of Africa. This contradicts the European perspective that they brought civilization and culture to Africa and are therefore entitled to the fruits of production there by pointing out that without African land and labor the profits Europeans claimed would be impossible. Dubois' trademark support of claims by Blacks on the profits Europeans believed they were entitled to is once again reflected by the resolution of the Congress.

²⁹ David Levering Lewis, *WEB DuBois : A Reader*, 1st Owl book ed. (New York: H. Holt, 1995), 672.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 672

Finally, in the specific resolution regarding the United States the Pan-African Congress concluded, “[African-Americans] of the United States should begin the effective use of their political power... [and] vote with their eyes fixed upon the international problems of the color line...”³¹ This mandate reflects the spirit of the Niagara Convention articles on the color line and agitation in that it calls for African-Americans to reject racial segregation and discrimination in all cases, and beseeched them to use what political power they have to continue the fight for equality until it is realized all over the world and not be satisfied with the achievement of equality in their home state alone. As Dubois said in 1900 at the First Pan-African Congress, the exploitation of Africa is deplorable not just to Africans, but to the ideals of justice and freedom all over the world.³²

Through his prolific writing and teaching W.E.B. Dubois defined the roots of Black ideology in terms of mutual humanity that must guarantee equality in political, industrial and social spheres. Kwame Nkrumah developed on a foundation of Dubois’ ideology and wrote extensively on the meaning of Pan-Africanism. Nkrumah shares the conception of basic human equality that Dubois developed, and it is reflected in conception of Pan-Africanism. From this connection we can see more clearly how the relationship between Africans and African-Americans comes from a shared political framework.

³¹ Ibid., 674

³² Ibid., 640

Kwame Nkrumah

On the evening of March 6th 1957, the parliament of the United Kingdom granted independence to the Gold Coast colony of West Africa, henceforth known as the Republic of Ghana. Kwame Nkrumah served as the Prime Minister of the state at the time of its independence, he had been fighting for this day for the majority of his political career. Although he only served for 9 years as the Ghanaian Head of state the success of his liberation movement inspired similar actions all across the African continent. Nkrumah's larger agenda was to create economic and political unity throughout the continent in order to foster independence from unilateral European influence and secure African liberty in a more meaningful way. Nkrumah called his ideology Pan-Africanism, and the parallels it draws with Black ideology are striking. In both cases the ultimate goal is freedom and equality for all people.

Just as Dubois described in the charter of the Niagara Movement human equality is a central tenet of Pan-Africanism. Consistent with this belief he calls for the aid of skilled Black Americans in just the same way that Malcolm X enlisted the support of a cadre of African leaders. In both cases there is an emphasis on cooperation rather than parties on one side of the Atlantic leading those of the other side. Finally, Nkrumah calls for the strength of unity on the continent as well as with African-Americans to use as a tool towards the achievement of these goals. This is highly similar to method adopted by Black political leaders. Nkrumah's lofty goals and actions elucidate just how closely

Black and Pan-African ideology align, and through that lens explain the maintained connections between Africans and African-Americans.

After securing the independence of Ghana from the British one of Nkrumah's main goals was to move forward with plans for the political and economic unity of all of Africa. This aligned with his Pan-African ideology, and he believed was the best step that could be taken towards securing the human rights of all Africans. The resolution to this desire came in the form of the Organization for African Unity. In January 1963 Nkrumah shared a proposal with his contemporary leaders that outlined the creation of a union government with a single foreign policy and defense force, and an integrated economy and currency.³³ This proposal became the outline for the charter of the OAU, which was discussed at a conference in Addis Ababa in the summer months of 1963 with thirty-two African leaders in attendance.³⁴ During this time Nkrumah made several speeches that explained his belief in the political unity of Africa as the only way to guarantee the human rights of her citizens.

