

# INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Africans and Blacks in the diaspora



Edited by  
**Jeje Kolawole**

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INTRODUCTION TO  
SOCIAL AND POLITICAL  
PHILOSOPHY

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*(Africans and Blacks in Diaspora)*

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*Edited by*

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*Complimentary Copy  
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## **DEDICATION**

To those giants in social and political philosophy upon whose shoulders we stand to see beyond the Crowd.

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**Jeje Kolawole Omotehinse**

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## PREFACE

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This little Book is an introduction to the study of social and political philosophy of Africans and Blacks in Diaspora. Also casual readers and lovers of philosophy and in general those who have interest in reading about Blacks will find the book useful.

The task of this little book is to provide simple and straight forward study for students who may have interest in social and political philosophy of the Africans and Blacks both at home and in Diaspora.

It is to be stated here that, the book gives just a little of the study on Africans and Blacks in the diaspora. The students using the book still need to equip themselves with full and comprehensive book on each Nationalist discussed.

The book has drawn tremendously from the works of a few authors, philosophers and publishers. We acknowledge D. D. Raphael, *Problems of Political Philosophy* (London) The macmillan Press Ltd. 1976). Aivan O. Thompson, *Africans in the Caribbean and the Guyannas* ' Tarikh, vol. 5/5, Kwame Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Part* (London: Panaf book Ltd). 1973), Cesair Aime, *Discourse on Colonialism* Translated from French by J. Pinkham New York, Monthly Review Press 1972, Fanon Frantz, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963); *Studies in Dying Colonialism* (1965), Rodney Walter, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1982), Anthony D. Smith; *State of Nation in the 3rd World* (London: Wheatshet Book Ltd 1983 and Paulo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* translated by Myra Bergmem Ramos, London, Penguin Book: 1972 and a host of others who may be acknowledged in the references and bibliography of the text.

Special gratitude goes to our guest contributors, whose articles are republished in this book. I say a big thank to Professor S. B. Oluwole, Dr. Muiyiwa Falaye and Dr. Olufemi Mimiko. Special thank also goes to Dr. S. A. Ali for his effort to see that the book come out successfully.

Needless to say, the final responsibility for the general plan of this book, together with the burden of any shortcoming rest solely upon me. Any error and in accuracies herein contained are to be attributed mainly to my amateurism in an attempt to develop a philosophical mind, but the ideas expressed by the different contributors are entirely theirs.

**Jeje Kolawole. O.**  
March, 2000

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## FOREWORD

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Aristotle in a famous historical aphorism declared man as a "political animal". This aphorism is nothing short of the fact that man, at all ages, does not only engage in politics but also, given his gregarious, sophisticated and specialised behaviour, naturally lives in a "polis" - that is, in a governed and socially interactive community. In the light of this, he is bound to experience or come across the "turmoil" of life characteristically designed by nature but something significantly worthy of philosophical study.

However, this book, *Introduction to Social and political philosophy: Africans And Blacks in Diaspora* is, conceptually, a cogent digest in socio-political philosophy venturing into the socio-political activism of the African past. Contextually, the book addresses a number of socio-political issues bordering on the act of politicking and political governance. These issues precisely include among others, the concepts of political philosophy, race and racism, violence and non-violence, colonization and decolonization, freedom, as well as the question of under-development, the enslavement of the African mindset, imperialism and reparations.

It is significant to note here, that all the conceptual socio-political issues addressed were handled by seasoned as well as intellectually aggressive young African scholars. In pursuing this goal, they have perceptively focussed attention on the African experience bearing in mind the African experience and the immediate needs for the Africans to overcome rapidly the torture and the nasty experiences of imperialism and alien political governance.

For an ambitious mind who aspires to equip and update himself with the knowledge of African polity in diaspora with current political issues, this book will definitely be one of the most worthy materials to consult.

Hence, it is in line with the above expectations that this book is recommended for all lovers of political thought, the general readers interested in conceptual issues underlying social and political philosophy of the African past and as well to students in tertiary institutions.

