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Pan Africanist Congress of Azania



**An Address on Malcolm X's
Legacy to the Black Struggle
in Azania & the U.S.A.**

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Legacy to the Black Struggle
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**Delivered by David Sibeko
on February 22, 1979, during
Black History week at the
University of Illinois, Circle Campus,
Chicago.**

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Introduction

On February 22, 1979, David Sibeko delivered an address at the University of Illinois in Chicago in commemoration of Malcolm X. It was one of the last times David Sibeko would speak in this country. On June 11, his life was cut short by assassins' bullets in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

In his Circle Campus tribute to Malcolm, Mr. Sibeko points out that commemorations are useful only if we draw lessons from the people we are commemorating. Like Malcolm, Comrade Sibeko leaves a rich legacy to people all over the world fighting for their freedom, a legacy which in part we find in this address.

From the internationalist perspective that characterized his life, Mr. Sibeko analyzes the contributions of Malcolm, not only to American Blacks, but to the Azanian people and revolutionaries everywhere. In so doing, he brings to life the Azanian struggle in the manner which won thousands to support the African liberation movement. And he draws the links between our struggle and his, further exposing the ugly face of U.S. imperialism and bringing the inspiration of his people's determined battles to our movement.

Malcolm taught, says Mr. Sibeko, that our struggle is not one of begging for crumbs from the master's table. Nor is it one of passive resistance. Our struggle, he continues, is that of a people rising up to take their destiny into their own hands and to win emancipation in every sense of the word. This, he shows, is true for Black people in both South Africa and the United States.

Nonetheless, Mr. Sibeko concludes, Malcolm's ideas must be applied to the particular conditions of each country. This is one of the lessons which Mr. Sibeko says his organization, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, learned in the aftermath of the Soweto rebellion. The other is the critical importance of maintaining close ties with the people and learning from their experiences.

It is by contributions like these that we remember David Sibeko as an irreplaceable comrade-in-arms.

Workers Voice July, 1979

I thank our chairperson for his very concrete remarks about our own humble contribution to the struggle against oppression, exploitation, and all negative relationships between man and man. I also want to thank all those who have contributed to this program for making it possible for a representative of the vanguard movement of the Azanian people, the oppressed masses in South Africa, to come here and share some thoughts with you on this auspicious occasion.

Today we pay tribute to one of the greatest sons of Mother Earth Africa who ever lived in this part of the world. Indeed Malcolm was not only a great revolutionary African; he was a great human being because his contribution towards the liberation of Black people in the United States of America was in essence a contribution to the age-old struggle of mankind [throughout the world]: freeing the dispossessed, freeing the slave, freeing the oppressed and exploited from the yoke of feudal oppression, colonial oppression and imperialist exploitation.

We note also that here at the University of Illinois at Circle Campus, this has been dedicated as a week of Black History. This affords me the opportunity on behalf of the struggling people of my country, and indeed on behalf of the African continent, to pay the highest revolutionary tribute to African-Americans, not only for their heroic deeds in the struggle against the abduction from Africa and their enslavement in these United States of America; but also for the treasures they have stored in the archives and other journals of the great performances of Black heroes throughout the fight against slavery, colonialism and imperialism: the Harriet Tubman's, the Frederick Douglass', the W.E.B. DuBois', and indeed the man we have met to commemorate today, Malcolm X.

One of the greatest tragedies of colonialism is the deliberate inculcation by the colonialists of a feeling of inferiority amongst those who have been so captured and so enslaved. It is indeed a pity that even in independent Africa, our children in their very fertile stages are systematically fed the malnourishing diet of the superiority of all European civilization to the total exclusion of all the achievements of the Black African people. We know more about Christopher Columbus, we know more about the so-called "great" kings of Europe, we know more about the missionary work of white adventurists, than we do about the achievements of the Nubian people in the Nile Valley or about the great empires of Ghana and Mali, which had institutions of learning to which Europeans travelled from their own countries to