Addressing a joint session of all the assembled leaders Nkrumah shared his perspective on the relationship between independence and liberty. He said "Independence is only the prelude to a new and more involved struggle for the right to conduct our own economic and social affairs, to construct our society according to our aspirations,

³³ W. Scott (Willard Scott) Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957-1966; Diplomacy, Ideology, and the New State*, W Scott Thompson (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), 316.

³⁴ Kwame Nkrumah and Samuel Obeng, eds., *Selected Speeches* (Accra, Ghana: Afram Publications (Ghana), 1997), 30.

unhampered by crushing and humiliating neo-colonialist controls and interference.”³⁵ The distinctions he draws here are between the liberty that Africa countries were gaining from their colonial masters at that time and self-determination that gives liberty its meaning. The new independence in Africa did not in most cases include self-determination for the state or its people because of the lingering economic interests of the former colonial masters. The interests that Nkrumah is referring to could extend anywhere from foreign control of major export goods to the harboring of foreign troops in the so-called free country as a nominal security package granted by the former colonists.³⁶ Nkrumah asserted that self-determination for African countries requires the limiting of these foreign influences. As long as African countries were unable to make their own decisions about their economic structures and national security they were still subordinate to European interests. This draws a parallel to the status of Africa-Americans. When Black people were unable to engage fully in the American economy because of racism or segregation they were relegated to the sidelines of society and their very livelihoods depended on the fickle whims of prejudice. The same was the case for African countries suffering from neo-colonialism. As Nkrumah pointed out and African-Americans demonstrated, the only way to secure human rights is through unified struggle against oppression.

Nkrumah’s next speech occurs at the end of the conference in 1963 where he commends his fellow leaders on the progress they have made by turning the dream of African unity into a reality with the ratification of the Charter of the O.A.U. Here,

³⁵ Ibid., 31

³⁶ Ibid., 32

Nkrumah summons a phrase that he has used before: “As I have said over and over again, the independence of our separate state is meaningless, unless the whole of Africa becomes free and united.”³⁷ This is an echo of Dubois’ statement that an assault to equality anywhere damages it everywhere. Nkrumah’s adherence to this construction demonstrates his perspective on African people. He believed that nobody on the African continent could have true liberty while others were still oppressed because all Africans had an obligation to each other to support liberty and equality regardless of national borders. For Nkrumah there was a difference between African liberation only by the grace of the colonizers and liberation that could be maintained by free people without the support or undue fear of re-colonization. His statements here exemplify this belief by inextricably linking the liberty of each African state to every other.

Nkrumah’s prolific writings also demonstrate the views he shared with Black ideology. In his 1964 book *Consciencism* explicitly states that true liberty for the African continent must involve the restructuring of society in a way that would support the equal rights and opportunities of African people. The title of the book indicates a particular philosophy that Nkrumah developed based in materialism. He calls it “the map in intellectual terms of the disposition of forces which will enable African society to digest the Western and the Islamic and the Euro-Christian elements in Africa, and develop them in such a way that they fit with the African personality.”³⁸ The personality he mentions includes the Black conception of the inherent equality of all people, as well as some

³⁷ Ibid., 47

³⁸ Kwame Nkrumah , *Consciencism, Philosophy And Ideology For De-Colonization revised* (N. Y., Monthly Review PR., 1970. 122 P. 79.

underlying ideological connection that Nkrumah believed would help to unify all the people of the continent.

From this we arrive at Nkrumah's belief in the primacy of egalitarianism in achieving liberty. Again, he writes, "The emancipation of the African continent is the emancipation of man. This requires two aims: first, the restitution of the egalitarianism of human society, and, second, the logistic mobilization of all our resources towards the attainment of that restitution."³⁹ This statement exemplifies the core of Black political ideology as well as Pan-Africanism. In both cases egalitarianism is the central ideology, and both Black and Pan-African ideology hold that the resources of the state should be leveraged to achieve that goal. Through this writing Nkrumah undeniably weaves his beliefs in with the Black ideology and demonstrates that despite geographic and temporal separation he stands for the same basic beliefs as Dubois, the quintessential Black leader. When Malcolm X steps onto the political playing field the beliefs of both Nkrumah and Dubois are reflected and expressed in an even more universally than Nkrumah or Dubois ever did.