S. Ade Ali, Ph.D.  
Department of Philosophy  
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## = CHAPTER NINE =

### HAROLD CRUISE MALCOM 'X's VIOLENCE PHILOSOPHY

**Ebikaboere Ovia**

#### INTRODUCTION:

**M**ALCOM X is regarded as one of the most advocates of violent society which considered less the interest of the Negro race. He was born and bred in the mix of violence. He believed like Frantz Fanon, that the way to gain freedom is through violence. In most cases, his political idea has been described as violent. He believed in violence as a necessity and not a prior of a social protest against injustice. Malcom X does not only believe in action, but also substitutes violence for the delay of passive action. That is why Alex Haley and M.S. Handler (1965) quoted him thus:

*I am for violence, if non - violence mean we continued postponing solution to the America Black Man's problem - just to avoid violence. <sup>1</sup>*

Malcom X sees violence as an important instrument of self - defence of the racist attack. He has a violence nature and so he was described as " the angriest Negro in America"<sup>2</sup> He justified this anger by the Bible and thereafter conclude that he believes in anger.

Malcom X's violence seems to justify the Negroes' right to defend themselves against racist attacks, by any means. Malcom X is careful not to claim radical and absolute violence. That is why he says " I am not for wanton violence"<sup>3</sup> Malcom X believes that non - violence cannot solve the problem of physical alienation and psychological alienation of the Negroes.

#### MALCOM X'S PROFILE

Malcom X was the seventh child of a family of nine to Reverend Earl Little. He was born in 19th of May, 1925 in Omaha Nebraska. His father was a Baptist Minister, who organized for "Marcus Aurelius Garver's Universal Negro improvement Association" (UNIA)

His mother was Louise Little, who was born in Grenada. His father was killed when he was six years old. The Murder case was filed as a suicide case by the police. At the age of thirteen, he developed into the world of crime. He learnt this

through his struggles with his sister at Roxbury. Although crime then seemed almost unavoidable among black under Negro condition and training. Malcom X was charged for robbery and was sentenced to ten years imprisonment. This Malcom X 's offence would only earn the white criminal for only one year. He become a Muslim when he was in prison converted by Honourable Elijah Muhammed, the founder of the nation of Islam in America.

In 1952, on his coming out of prison, he changed his "Little" to X. This little was taken up by the members of the Black Muslim Organisation. This little meant much to his past and psychological make - up. So he started preaching in his philosophy, that is, "rejection of evil white society". Initially, Malcom X's life was with full of irrational crimes and recklessness, which later transformed to a newly born again Muslim life. He takes up a new life in the Temple of black Muslims and change to a new philosophy.

Malcom X established a mosque in Philadelphia and also founded the "Muhammad speaks" - a newspaper.

He also headed another mosque in Harlem in New York city. He was recognised officially as leader of the Muslim sect. His speech and philosophy in which he demanded for quick and speedy separation and independence, and non - participation in white society or religion, and the condemnation of white decadence and immorality, became a permanent threat to other Muslim leaders. In November 22, 1963, he proposed that President John F. Kennedy's assassination, was a case of "Chickens coming home to roost". This mean an out growth of the kind of violence that whites had been using against Negroes. For this, there was destestation and jealousy from other colleagues in the sect, who later poisoned Elijah Muhammed's mind against him. So He was suspended for 90 days from the sect and from preaching on behalf of the sect. He dissociate himself from the sect before the expiring date to form his own nationalists groups. These two groups are (1) The Muslim Mosque Inc. and (2) Organisation of Afro - America Unity. The second group is a powerful movement directed towards black unity and freedom in co -operation with several other civil right group.

He made pilgrimage to Mecca. This changed him totally from his White outlook and even sees "whites as evil race". He changed his name to Alhaji Malik al Shabazz. His belief at this point is that Black struggle could be made with the help of World Organisations, and other Black's group. He even believed that Black struggle could be made with effort of the progressive white groups.