learn the advanced subjects of Mathematics and Science. Had it not been for the sterling work that has been done by African-American scholars and other contributors, such a history would be lost to us in Africa where, because of colonial oppression and exploitation, we have had in the main to rely on oral history, history passing from generation to generation [by word of mouth]. Because of their work we see, even in the commercialized versions of "Roots" that daily assail us from our television boxes, a certain trace and a certain element of the richness of African life and how it has been systematically deprived of its vital essence. But even those of us who perhaps have seen the scales drop from our eyes when we try to authenticate the history of our people, do so by using European models. To give you an example: when you look at the history of King Shaka in Azania, a great warrior, a great nation-builder, a military genius, an astute administrator, when the history books dare pay him any compliment at all, he is referred to as the Black Napoleon of South Africa. A man like Napoleon would never be referred to as the Shaka of France. This is the kind of mental assault that has been inflicted on us down the years.

I say again, we have a great deal of respect for our African-American brothers and sisters who through prodigious effort have done sterling work in preserving some of our great heritage. We join you with enthusiasm in celebrating this week of Black History on this campus.

As I said, Malcolm was a man who had a tremendous amount of impact, not only within these shores, but all over the continent of Africa, in the Middle East and amongst revolutionaries the world over. Malcolm was a fighter as much as Malcolm was a teacher. This is a very rare combination. Many great leaders are only recognized in history for the things that they have said, for the points of view that they have articulated and for the ideas that they have espoused. But very few leaders ever get the opportunity to put into practice the ideas that they have conceived. It is a scientific fact, however, that the validity of any idea, no matter how grand, can only be tested through practice. When Malcolm spoke of Black people in this country rising to seize their freedom by any means necessary, he was in the forefront to seize that freedom by any means necessary.

He, like we in the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, sought to remove the protest of the Black man from the doldrums of passive resistance, or rather from the experience of turning the other cheek and perhaps earning a Nobel Peace Prize at the end of the day. He sought rather to slap back, that is, meeting fire with fire. If anybody

dared to punch Malcolm, he was going to doubly punch him back. For a people that have for 400 years been systematically oppressed and forced to submit to their oppression and even had inculcated into them an inferiority complex because of the color of their skin, to have a man who could stand up before them and say: "You as a human being are as worthy as any other human being," irrespective of the color of his skin, the shape of his or her nose, or the length of his or her hair, is to make a major stand that parts company with submissiveness and cap-in-hand struggle. And this is what Malcolm was able to do.

We readily identify with such a stand in the Pan Africanist Congress. In our own circumstances, our struggle had to be divorced from the passive resistance that might have been well and good for Ghandi and the millions of Indians fighting a viceroy in New Delhi, India. But it could never work where we have a white oligarchy that has been entrenched in our country and has reduced to fourth class citizens the indigenous people of our country, closing all avenues of political protest of a peaceful nature that would in any way hold out the legal way of struggle. In effect, in order to destroy the system of oppression, you have to be able to destroy the edifice on which it stands.

The edifice in South Africa is the whole plethora of apartheid colonial laws, the laws that legislate for an African to be deprived of and denied his one inalienable birthright, the right of citizenship in the land of his forefathers. He is carted off into slave camps, reserves, labor reservoirs, the so-called "Homelands," and asked to remain there until monopoly capital requires his services in the rest of the country, the white-declared areas where some 87% of the minerals rest, where all of the industries rest, where all of the seaports are, and where all of the airports are. And when those services come up for being required, he, as the breadwinner of the family, may not bring his spouse with him to cohabit in the normal fashion that has been accepted the world over. He has to share little barracks that are called all-male hostels where he sleeps on a concrete bunker, where he has no proper sanitation or lighting, and in fact the whole set-up is designed to humiliate him mentally and destroy him physically. The work that he does is largely below ground, where for up to 12 hours a day, he removes from the bowels of his own earth the wealth of his own country, his natural inheritance, bringing it to the surface so that the bloodsuckers of international monopoly capital may be able to heist this wealth and send it to the money markets of London, of New York, of Paris, and of Bonn.