³⁹ Ibid., 78

Malcolm X

As a leader in the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X played a prominent role on the American national and the international stages of Black politics. Malcolm began his career as a hard line representative of Elijah Muhammad, leading various efforts from the founding of a newspaper, *Muhammad Speaks*, to the support of Muslim owned businesses in America as well as the building of hundreds of new mosques in every state in the union. As Malcolm developed politically he moved away from the Nation of Islam toward a more universal stance on the plight of Black people around the world.⁴⁰ By the end of his life Malcolm believed that Africans would never be recognized by the world as true human beings until African Americans were also recognized socially, morally and politically in their own country. This ideology of shared problems and a shared solution perfectly underscores the mutual roots of Black and Pan-African ideology in human rights. Through his parlays with African leaders, travels in Africa to initiate mass discourse on the status of Black people around the world and by using world organizations to politically confront the United States for its treatment of African Americans Malcolm X demonstrates the inextricable connectedness of Pan-African and Black politics.

Malcolm's progression away from the ideology of the Nation Of Islam towards his own unique perspective began to take shape in the last six years of his life. In 1960 as the nation of Islam began to place more formal emphasis on the nationalistic separation

⁴⁰ Kofi Natambu, *The Life and Work of Malcolm X* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Alpha Books, 2002), 317-318.

of the race Malcolm found himself leaning towards a different perspective that involved linkages between the Black American state and Africa, the Caribbean and south America where people were all suffering oppression. He was advocating more of a political distinction than a complete separatist movement, which did not conform with the hardline Nation Of Islam plan for a Black American state with its own land and jurisdiction.⁴¹ By separating from the NOI Malcolm carved out a unique political identity that placed more and more emphasis on the international scope of the Black plight in America.

In 1965 Malcolm cemented his international perspective on Black plight, but was disappointed that African-Americans were not quickly adopting this perspective. In his *Autobiography* he wrote, “The American white man has so thoroughly brainwashed the black man to see himself as only a domestic ‘civil rights’ problem that it will probably take longer than I live before the Negro sees that the struggle of the American black man is international.”⁴² This belief derived from the perception of America as a place that did not in fact care about the rights or its responsibility to its Black citizens, but only for maintaining the status quo and producing profits from the internally colonized black population. In order to counteract the venom of white racism in America Malcolm was reaching out to his compatriots across the Atlantic for support in the struggle for equality.⁴³ Acts of vandalism perpetrated against African leaders in the U.S. during the U.N. conference only strengthened Malcolm’s conviction that the fight for Black freedom and equality necessarily included the fight for African Freedom and equality. The way

⁴¹ Ibid., 226

⁴² Malcolm 1965 X, Alex Haley and Attallah Shabazz, eds., *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1999), 371.

⁴³ Natambu, *The Life and Work of Malcolm X*, 235.

that American racists mistreated African diplomats matched the way that Black Americans were abused; demonstrating that in the eyes of the American there was no distinction between a black person and an African dignitary. It was important for Malcolm as well as African leaders to see this for it helped them to understand the parity between their struggles and lent Malcolm's position even more credibility.

Malcolm saw the economic and social position of Black Americans reflected in other parts of the world and worked to share that vision with Americans, Europeans and Africans alike. Just before his death Malcolm performed a series of interviews in New York, London and Paris discussing the great need for African Americans to establish political and ideological links with revolutionary movements in Africa.⁴⁴ In a 1963 interview conducted with Bernice Bass in New York Malcolm discussed the links between African and African American problems. In response to a question on the Congo crisis and his dealings with the UN, Malcolm said “[this situation] reflects the tendency on the part of Africans to identify completely with what is happening to the Black man in this country.” He goes on to say, “there’s an increasing tendency on the part of our people in this country to identify with what’s going on or happening to our people on the African continent.”⁴⁵ He believed that these links would mutually strengthen the cause; Black Americans could support African liberation in ways that were more difficult for Africans themselves, while the successful achievement of liberation in Africa inspired African Americans to continue pursuing their goals. On the other hand, he asserted that denying

