

# MALCOLM X

El Hajj Malik El Shabazz

# TRIBUTE PAPER



Volume One of VANTAGE POINT: Malcolm X Tribute.

first edition, 2019  
second edition, 2020

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Published by Naledi Press, California



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Coming in the next issue: Marcus Garvey and the UNIA

# INDEX

- I. Growing up
- II. Detroit Red
- III. Nation of Islam
- V. The Journey to Africa, Omowale - the Son who has returned, the Hajj in Mecca and true Muslim Brotherhood across Races
- VI. The Organization of Afro-American Unity
- VII. The Plot to Kill Malcolm X

## Appendix

Malcolm X – full Speech on the Founding of the  
OAAU June 28, 1964

Selected Quotes

## Sources



# A LIFE SYNOPSIS

## From Malcolm Little to Malcolm X to El Hajj Malik El Shabazz



### I. GROWING UP

Malcolm X was born Malcolm Little on May 19, 1925 in Omaha, Nebraska as the third of four children born to Louise and Earl Little, his father had 3 more children by his previous wife. Both parents were supporters of Marcus Garvey and were active members in the local chapter of the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Her uncle Edgerton Langdon introduced Louise to Garveyism and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Through the UNIA in Montreal she met Earl Little, a craftsman and lay minister from Reynolds, Georgia. They married on May 10, 1919.



*Louise and Earl Little*



*Honorable Marcus Mosiah Garvey presiding at the 1922 UNIA convention, Liberty Hall, New York City.*

Malcolm recalls in his autobiography,

“My father, the Reverend Earl Little, was a Baptist minister, a dedicated organizer for Marcus Aurelius [Mosiah] Garvey's UNIA (Universal Negro Improvement Association). With the help as such disciples as my father, Garvey, from his headquarter in New York City's Harlem, was raising the banner of black race purity and exhorting the Negro masses to return their ancestral African homeland - a cause which had made Garvey the most controversial black man on earth.” (Malcolm X 1984 [1964]:1)



*UNIA Rally, Harlem 1924*





Louise worked as chapter secretary. Louise Little, Malcolm's mother, an educated woman, was born in Grenada, to a black mother and a white father, she never met her father. Malcolm described her as looking like a white woman, with straight black hair. Malcolm himself stated he was the lightest child in the family. Malcolm recalls her working hard. In his autobiography Malcolm mentioned that he felt his father was favoring him over his brothers, which he attributed to his lighter tone of color. His mother, on the other hand, was much more severe with Malcolm. She beat him regularly, but did not beat his brothers.

When Malcolm was born, the family moved from Omaha to Lansing, Michigan as the racist KKK was heavily active in Omaha, threatening Earl Little's life more than once. Only a few months after their arrival, the Little's house was burned to the ground by the same hate group. The family moved further to East Lansing. Malcolm recalls his father's deep dedication to the cause of spreading Garvey's message. He had seen four of his six brothers die by violence, three of them killed by white men, including one by lynching. "What my father couldn't know then was that of the remaining three, including himself, only one, my Uncle Jim, would die in bed, of natural causes. Northern white police were later to shoot my Uncle Oscar. And my father was finally himself to die by the white man's hands. It has always been my belief that I, too, will die by violence. I have done all that I can to be prepared," (Malcolm X 1984 [1964]: 2)



Malcolm's father was an ambitious man, he was inspired by and dedicated to the message of Marcus Garvey.

"I can remember hearing of "Africa for the Africans", "Ethiopians, Awake!" And my father would talk about how it would not be much longer before Africa would be completely run by Negroes - "by black men," was the phrase he always used. (...) I remember seeing the big, shiny photographs of Marcus Garvey that were passed from hand to hand." (Malcolm X 1984 [1964]: 6)

Earl's activism made him a target. He received death threats from the white supremacist organization Black Legion. The Littles decided to move away from Omaha and its racially toxic atmosphere and relocated to Lansing, Michigan, where the climate was not much better. In 1929 their home in Lansing was burned to the ground. Earl, against all odds, remained highly active in the UNIA and remained a threat to the status quo.