That is a struggle that could never be fought to its successful con-

clusion by appealing to the Christian conscience of our white oppressors. It required for the African to stand up for his rights, to seize back the land that has been possessed of him, to seize back the means of production that have been created through his blood, labor and sweat, and to ensure that the fruits of the victory of the restoration of the natural resources can be distributed equitably among those people who labor to create it aplenty.

Occasions such as this are useful only if we will then draw lessons from men like Malcolm X and our own late president, Mangaliso Sobukwe, whose death we commemorate next Monday. They gave us the idea that the African people must stand up as one in our country; that the African people must fight not only to remove the insulting discriminatory signs of apartheid, but fight to seize political power in our country; that our people must fight not merely for better wages and better salaries, but fight to ensure that we establish an egalitarian system in our country. On March 21, 1960 at Sharpesville and Ilanga, we made a stand, we mobilized our people and we launched a positive action campaign which compelled the world and the apartheid regime itself to take note of the determination of our people to fight for their liberation.

Having accomplished that, Mangaliso Sobukwe and his movement, the Pan Africanist Congress, pronounced a turning point in the history of our struggle, in fact drew up the battlelines. In the arena of South African politics, as Sobukwe said, there are only two contestants, the oppressor and the oppressed. There can be no middle line, there can be no middle route. So that even amongst those who are intellectual converts to our struggle (and we say intellectual converts to our struggle because they continue to exploit the color of their skin and derive from apartheid all of the benefits that apartheid apportions for white people exclusively, to the total negation of the African people), those who are so convinced must themselves join the oppressed in a living way, that is make the sacrifices that we make or are prepared to make.

And Malcolm, to the specification of the United States of America, was speaking up for Black people in a similar vein. He was talking about Black people controlling those political institutions that have to do with their daily life. He was saying, as a matter of fact, that we can run these schools, we can run these universities, we can run these councils, we can run these legislatures, and we can send to Congress, if need be, people that are capable of articulating the situation of our unemployment, the situation of our poor health services, the situation of our overall denigration as Black people in this part of the

world.

Yesterday I attended in Brooklyn a commemoration service to Malcolm at which his great and dear and loving wife, Dr. Betty Shabazz, was present. Now I've shared many platforms with Sister Betty and she has a personal profound humility, most unassuming, very self-effacing, and is never ostentacious in any way or form. That is why we don't find her to be the toast of the media in this country—because she humbles herself in front of the people and serves them the best way she can. But I've never seen her so broad in smile, so enthusiastic in applause, so involved in a meeting, in expressions that were coming out of that meeting.

What came out was really brought out by two very immaculate Black speakers. One was Gil Noble, who in New York is a newsreader on ABC but also does a special program of his own called Black News. We had compiled with very great difficulty, and I happen to know this because Gil and I are close, a portrait of Malcolm covering his very early beginnings, his work in the streets of Harlem, across the country, even his high intellectual presentation before the Oxford Union in England, his visits to the U.N. and his presentations there of petitions pertaining to the deprivation of human rights of Black people in this country. Gil brought out a simple message. He said that joining ABC he could have been many things but he chose to be the thing that Malcolm would have expected him to be, that Black people in this country would expect him to be. He said that he would continue to be subjective as a journalist on ABC as long as white journalists are subjective towards their own, and that he had no apologies to make for that. And that is why he presents the struggle of Black people in this country from a subjective point of view—because he is a direct victim and that he would like to live up to the image which his people expect of him.

The other speaker was Reverend Daughtry. Reverend Daughtry is chairman of the Black United Front in the Brooklyn area. It is a very important movement, it's a growing movement, it's assuming very important significance in that area. It think its growth owes itself to what has been a very heavily exploited term but is being applied in this instance in a very creative way—to the Black nationalism of Daughtry and his collaborators. They speak a very revolutionary language but Daughtry maintains that revolutionary language that is not accompanied by revolutionary action is meaningless. But for such revolutionary action, Black people in this part of the world have to understand the concrete conditions that they are living under. And having understood those concrete conditions, they must organize among

themselves to seize those political institutions that are within their grasp to the maximum, to seize that ability to have a say-so within the system to the extent possible so they can begin to approach the goals that they think as African-Americans within this country they can attain. Malcolm's wife beamed, because for his basis, Daughtry went back to the basic documents of Malcolm's Organization of Afro-American unity and articulated its aims and objectives.