⁴⁴ Ibid., 312

⁴⁵ Malcolm 1965 X and Bruce Perry, eds., *Speeches Selections; Malcolm X: The Last Speeches*, 1st ed. (New York: Pathfinder, 1989), 94.

these links would invariably weaken the cause. Limiting the Black American battle to Civil Rights rather than Human Rights would exclude the U.N. from any jurisdiction or influence over the outcome of the struggle.⁴⁶ Malcolm wanted to use the international stage for leverage to achieve freedom, so he maintained the fight as one for human rights.

A moment later in his interview with Bass Malcolm expresses the view that “the problem of the Black people in this country is not an isolated problem. It’s not a Negro problem or an American problem. It’s a part of the world problem. It’s a human problem.”⁴⁷ Rather than limiting his dialogue to the status of Blacks in America, Malcolm asserted that the place of black people has international ramifications. In part this stems from the imperialist practices of America. It is not only true that Black people are mistreated within the United States, but the same sort of injustices are being perpetrated worldwide by Western powers, so in a new sense Africa and African Americans have a shared oppressor, which implies that they should have a shared solution. This perfectly parallels the Black Ideology expressed by Dubois and takes it to a more explicit more direct level. On both sides of the Atlantic the people were fighting for their human rights not just civil rights, and Malcolm’s philosophy demonstrates here that it is congruent and optimal for Black American ideology to also support the liberation and autonomy of Africa through Pan-Africanism. This universality of Malcolm’s battle reflects the reasoning behind Pan-Africanism as well as Black ideology.

⁴⁶ James L. Conyers and Andrew P. Smallwood, eds., *Malcolm X: A Historical Reader* (Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2008), 129.

⁴⁷ X and Perry, *Speeches Selections; Malcolm X: The Last Speeches*, 94.

As Malcolm's ideology progressed further he began to move away from his earlier belief that there was a shared identity between Africans and African Americans that made them responsible to each other and to endorse more fully the political nature of the connection between the two groups. The distinction between sharing the same ideology and sharing the same goal is pivotal to understanding this discussion. The success of the American civil rights movement can be attributed to the mobilization of massive groups of people because they shared a goal, not because of similar class or ethnicity. Blacks and whites of varied social class and religious affiliation participated in the civil rights movement because they were united under one single goal, not for race or ethnicity. The goal was equal protection under the law that can be reduced to self-determination in the most general sense. Malcolm realized this and that knowledge moves him far past the limiting nationalist perspective he inherited from the Nation of Islam. He continued to support a unified understanding of the African and African American struggle, and when he returned to the U.S. in 1964 he founded the O.A.A.U.

The O.A.A.U. -Organization for Afro-American Unity- was modeled after the O.A.U. -The Organization for African Unity- and was designed to serve a similar function in the United States as the O.A.U did in Africa. It was a political party focused on the benefit of African Americans. As Malcolm describes it:

“...the Organization of Afro-American Unity, which I am the chairman of, intends to work with any group trying to bring about maximum registration of Negroes in this country. We will not encourage Negroes to become registered Democrats or Republicans. We feel that the Negro should be an independent, so that he can throw his weight either way. He should be nonaligned. His political philosophy should be the same as that of the African, absolute neutrality or non-alignment. When the African makes a move, his move is designed to benefit Africa. And

when the Negro makes a move, our move should be designed to benefit us; not the Democratic Party or the Republican Party...”⁴⁸

Through this organization Malcolm planned to unify Black people around the goals of their own benefit rather than sacrificing to the insufficient plans or abilities of the dominant political parties in the country. The organization was still quite young when its founder was assassinated so it did not meet its full potential. On the other hand by reflecting the O.A.U. in America, Malcolm succeeded in once again demonstrating the parity between the Black and Pan-African ideologies. A mass movement of Black Americans to join the O.A.A.U in fighting for their human rights was perhaps more than Malcolm could have expected, but the basic connection between Pan-Africanism and Black ideology remains. Using the O.A.U. as a sounding board Malcolm planned to press his claims for Black American human rights at the U.N.