Two years later, in 1931 Earl was murdered in Lansing, run over by a streetcar. Police ruled the incidents as an accident. Malcolm later wrote, "Negroes in Lansing have always whispered that he was attacked, and then laid across some tracks for a streetcar to run over him. (...) It was morning when we children at home got the word that he was dead. I was six. I can remember a vague commotion, the house filled up with people crying, saying bitterly that the white Black Legion had finally gotten him. My mum was hysterical." (Malcolm X 1984 [1964]: 10)

After a few years Louise's psychological health declined rapidly. She did not get the full life insurance paid out, as the company was claiming Earl committed suicide. The welfare office was pressuring her and at one point she could not take any more. That was the moment the children were taken by welfare into different foster homes. After Louise suffered a complete breakdown she was taken to the State Mental Hospital at Kalamazoo, where she remained for twenty-six years, before moving in with Malcolm's older brother Philbert.

MARCUS GARVEY and his organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), represent the largest mass movement in African-American history. Proclaiming a black nationalist "Back to Africa" message, Garvey and the UNIA established 700 branches in thirty-eight states by the early 1920s. While chapters existed in the larger urban areas such as New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, Garvey's message reached into small towns across the country as well.

## MAN RUN OVER BY STREET CAR

Earl Little, 41, Fatally Hurt;  
Thought to Have Fallen  
Under Truck

### CORONER PLANS INQUEST

Belleve Negro Lost Life Be-  
cause He Forgot Coat,  
Left Earlier Car

Earl Little, 41, living at Jolly Cor-  
ners, sustained fatal injuries late  
Monday night when he was run over  
by a street car at Detroit street and  
East Michigan avenue, a block east of  
the city limits.

The car was operated by William  
Hart, 1417 Vine street, who told Cor-  
oner Ray Corraline that he did not see  
the man before the accident. It is be-  
lieved that he fell under the rear  
trucks as he was running for the car.

Coroner Corraline found that Little  
had taken another car which passed  
about 12 minutes before the car op-  
erated by Hart. He reached for his pock-  
et when he boarded it, but told the  
motorman to let him off at the next  
corner. He did not have an overcoat  
on at this time, it was said, but did  
have an overcoat on when the acci-  
dent occurred.

#### Went Back for Coat

It is believed that he discovered that  
he had forgotten his coat when he  
reached for his purse, and that he  
got off the car to go back for it. The  
coroner has been unable to discover  
where he left the coat. When he was  
found his purse and a street car check  
were in the overcoat pocket.

Coroner Corraline planned to sum-  
mon a coroner's jury for an inquest  
and expected to take the members of  
the jury to the scene of the accident  
Tuesday forenoon.

Little, a negro, leaves a widow, Mrs.  
Louise Little, 10 children, the parents,  
Mr. and Mrs. John Little of Reynolds,  
Ga., three sisters, and a brother,  
James Little of Albion. Funeral serv-  
ices will be held at the Buck Funeral  
home Thursday afternoon at 2 o'clock.  
The body will be taken to Georgia for  
interment.



Malcolm described an incident in his life that was a turning point for him. He was one of the few black pupils in his school. He describes an event that happened one day when he was alone in the classroom with his English teacher,

“I know that he probably meant well in what he happened to advise me that day. I doubt that he meant any harm. It was just in his nature as an American white man. I was one of his top students, one of the school’s top students-- but all he could see for me was the kind of future “in your place” that almost all white people see for black people.” The teacher asked him if he had thought of a career. Malcolm answered that he aspired to become a lawyer. Looking surprised, leaning back, the teacher replied half smiling “Malcolm, one of life’s first needs is for us to be realistic. Don’t misunderstand me, now. We all here like you, you know that. But you’ve got to be realistic about being a nigger. A lawyer – that’s no realistic goal for a nigger. You need to think about something you *can be*. You’re good with your hands—making things. Everybody admires your carpentry shop work. Why don’t you plan on carpentry People like you as a person – you’d get all kinds of work. (...) “It was a surprising thing that I had never thought of it that way before, but I realized that whatever I wasn’t, I *was* smarter than nearly all of those white kids. But apparently, I was still not intelligent enough, in their eyes, to become whatever I wanted to be. It was then that I began to change – inside. I drew away from white people. I came to class, and answered when called upon, it became a physical strain simply to sit in Mr. O’s class. Where “nigger” had slipped off my back before, wherever I heard it now, I stopped and looked at whoever said it. And they looked surprised that I did. (...) Nobody including the teachers, could decide what had come over me.” (Malcolm X 1984 [1964]: 36f.)