And these aims and objectives addressed themselves to more than punching the air with our clenched fists. They addressed themselves to the institutions that are responsible for our oppression and to overcoming them so as to create better institutions that will serve our people. It is a matter of domestic politics so I think it is more for American revolutionaries to address themselves to those guidelines and see how they can utilize them best. But I do say that it was something that made the widow of Malcolm feel very enthusiastic during that occasion.

Nobody can fail to recognize that there is at this present time a dearth in struggle on both sides of the color line of the United States of America. The American revolution is in search, maybe not of a direction, but of a launching pad and it's really up to Americans to provide that launching pad. I think that during this period there are many like Daughtry who are beginning to recognize that the system that oppresses us is a system that is highly organized, and that to be able to overthrow that system and bring about one that will serve us we need a superior organization. In essence it is people who make history, not things. If things were able to control history, the Shah of Iran would not be a refugee in Morocco today. The superior organization of the revolutionary forces in Iran made it possible for the people of Iran to demonstrate that F-111's, Sherman tanks, sophisticated spy equipment, all of that is a paper tiger in the face of a people united and determined to wage struggle against any enemy, no matter how powerful.

We ourselves in the Azanian national liberation struggle have learned some of these lessons in a very painful way. I have referred to the entrance of the Pan-Africanist Congress into the national liberation struggle, to the great victory that we scored at the time of Sharpesville. That victory was followed by a period of fierce determination to wage armed struggle for the first time since our forefathers were conquered by Anglo-Dutch settler colonialism. In fact, this year, 1979, we celebrate the first centennial of the last great victory of our forefathers against British imperialism, when the armed forces of King Cetshwayo defeated British divisions, inflicting in this continent Africa the first

defeat of its kind on British imperialism south of Sahara. Since then we had a leadership that was captured by the missionary forces, taught in the Christian ways, and guided into believing that by petitioning and merely demonstrating against the colonialists, we might be able to prick the Christian conscience of our oppressors.

In 1960, Mangaliso Sobukwe, the president of PAC, said this was not possible. We are our own liberators. There is no way, anyway in history, that a pirate will ever surrender the privileges of power and all that goes with it, through peaceful means. You have to force that tyranny to come down to its knees. When we went into the positive action campaign, the whole world came to recognize the historical march of our people to freedom and independence. But an enemy of South Africa's tyrannical pretensions is not likely to give in to simply one campaign. Indeed the apartheid regime rallied and introduced some of the fiercest repression that mankind has ever known on this earth. It intensified its laws of repression and its summary executions of those that had been detained. A series of comrades went to the hangman's noose in Pretoria; scores of others are doing life imprisonment for standing up against the apartheid regime. Over 10,000 PAC cadres were arrested in 1963 in a pre-emptive attempt to stop a nationwide armed uprising.

But towards the close of the sixties our young people, particularly those at college levels, started certain rumblings. These rumblings emerged into the South African Students Organization, and later into the Black People's Convention, and later still into a series of black mass organizations that became known as the Black Consciousness Movement, with Steve Biko as its leader. The mass work being done at that time, the assertion of black dignity, the nation-building effort of Steve Biko, culminated in the June 16, 1976 uprisings at Soweto. With bare hands, with bottles, with stones, with sticks, and other such primitive weapons, our young primary school children and our high school students, fought toe to toe against tanks, helicopters and other weapons. Over 2000 of them were killed in the streets of Soweto, Thembisa, Gugulethu, and hundreds of towns and ghettos and villages throughout Azania. It was very much of a kind of repeat performance of what you have seen on your television screens around the mass movement of the Iranian people in the streets of Teheran and Tabriz and so forth. But it is a measure of the formidable enemy that we are up against, that even after almost a year of such mass resistance, as much as the South African economy suffered, as much as South Africa's isolation intensified, as much as international condemnation was raised to a point of crescendo, especially after the

murder of Steve Biko, the South African racist regime was able to resist.