One of Malcolm’s three major concerns was the introduction of the “Afro-American question” to the United Nations. He spoke briefly on his concerns in 1964 in an interview with Less Crane. He asserted that the civil rights fight in the U.S. was better understood as a human rights battle, and therefore should be taken up with the highest authority in the world. Malcolm said, “The [OAAU] has reached the conclusion, after a careful analysis of the problem, that approaching our problem just on the level of civil rights and keeping it within the jurisdiction of the United States will not bring a solution... It’s a world problem. It’s a human problem”⁴⁹ He believed that Black Americans have internationally protected human rights guaranteed under the U.N. charter

⁴⁸ David Gallen, ed., *The Malcolm X Reader*, 1st Carroll & Graf ed. (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1994), 198.

⁴⁹ X and Perry, *Speeches Selections; Malcolm X : The Last Speeches*, 89.

and that America was doing its best to strip those rights. These include the right to political independence of self-determination, and the right to raise an armed struggle if the above rights are denied. Malcolm never took the option of violence off the table and he used that fear to show that the U.S. was in fact outside its sovereign power in denying Black people their liberties because it created a worldwide security risk. In 1964 Malcolm was present at the meeting of the OAU in order to share his plan to bring the USA before the UN for violations of the human rights of 22 million Black people living in America. His grounds for this presentation were that the deteriorating condition of Black people was becoming a threat to world peace. He believed that if the trends continued as they had then soon Black people would rise up in a violent revolution that could destabilize the entire country and the world.⁵⁰

Malcolm took as precedent for his presentation the 1963 decision by the security council to adopt a resolution condemning apartheid in South Africa. The Council's move in this case was incited by a peaceful gathering that turned into a massacre where 67 civilians were killed and over 100 more were wounded. The 1951 *We Charge Genocide* petition presented to the United Nations General Assembly by Paul Robeson also inspired Malcolm's presentation.⁵¹ Malcolm's petition pointed out the several cases where the United States had violated the universal declaration of human rights. Article 2 guarantees all rights and freedoms to all persons regardless of race, gender or myriad other factors. Article 5 is a protection against torture and cruel or degrading treatment. Article 6 said that everyone must be rightly recognized as a person in every country. Article 7 holds

⁵⁰ Conyers and Smallwood, *Malcolm X: A Historical Reader*, 126.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 126

that all persons are equal under the law. Article 16 asserts the rights of adults to marry whom they choose without restriction. Article 17 guarantees the right to own property to all persons of legal age. Finally Article 23 grants the right to work to all persons without discrimination or limitations. Although Malcolm was assassinated before he could bring his petition past the outline stage and into a full motion, the briefest knowledge of American history recalls numerous examples of how these so-called universal rights have been violated for African American people.⁵² Given Americas dreary record with protecting African American rights Malcolm concludes: “The petition thus contends that after more than three centuries of wrongs against African Americans, It was only fair to conclude that America’s conscience was not able to accord human beings whose skin was not white the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”⁵³ Although he did not live to present his case to the U.N. the arguments he brought to bear still pertain to Black people and Africans. If either group is denied human rights then the same fallacious reasoning used to exclude the first can be applied to the second group.

The political legacy of Malcolm X clearly demonstrates how close Pan-African and Black interests are. In both cases the central principles are human equality, justice and self-determination. Historically, these ideologies have been separated and minimized, but Malcolm shows that they are really deeply connected and important for if one rises, so to must the other. This mutually beneficial connection explains why African-Americans and Africans have maintained political ties: It is not ethnicity, retentions or the nonexistent African identity, but the mutually beneficial political arrangement that

⁵² Ibid., 129

⁵³ Ibid., 129

acknowledges that one cannot simply fight for their own human rights because they can only be achieved together.