*Ella and Malcolm, Boston*

When Malcolm finished eighth grade he moved back to Boston to live with his half-sister Ella who obtained custody of him. He concludes,

“I’ve thought about that time a lot since then. No physical move in my life has been more pivotal or profound in its repercussion. If I had stayed on in Michigan, I would probably have married one of those Negro girls I knew and liked in Lansing. I might have become one of those state capitols building shoeshine boys, or a Lansing Country Club waiter, or gotten one of the other menial jobs which, in those days, among Lansing Negroes, would have been considered “successful” – or even become a carpenter. Whatever I have done since then, I have driven myself to become a success at it.

I've often thought that if Mr. Ostrowski had encouraged me to become a lawyer, I would today probably be among some city's professional black bourgeoisie, sipping cocktails and palming myself off as a community spokesman for and leader of the suffering black masses, while my primary concern would be to grab a few more crumbs from the groaning board of the two-faced whites with whom they're begging to "integrate." (Malcolm X 1984 [1964]: 38)



*Malcolm with his sister Ella and two of her friends, Boston*

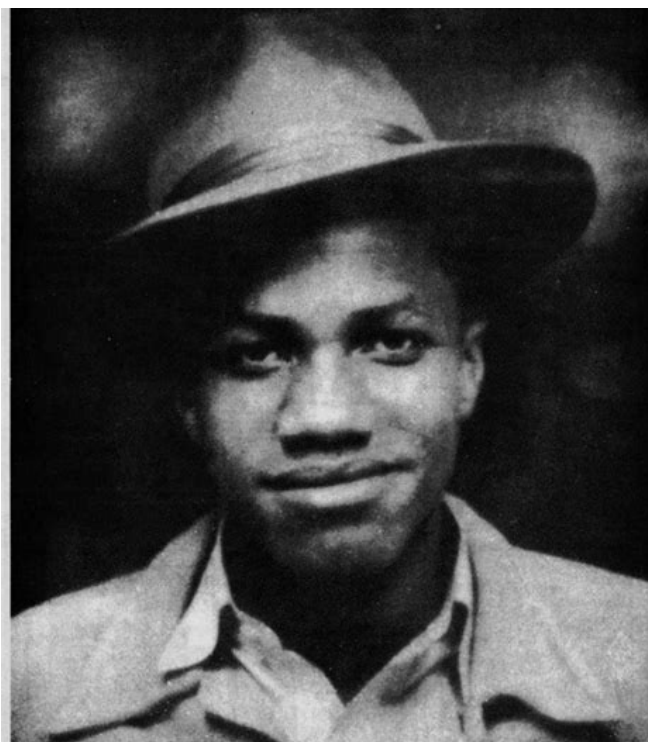
## II. DETROIT RED

After moving to Boston, Malcolm slowly transformed as what he would be known for in that period 'Detroit Red', due to his brighter skin complexion and his reddish hair. He was wearing nice zoot and shiny shoes. His style became part of his reputation.

He worked in the Roseland State Ballroom as a valet and became the 'man for everything' for his customers. Off duty he was a passionate dancer and was soon known for his skill on the dancefloor. He loved the dancing "hardly a party took place without me turning up and lindy-hopping my head off (...) I worked my partners hard, that's why they liked me so much." (Malcolm X 1984 [1964]: 57) Later his new work as a railroad cook took him to New York. Here he found entry into the world of 'hustlers, thieves, prostitutes, pimps, addicts and dealers.'



*Malcolm becoming Detroit Red*



"I was born in trouble. I don't even care about trouble. I'm interested in one thing alone and that's freedom - by any means necessary... I for one will join in with anyone, I don't care what color you are, as long as you want to change this miserable condition that exists on this earth"

Malcolm X

*Detroit Red in full charm*

'After selling reefers with the bands as they traveled, I was known to almost every popular Negro musician around New York in 1944- 1945. Reginald and I went to the Savoy Ballroom, the Apollo Theatre, the Braddock Hotel bar, the nightclubs and speakeasies, wherever Negroes played music.'



Back in Boston, Malcolm and his friends started a series of burglaries and scams. It wasn't long that police caught them. Malcolm and Shorty were sentenced to ten years in prison. The two white ladies who were part of their team got one year on probation. Malcolm started serving his sentence on February 27, 1946. Life in prison was hard.