Naturally this called for a great deal of concern from those of us who have been entrusted with certain mandates by our people, namely entrusted with the mandate to intensify the struggle for national liberation in Azania. We had long ago selected the weapon of armed struggle; we had long ago said that we must organize our guerilla units into such a situation that they were able to concentrate their superior forces against the inferior forces of the enemy's. We had in fact studied and restudied and overstudied in instances all of the tactics of a people's war. But although there were comrades who performed well, although there were comrades who made tremendous sacrifices, suddenly, when our people rose as one in 1976, there was lacking the cutting urge of the national liberation movement which could have channelled all of this energy and all of this human resource in a direction whereby we would too be riding the tanks of the enemy in the streets of Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Capetown today in our victory.

We say this openly because we are revolutionaries. One of the basic tenets of being a revolutionary is the ability to be self-critical. We had to find out what went wrong, where did it go wrong, how did it go wrong. The leadership of the Pan Africanist Congress went into this exercise of introspection. We resolved that since our forces had been rejuvenated with the influx of young men and young women into the ranks of the national liberation movement, perhaps the time had come for us to take full advantages of the fresh experience of these cadres, as well as the experience of the old cadres of our movement. We sat in conclave and discussed and self-examined and were self-critical, objective and constructive in our criticism, so that we could build the kind of formidable force that in the next round would not be caught unawares. And that in fact would be in charge of the direction of the next round.

In such an exercise it is inevitable that there would be casualties, those elements that fear democracy, want to mystify the duties, do not want to be self-critical and want to cover up. We went through that exercise and we found that in the PAC we are not unique, we will have such a problem. Nevertheless the Central Committee boldly went through the exercise, made the necessary decisions, and called the Consultative Conference of the Pan Africanist Congress. It was a conference of the leadership, the old cadres with a lifetime of experience, and of the youth of Soweto and Gugulethu, of SASO and BPC, who had left the ranks of the mass organizations and taken membership of

our national liberation movement, bringing with them the fresh experiences.

Through this exercise we were able to chart a new program of action to forge ahead with the struggle. Such exercise was successfully concluded in Arusha during June and July of last year. A program of action was adopted and its efficacy can be determined by the fact that inside six months, the PAC through its armed wing, the Azanian People's Liberation Army, initiated such campaigns inside the country as would force the notorious Jimmy Krueger, the killer of Steve Biko, to admit on the 20th of November in a public television and radio broadcast that since Arusha, the Pan Africanist Congress had intensified its armed activities inside South Africa. It was reported by the *The Guardian* in London, *The Johannesburg Star* in South Africa itself, and indeed by these radio and television services, that we had mounted an Operation Homecoming and that we had mounted an Operation Cottonraiser inside South Africa. Krueger claimed falsely that they had arrested over 23 PAC guerillas inside the country. Indeed there have been mass arrests but they have been going after every suspected PAC person, not only in apartheid 87% white-owned territories, but even in those reservoirs, the Bantustans like the Transkei, where they scour the countryside for the armed forces of the PAC. As Boutier, the Chief of Security in South Africa, told Patrick Lawrence of the *Johannesburg Rand Daily Mail*, they do not have such a problem with the other elements trained to stage guerilla warfare in South Africa because invariably they want to come into the urban areas and stage their actions there. Likewise the PAC does have certain urban actions, but we mainly concentrate on working in the countryside. In this way, we stretch the mobility of the security forces so that it is more difficult for them to come into contact with our subversive activities. This was reported in the *Johannesburg Rand Daily Mail*. So that at this point in time, we in the Pan Africanist Congress, with very limited resources at our disposal, are sparing no effort to intensify the struggle for national liberation in our country. As you might notice, every commentator who goes to South Africa today, including Anthony Lewis in the *NY Times* this morning, speaks of a toughened Black South African, a more militant Black South African. We know from our work among the people that something is going to explode in this country that's going to make Soweto look like a kindergarten. Our people have reached their saturation point and, as Mangaliso Sobukwe once said, the time will come when the Black man in South Africa will say "So far and no more."