Malcom X was assassinated , which he had prophecised before. He says

*It has always been my belief that I, too will die by violence.  
I have done all that I can to be prepared.*

His death was a blow on the advancement on the struggle involved in a race relation in America.

## MALCOM X'S VIEW ON VIOLENCE

Malcom X's philosophy of violence and social justice is very significant academically and historically. His philosophy seeks for the solution to the white radical discrimination of the Whites against the Blacks. Hence, the philosophy further expresses how the plausible solution can be sought for Negroes' freedom. Black's existence was threatened by a White terrorist group called "ku Klux Kan". This terrorist group was established in 1865, but its operation was not apparent until 1868, three years after its establishment. The Whites claimed that the Black in America posed problems, economically to the Whites. So this group (Ku Klux Kan) serves as a catalyst against the Black economic rivals.

Later or sooner, as a result of the rapid extension of this group, the whole empire become an epitome of white racial terrorism, violence, vengeance and operation. It was recorded that the members of this terrorist group engage in nocturnal activities like night-riders masked, horse riding, whipped and tortures. All these activities were to the disadvantage of the Blacks. It was even recorded in 1921, handsome members of casualties. This sect were accused of responsible for 4 killings, 1 mutilation with acid, 41, flogging, 27 tar- and feathering, 5 kidnappings and 43 persons driven into exile. All these allegations were denied by the spokes man for the Klan.

The Black struggle continued in the midst of these terrorists' activities. Education became a good weapon of survival for the black. The black elite came up to defend the right of the whole black race in America. In America, people like Booker, T. Washington, Marcus Garver, Edward Blyden and Malcom X stood up to defend the right of the black. Malcom X was opposed to in action for action towards the struggle for emancipation. By violence, Malcom X means self-defence against assault. He claims that he never advocated for violence. He says;

*The violence I constantly refer to is the violence that the Negro in America is the Victim of, and I have never advocated our people going out and initiating any acts of oppression against white indiscriminately.<sup>5</sup>*

Malcom X explains further by registering his protest against the uncared attitude of the United State Government over the oppression of the Whites on Blacks. He says;

*... and if the United State Government ... Unwilling or unable to protect us and our lives and property ... its time for our people ..... to protect ourselves to defend ourselves against this.<sup>6</sup>*

Although, Malcom X claims that he was not for wanton violence, but for self-defence. He became initiated with the inactive of some civil rights for black emanci-

pation. He has no option than to switch over to what he denied before. He says;

*I am for violence, if non - violence means we continue postponing a solution ... just to avoid violence if it also means ... a delayed solution which is non solution.* <sup>7</sup>

He therefore advocated for black revolution, because he believed that it is the only means that would bring back or restore justice. He says he believed in justice, which he felt can only be achieved through black revolution. He kicked against Negro's revolution because he claimed that "Everything in nature can defend itself, and is right in defending itself, except the American Negro.

Malcom X says that the American Negroes should stand and fight for their right. As he claims;

*... Afro - Americans should stay and fight for what was rightfully theirs - an equitable share of food, clothing, shelter, education, jobs and power that had been the birthright of other American*<sup>8</sup>.

Malcom X sees all the sit - in and march embarked by the black as black weakness and this would further encourage aggression and oppression by the White. So Non - violence encourages the spirit of superiority and inferiority complex among the White and Black respectfully. So the Blacks need to swift into actions and defend themselves against the White oppression.

To him, inaction postpones the justice which would have been done soonest. He strongly believed that "justice delayed is justice denied". Malcom X claims that Evil is a bad aid to morality which moral, and non - violence cannot encourage it. So to him, violent that attempts to make wrong right is a moral action. He claims that self defence is an intelligent and right mode of action taught by Prophet Muhammed.

To all these views of Malcom X, the White community feared him, because they thought that he could bring an uprising. It was recorded that some followers of Malcom X resulted to violent destruction and this act reduced the oppression of the White.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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