One of Malcolm's mugshots, 1946

After a while his sister and brother came around to visit him. Being part of the Nation of Islam, they brought the political and spiritual message of Elijah Muhammad with them. In his autobiography Malcolm remembers the letter his brother Reginald wrote to him, with the advice "Malcolm, don't eat any more pork, and don't smoke any more cigarettes. I'll show you how to get out of prison." (Malcolm X 1984 [1964]: 155) Malcolm followed his advice, not knowing precisely which journey he was about to engulf on. Later, he writes, that he was, by doing so, experiencing the Muslim teaching of *"If you will take one step towards Allah - Allah will take two steps towards you."*

In late 1948 Ella managed to get Malcolm transferred to the Norfolk Prison Colony, which had a focus on rehabilitation rather than punishment. Malcolm recalls the amount of comfort and freedom it gave compared to Concord prison. It was a mainly white prison - only about 15% of the inmates were black. It was structured in units of houses, every inmate having their own room. With walls instead of bars,



this prison featured intellectual debates, group discussions, and educational rehabilitation programs lead by professors from Harvard and Boston University.

“Norfolk Prison Colony’s library was one of its outstanding features. A millionaire named Parkhurst had willed his library there; he had probably been interested in the rehabilitation program. History and religions were his special interest. Thousands of books were on the shelves, and in the back were boxes and crates full (...). At Norfolk, we could actually go into the library, with permission – walk up and down the shelves, pick books. There were hundreds of old volumes, some of them probably quite rare. I read aimlessly, until I learned to read selectively, with a purpose.” (Malcolm X 1984 [1964]: 158)

#### BOOKS OF IMPACT

“I can remember accurately the very first set of books that really impressed me. I have since bought that set of books and have it at home for my children to read as they grow up. It’s called *Wonders of the World*. It’s full of pictures of archeological finds, statues that depict, usually, non-European people. I found books like Will Durant’s *Story of Civilization*. I read H.G. Wells’ *Outline of History*. *Souls of Black Folks* by W.E.B. DuBois gave me a glimpse into the black people’s history before they came to this country. Carter G. Woodson’s *Negro History* opened my eyes about black empires before the black slave was brought to the United States, and the early Negro struggles for freedom.

J.A. Rogers’ three volumes of *Sex and Race* told about race-mixing before Christ’s time; about Aesop being a black man who told fables; about Egypt’s Pharaohs; about the great Coptic Christian Empires; about Ethiopia, the earth’s oldest continuous black civilization,...). *Findings In Genetics* by Gregor Mendel. I really studied this book by the Austrian Monk. Reading it over and over, especially certain sections, helped me to understand that if you started with a black man, a white man could be produced; but starting with a white man, you never could produce a black man – because the white chromosome is recessive. (...) Books like the one by Frederik Olmstead [ *The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveller’s Observations on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States, 1853-1861 / A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*] opened my eyes to the horror suffered when the slave was landed in the United States. The European woman, Fannie Kimball, who had married a Southern white slaveowner, described how human beings were degraded. Of course I read *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. In fact, I believe that’s the only novel I have ever read since I started serious reading.

Pankhurst’s collection also contained some bound pamphlets of the Abolitionist Anti-Slavery Society of New England. (...) I read about the slave preacher Nat Turner (...) who wasn’t going around preaching pie-in-the-sky and “non-violent” freedom for the black man. (...) I read Herodotus “the father of History”

Book after book showed me how the white man had brought upon the world’s black, brown, red, and yellow peoples every variety of the sufferings of exploitation.”  
(Malcolm X 1984 [1964]: 176)

### III. NATION OF ISLAM

His brother Reginald started visiting him in prison, he received letter from his siblings who had all converted to Islam, becoming members of the Nation of Islam, under honorable Elijah Mohammad. They wanted Malcolm to join the movement too. Slowly but steady Malcolm could unriddle the messages his siblings brought to him about Elijah Mohammad and the Nation. The more he engaged with it, “*the true knowledge of the black man*” made more and more sense to him,

“The true knowledge,” reconstructed much more briefly than I received it, was that history had been “whitened” in the white man’s history books, and that the black man had been “brainwashed for hundreds of years.” (Malcolm X 1984 [1964]: 162)