Conclusion: The Future of Equality

The above discussion demonstrates that the origin of the connection between Africans and African-Americans is not racial, ethnic, or cultural, it is a political connection that is deeply rooted in the history of Black ideology. W.E.B. Dubois, one of the founding fathers of black ideology, presented a position that held the humanity of all people at its center and advocated for the security of human rights regardless of skin color. Kwame Nkrumah took the belief in mutual humanity as the core of his Pan-African ideology and used that to advocate for the political and economic unity of Africa in order to secure the human rights of its people. Malcolm X took the core of Black ideology one step further with plans to petition the UN for the recognition of the universal human rights of African-Americans. The sum of their works demonstrates that Africans and African-Americans have ideological ties to each other as long as injustice and inequality persist in the world. In fact, the logical conclusion of Black ideology is not at the achievement of equality for all Africans and African-Americans, but at the achievement of universal equality for all people of the world. The humanity that Dubois supported is not limited to the descendants of Africa.

The American Civil Rights movement ended in April of 1968 with the passage of the landmark Civil Rights Act of that year, which marked the beginning of what has been

called the “Post Civil Rights” era.⁵⁴ Black people are no longer marching or protesting because their demands have been met and equal rights and opportunity have been guaranteed under American law, the battle for equality seems to have stalled. The core belief of Black ideology says that this is not enough, and the fight is far from over. Accepting the common humanity of all people has the potential to motivate the next phase of Black political action. Accomplishing legal equality in America is certainly good and commendable, but it must be seen as a waypoint on the path to equality, not the marker of the Promised Land. To be politically Black is to agree with Dubois, Malcolm and Nkrumah, and their beliefs clearly show that the Black people cannot be complacent or satisfied with political equality in any single country for preclusion to liberty anywhere is an assault on equality everywhere, for all people, regardless of culture, ethnicity or nationality. The call of Black ideology can be answered by anyone of any stripe and is not limited to Africans or African-Americans, it resonates with anyone who truly believes that all men are created equal because it is a defense of our common humanity.

⁵⁴ Robert C. Smith and foreword Ronald W. Walters, *We have no Leaders : African-Americans in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 1

Bibliography

1. Adeleke, Tunde. *UnAfrican Americans : Nineteenth-Century Black Nationalists and the Civilizing Mission*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998.
2. Asante, Molefi Kete. *An Afrocentric Manifesto : Toward an African Renaissance*. Cambridge: Polity, 2007.
3. ———. *Afrocentricity : The Theory of Social Change*. Rev. and expand ed. Chicago: African American Images, 2003.
4. Bates, Robert H., V. Y. Mudimbe, and Jean O'Barr, eds. *Africa and the Disciplines : The Contributions of Research in Africa to the Social Sciences and Humanities*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
5. Birmingham, David. *Kwame Nkrumah : The Father of African Nationalism*. Rev. ed. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1998.
6. Bragança, Aquino de and Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, eds. *Quem é o Inimigo English; the African Liberation Reader*. London: Zed Press, 1982.
7. Conniff, Michael L. and Thomas J. Davis, eds. *Africans in the Americas : A History of the Black Diaspora*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.
8. Conyers, James L. and Andrew P. Smallwood, eds. *Malcolm X : A Historical Reader*. Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2008.
9. Danaher, Kevin. *In Whose Interest? : A Guide to US-South Africa Relations*. 1st ed. Washington, D.C.: Institute for Policy Studies, 1984.
10. Davidson, Basil,. *BLACK STAR. A VIEW OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF KWAME NKRUMAH*. N. Y., PRAEGER, 1974, C1973. 225 P:.
11. Diop, Cheikh Anta and Egbuna P. Modum, eds. *Towards the African Renaissance : Essays in African Culture & Development, 1946-1960*. London: Karnak House, 1996.
12. Du Bois, W. E. B. 1963 and Nathan Irvin Huggins, eds. *Selections 1986; Writings. Suppression of the African Slave-Trade; Souls of Black Folk; Dusk of Dawn*. New York, N.Y.: Literary Classics of the United States : Distributed to the trade in the U.S. and Canada by Viking Press, 1986.
13. Du Bois, W. E. B. 1963 and THE CRISIS, eds. *THE EMERGING THOUGHT OF W E B DU BOIS. ESSAYS AND EDITORIALS FROM THE CRISIS. WITH AN*