Whilst this readiness on our part is gathering momentum, the enemy is also up to his own monkey tricks. We hear daily about the

prospects of a national convention, where oppressor and oppressed must sit at a round table and decide how to prepare a new constitution for South Africa. I simply say that the PAC would totally reject that with all the contempt that it invites. The interest of the Pan Africanist Congress can never be the same as the interest of Oppenheimer and his like. We are fighting for national liberation, the right to self-determination, and not for crumbs from the master's table. The moment has come when we must seize political power and restore it to the ownership of the people. We will not allow ourselves at this critical point, when imperialism is in crisis all over the world, in the Middle east, in Southeast Asia, everywhere, to bail out imperialism by becoming principled, nice niggers in our 3-piece suits. No way. We have no intentions of betraying the protracted revolutionary struggles of our fathers which date back to the advent of colonialism. At a time when the people of Zimbabwe are encircling Salisbury, ready to proclaim a free Zimbabwe, at a time when the people of Namibia are marching inexorably to the creation of a free and independent Namibia, we will not settle for second class independence in Azania. In no way can that be done. We say that we are going to wage the struggle tit for tat, through to its successful conclusion. And in Azania there will be a non-regal, truly democratic and a socialist society. About that there can be no compromise. We regard our struggle as merely a side theatre in the global struggle to liquidate the exploitation of man by man.

Today we are unable to make our contribution toward the struggles of the people of the United States of America, save to say we shall make U.S. imperialism highly uncomfortable in our own country. It is for that reason that we appreciate the acts of solidarity that we have seen emerge from these parts, like the campaigns for divestment, and for the diplomatic isolation of South Africa. Of course we know that in the final analysis, it is not going to be the marches through the streets of Washington, New York, Chicago, or San Francisco that will compel the U.S. imperialists to pull out of our country. It will be when we firebomb the factories of Ford, of General Motors, of Chrysler, of Coca Cola, and all these multinational corporations in our country, that Lloyd's will find it bad business to insure their companies and they will be forced to pull out of our country.

We want to say we are indebted to all of you for the support that you have given us, but the struggle is still going to be fairly protracted. Our enemy has been armed to the teeth by the western countries; our enemy possesses even the potential for manufacturing nuclear weapons. We therefore feel that it is not a time when we can become complacent. We call upon you to seize the initiative that has been taken.

Revolutionary Workers Headquarters Statement on the Death of David Sibeko

Office of the Permanent Representative of the
Pan Africanist Congress of Azania
United Nations Plaza
New York, New York

Dear Friends,

With deepest sorrow we receive the news of the death of comrade David Sibeko. We will miss the voice that never tired of denouncing the savage injustice of apartheid, the laughter he shared with those who joined him, and the enthusiasm that only an assassin's bullet could stop.

His words helped many of us in the U.S. to better understand the struggle to liberate Azania and all of Africa. He showed the common features of our struggles. In a recent speech commemorating the life of Malcolm X, another martyred Black revolutionary, he spoke humbly about the importance of keeping ties with the lives and resistance of his people, a task made doubly hard by apartheid repression.

We are inspired by his life. We mourn his death. He was a tremendous spokesman and leader of the Azanian people, an example to all who strive to be free of exploitation and oppression.

In remembering David Sibeko we re-dedicate ourselves to the cause he died for: that not one more generation of African people will suffer the inhumanity of apartheid and that future generations will live in freedom.

We extend our sincerest sympathies to his wife Elizabeth and his children and to our comrades in the Pan Africanist Congress.

In sorrow and respect
Revolutionary Workers Headquarters
June 18, 1979