It was at this point, that Malcolm got in touch with the concept of “the devil white man”, who had throughout history “pillaged, murdered, raped and exploited every race of man not white”. A concept Malcolm would argue as too generalizing, in his later years. What was most important though is that Malcolm and the people following Elijah Mohammad got a deep teaching in the history of black America, the past of enslavement, the alienation from the homeland Africa, their culture, their names, language, religion and customs, the creation of the “Negro race” by the white man, white society, which lead to a people “who had absolutely no knowledge of his true identity.” (Malcolm X 1984 [1964]: 162) The Nation of Islam focused on showing that the history of African people was one of glory, opposed to what was taught at school of a ‘savaged Africa’. It criticized the indoctrination of the Christian religion with a white God, which would facilitate the race pyramid of the white race being on top of creation, and therefore rightfully in power. White Christianity taught black people that blackness was a curse and therefore instilled in him the notion of rejecting everything black, including his own being and that everything white was good and to be respected and loved.

“I remember how, some time later, reading the Bible in the Norfolk Prison Colony library, I came upon, then I read, over and over, how Paul on the road to Damascus, upon hearing the voice of Christ, was so smitten that he was knocked off his horse, in a daze. I do not now, and did not then, liken myself to Paul. But I do understand his experience.” (Malcolm X 1984 [1964]: 163)

Malcolm’s sister Hilda encouraged him to write a letter to Elijah Muhammad and after some weeks he followed up and got an immediate response, Elijah telling him to see his imprisonment as a part of a bigger dynamic, namely the white system holding down black people by transforming them into prisoners and encouraged him to have courage.

"For the next few years, I was the nearest thing to a hermit in the Norfolk Prison Colony. I never have been more busy in my life. I still marvel at how swiftly my previous life's thinking pattern slid away from me, like snow off a roof. It is as though someone else I knew of had lived by hustling and crime. I would be startled to catch myself thinking in a remote way of my earlier self as another person." (Malcolm X 1984 [1964]: 170)



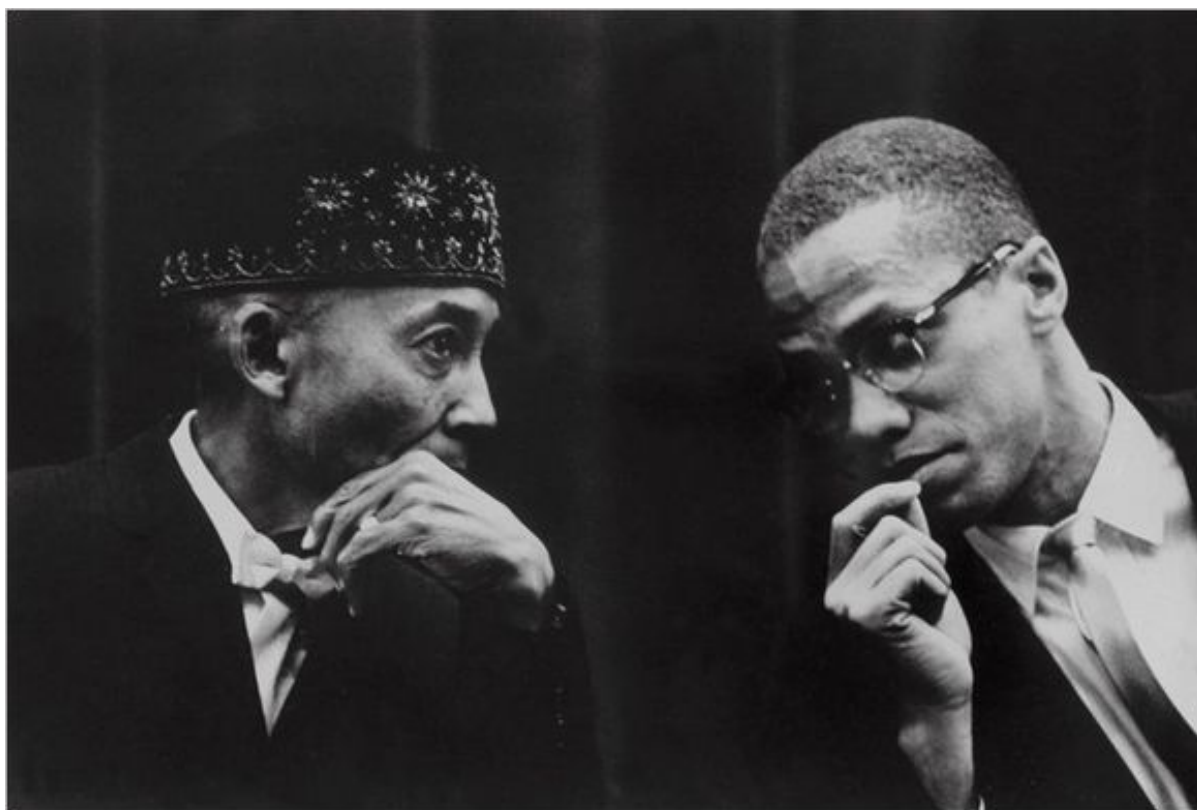
Malcolm kept writing daily letters to Elijah and his siblings. He realized that he wasn't able to articulate himself as well as he would have liked in the letters. So he started educating himself. He copied a whole dictionary, memorizing words and improving his handwriting at the same time. He dove into reading and learning. The more scholarly books became easier for Malcolm to read and he advanced tremendously in his skills of expressing himself. He started searching for evidences documenting the Muslim teachings.