INTROD., COMMENTARIES, AND A PERSONAL MEMOIR BY HENRY LEE MOON. N. Y., SIMON & S., 1972. 440 P.

14. Ehret, Christopher. *The Civilizations of Africa : A History to 1800*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002.
15. Falola, Toyin, ed. *Ghana in Africa and the World : Essays in Honor of Adu Boahen*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003.
16. Fierce, Milfred C. *The Pan-African Idea in the United States, 1900-1919 : African-American Interest in Africa and Interaction with West Africa*. New York: Garland Pub., 1993.
17. Fishman, George. *The African American Struggle for Freedom and Equality : The Development of a People's Identity, New Jersey, 1624-1850*. New York: Garland Pub., 1997.
18. Fitch, Robert and Mary Oppenheimer joint author, eds. *Ghana; End of an Illusion, by Bob Fitch and Mary Oppenheimer*. New York,: Monthly Review Press, 1968.
19. Frazier, Thomas R. comp. *Afro-American History: Primary Sources Edited Thomas R Frazier Under the Generalhip of John Morton Blum*. New York,: Harcourt Brace & World Inc., 1970.
20. Gaines, Kevin K. *American Africans in Ghana : Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
21. Gallen, David, ed. *The Malcolm X Reader*. 1st Carroll & Graf ed. New York: Carroll & Graf, 1994.
22. Garvey, Marcus 1940 and Tony Martin, eds. *Message to the People : The Course of African Philosophy*. Dover, Mass.: Majority Press, 1986.
23. Harlan, Elliott M Rudwick With a new pref Louis and an epilogue author. *W E B Du Bois, Propagandist of the Negro Protest*,. New York: Atheneum, 1968.
24. Harrison, Guy P. *Race and Reality : What Everyone should Know about our Biological Diversity*. Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2010.
25. Henige, David P., ED, ed. *HISTORY IN AFRICA; A JOURNAL OF METHOD DAVID HENIGE, EDITOR VI- 1974-*. WALTHAM, MASS.: AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION.
26. Hilliard, Asa G., Lucretia Payton-Stewart, Larry Williams, and National Conference on the Infusion of African and African American Content in the School Curriculum, eds. *Infusion of African and African American Content in the School Curriculum :*

Proceedings of the First National Conference, October 1989. 2nd ed. Chicago, Ill.: Third World Press, 1995.