"My alma mater was books, a good library. I could spend the rest of my life reading, just satisfying my curiosity - because I can hardly mention anything I'm not curious about. (...) Prison enabled me to study far more intensively than I would have if my life had gone differently (...) Where else but in prison could I have attacked my ignorance by being able to study intensely sometimes as much as fifteen hours a day?" (Malcolm X 1984 [1964]: 180)

\*THE NATION OF ISLAM was founded in Detroit in 1930, by Wallace Fard Muhammad. His goal was to "teach the downtrodden and defenseless Black people a thorough Knowledge of God and of themselves, and to put them on the road to Self-Independence with a superior culture and higher civilization than they had previously experienced." According to the NOI, Fard chose Elijah Muhammad to be his assistant in 1931. In May 1933 Elijah Muhammad was chosen to be Minister of Islam, shortly after Fard disappeared. Elijah became his successor.

In 1942 Elijah Muhammad was convicted and imprisoned for refusing to join the army who was fighting in WW2. The NOI opposed serving in the United States military, so many members had to face the same judgement. In 1946 Elijah got out of jail and slowly started to build up the membership of his movement. One of his main visions was the establishment of a separate nation for black Americans with Islam as the religious path, centered around the belief that blacks were Allah's chosen people.

When Malcolm was released on parole, on August 7, 1952, he decided to follow the urges of his siblings to move to Detroit and become a member of a temple of practicing Muslims. His brother Wilfred got him a job in the furniture store he worked at. Malcolm got more and more involved in the Temple and at one point gained the respect and attention of Elijah Muhammad.



*Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X*



He started as a street preacher, converting people to Islam, first preaching what Elijah Muhammad preached and soon finding his own style and own rhetoric and content. Becoming so striking at increasing membership he was sent to different cities to start new temples. He was prompted to the post of assistant minister in Detroit.

Malcolm was sent out as Elijah Muhammad's representative on rallies and conferences, when Elijah's continuous impaired health did not allow him to travel. Malcolm's charisma and his excellent rhetoric skills made him well-known, and well liked in the community.



Being chosen to become the new minister of Harlem Temple No.7, Malcolm soon filled the position of the spokesman and chief representative of the Nation Of Islam and heir-apparent to the leadership of the Black Muslim organization.

Malcolm was largely credited with increasing membership in the NOI from 500 in 1952 to 30,000 in 1963.

He had what it needed to be in the spotlight - charisma, determination and passion. This made him a media magnet. In 1959 Malcolm was featured in a week-long television special with Mike Wallace, called "The Hate That Hate Produced." The program focused on the fundamentals of the NOI and tracked Malcolm's emergence as one of its most important leaders. After the special, Malcolm was faced with an uncomfortable truth. His fame had eclipsed that of his mentor Elijah Muhammad. During the

early 1960's racial tensions in the States were increasing. The NOI and its activities became more and more prominent on the agenda of FBI and CIA. Membership in the NOI continued to grow, and Malcolm's influence increased. He became seen as a threat. FBI agents infiltrated the organization (one even acted as Malcolm's bodyguard). They secretly placed bugs, wiretaps, cameras and other surveillance equipment and monitored the group's and Malcolm's activities.

In 1963, at the height of the civil rights movement, Malcolm had to deal with a big blow. He found out that his mentor, and somewhat father figure, Elijah Muhammad, was having secret affairs with a number of teenage women within the Nation of Islam organization. Some of these relationships had resulted in children. The teachings of Elijah Muhammad include celibacy until marriage and monogamy. Malcolm was asked to help



cover up the affairs and subsequent children, but he refused. He was deeply shocked and hurt by Muhammad's deception and felt a growing guilt about the masses he had inspired to join the Nation of Islam.

He felt more and more that the NOI was a fraudulent organization, with too many ills too ignore.

When President John F. Kennedy was shot, Elijah gave direct command to all ministers, including Malcolm to not talk about the incident in front of the press. But Malcolm did it anyways. He stated the following *"[Kennedy] never foresaw that the chickens would come home to roost so soon"*. After uttering this statement publicly, Elijah Muhammad banned Malcolm for speaking in public for 90 days. Malcolm suspected he was silenced due to the uncovering of Elijah's private life and the threat the truth posed to the order in the Nation of Islam. "Any Muslim would have known that my "chickens coming home to roost" statement had been only an excuse to put into action the plan for getting me out. And step one had been already taken: the Muslims were given the impression that I had rebelled against Mr. Muhammad. I could now anticipate step two: I would remain "suspended" (and later I would be "isolated") indefinitely. Step three would be either to provoke some Muslim ignorant of the truth to take it upon himself to kill me as a "religious duty" – or to "isolate" me so that I would gradually disappear from the public scene" (Malcolm X 1984 [1964]: 305)

In March 1964 Malcolm left the NOI and cut all the ties to the organization and Elijah Muhammad. "The thing worse to me than death was the betrayal. I could conceive death. I couldn't conceive betrayal – not of the loyalty which I had given to the Nation of Islam, and to Mr. Muhammad (...) during the previous twelve years. (...) What began to break my faith was that, try as I might, I couldn't hide, I couldn't evade, that Mr. Muhammad instead of facing what he had done before his followers, as human weakness or as fulfillment of prophecy – which I sincerely believe that Muslims would have understood, or at least they would have accepted – Mr. Muhammad had, instead, been willing to hide, to cover up what he had done. That was my major blow. That was how I first began to realize that I had believed in Mr. Muhammad more than he believed in himself." (Malcolm X 1984 [1964]: 305 f.)

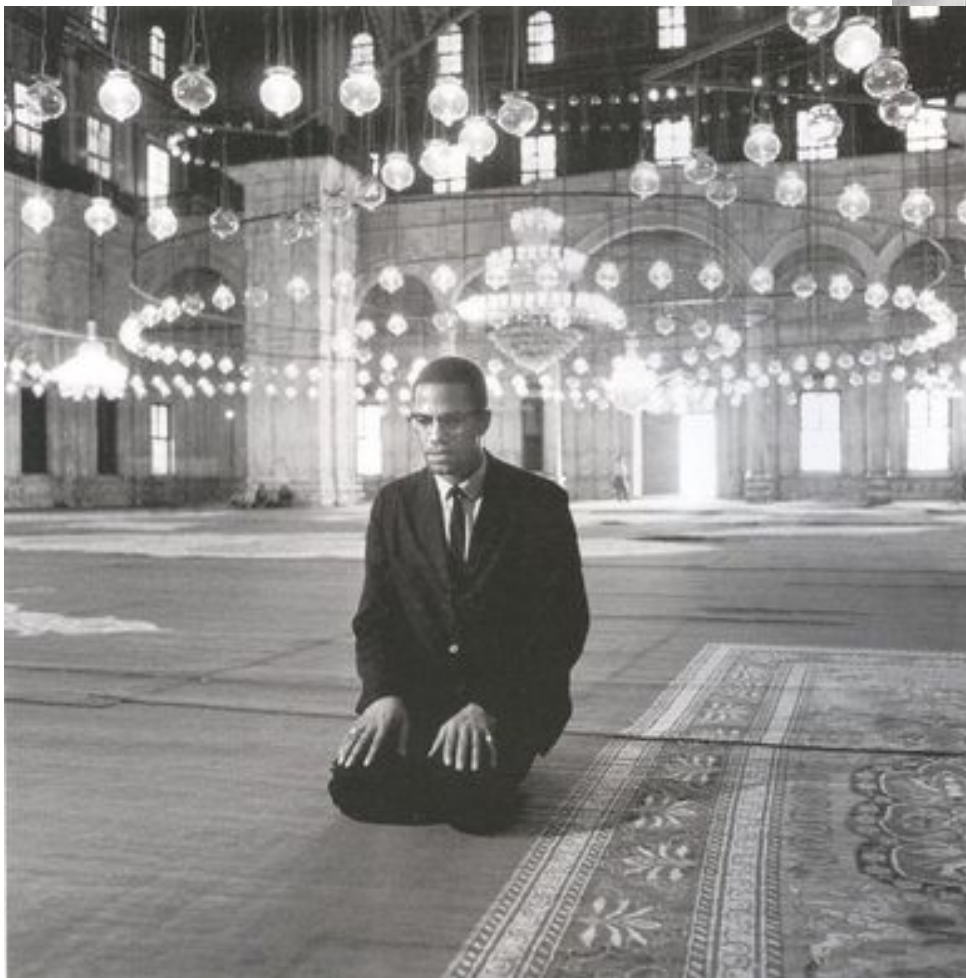
Malcolm decided to found his own religious organization, the Muslim Mosque, Inc. which started off with about 60 core activists from the NOI.