27. Hine, Darlene Clark and Jacqueline McLeod, eds. *Crossing Boundaries : Comparative History of Black People in Diaspora*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1999.
28. Jackson, Tomas F. and Martin Luther King Jr. 1968, eds. *From Civil Rights to Human Rights : Martin Luther King, Jr, and the Struggle for Economic Justice*. Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.
29. Jenkins, Everett and Jr. *Pan-African Chronology : A Comprehensive Reference to the Black Quest for Freedom in Africa, the Americas, Europe and Asia, 1400-1865*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 1996.
30. Jewsiewicki, Bogumil and David S. Newbury, eds. *African Historiographies : What History for which Africa?*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1986.
31. Johnson, Cedric. *Revolutionaries to Race Leaders : Black Power and the Making of African American Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.
32. Keita, Maghan, ed. *Conceptualizing/re-Conceptualizing Africa : The Construction of African Historical Identity*. Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2002.
33. Kelley, Robin DG. *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional! : Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1997.
34. Kly, Yussuf Naim and Malcolm 1965 X, eds. *The Black Book : The True Political Philosophy of Malcolm X (El Hajj Malik El Shabazz)*. Atlanta: Clarity Press, 1986.
35. Lewis, David Levering. *WEB DuBois : A Reader*. 1st Owl book ed. New York: H. Holt, 1995.
36. ———. *WEB DuBois--Biography of a Race, 1868-1919*. 1st Owl book ed. New York: H. Holt, 1994.
37. Maglangbayan, Shawna. *Garvey, Lumumba, and Malcolm: Black National-Separatists*. [1st] ed. Chicago,: Third World Press, 1972.
38. Matsuoka, Atsuko Karin and John Sorenson, eds. *Ghosts and Shadows : Construction of Identity and Community in an African Diaspora*. Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2001.
39. M'buyinga, Elega and translated Michael Pallis. *Panafricanisme Et Néo-Colonialisme English; Pan Africanism Or Neo-Colonialism? : The Bankruptcy of the*

- OAU*. London Westport, Conn., U.S.A.: Zed Press : Camerounian People's Union ; L. Hill U.S. distributor, 1982.
40. Natambu, Kofi. *The Life and Work of Malcolm X*. Malcolm X; Critical Lives, Malcolm X. Indianapolis, Ind.: Alpha Books, 2002.
 41. Nesbitt, Francis Njubi. *Race for Sanctions : African Americans Against Apartheid, 1946-1994*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004.
 42. Nkrumah, Kwame,. *CONSCIENCISM, PHILOSOPHY AND IDEOLOGY FOR DE-COLONIZATION REV ED*. N. Y., MONTHLY REVIEW PR., 1970. 122 P:.
 43. ———. *Ghana; the Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*. New York,: International Publishers, 1971.
 44. Nkrumah, Kwame1972 and Samuel Obeng, eds. *Selected Speeches*. Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah. Accra, Ghana: Afram Publications (Ghana), 1997.
 45. Okpewho, Isidore, Carole Boyce Davies, and Ali Al'Amin Mazrui, eds. *The African Diaspora : African Origins and New World Identities*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999.
 46. Osoro, R. *The African Identity in Crisis*. Hudsonville, Mich.: Bayana Publishers, 1993.
 47. Perry, Bruce. *Malcolm : The Life of a Man Who Changed Black America*. Barrytown, N.Y. New York, N.Y.: Station Hill Press ; Distributed by Talman Co., 1991.
 48. Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom*. 1st. ed. New York: Knopf, 1999.
 49. Smith, R. Drew, ed. *Freedom's Distant Shores : American Protestants and Post-Colonial Alliances with Africa*. Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2006.
 50. Thompson, W. Scott (Willard Scott),. *Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957-1966; Diplomacy, Ideology, and the New State, W Scott Thompson*. Princeton, N.J.,: Princeton University Press, 1969.
 51. Van Deburg, William L., ed. *Modern Black Nationalism : From Marcus Garvey to Louis Farrakhan*. New York: New York University Press, 1997.
 52. Walters, Ronald W. *Pan Africanism in the African Diaspora : An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Political Movements*. Detroit: Wayne State, 1993.
 53. WRIGHT, RICHARD,., *BLACK POWER, A RECORD OF REACTIONS IN A LAND OF PATHOS*. N. Y., HARPER, 1954. 358 P:.

54. Wright, WD. *Black History and Black Identity : A Call for a New Historiography*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002.
55. X, Malcolm1965, Alex Haley, and Attallah Shabazz, eds. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Autobiography of Malcolm X as Told to Alex Haley. New York: Ballantine Books, 1999.
56. X, Malcolm1965 and Bruce Perry, eds. *Speeches Selections; Malcolm X : The Last Speeches*. Last Speeches. 1st ed. New York: Pathfinder, 1989.