“Those who split away were the real activists of the movement who were intelligent enough to want some kind of program that would enable us to fight for the rights of all Black people here in the Western Hemisphere. But at the same time we wanted our religion. So when we left, the first thing we did we regrouped into a new organization known as the Muslim Mosque, headquartered in New York. And in that organization we adopted the real, orthodox religion of Islam, which is a religion of brotherhood.” (Malcolm at the address delivered in the Corn Hill Methodist Church, \*Rochester, NY, 1965)

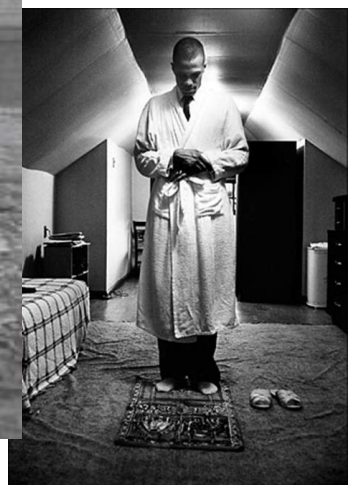
That same year, Malcolm went on the Hajj, a pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia which every Muslim should take once in his lifetime. He converted to Sunni Islam and took on the name El Hajj Malik El Shabazz.



*Malcolm X in Mecca, 1964*



The trip changed his life and his perspective. For the first time, Malcolm shared his thoughts and beliefs with believers of different cultural and racial background.





He returned to the United States with a new outlook on integration and a new hope for the future. He founded the Organization of African-American Unity (OAAU). It was open to all black people, and not a religious movement. After his travels Malcolm spoke to all people, he had a message for all races.

The relationship between Malcolm and Elijah Muhammad became increasingly tense after Malcolm resigned his position in the NOI and spoke publicly against Elijah Muhammad's affairs with teenage women. Their formerly close relationship was now fueled by distrust and Muhammad was threatened by Malcolm's powerful position in the movement. Supposedly FBI informants working undercover in the NOI warned officials that Malcolm had been marked for assassination by Muhammad's command. Various attempts on his life took place.

On February 14, 1965 Malcolm's family home, where Betty and their four daughters lived in East Elmhurst, New York was firebombed at night. None of them were harmed. Malcolm was aware that his life was in danger and he rarely traveled anywhere without bodyguards. The Nation of Islam were seen as being responsible for the bombing, which later showed signs of an undercover operation from secret intelligence societies as Karl Evanzz presents in his book "The Judas Factor".



*Malcolm reaching his home after it was firebombed the night before*



One week after the bombing, on February 21, 1965 Malcolm was assassinated during a speech at the Audubon Ballroom in Manhattan, New York in front of his pregnant wife and his 4 daughters. He was shot 15 times at close range. Malcolm was only 39-year-old.



*The Audubon Ballroom, shortly after Malcolm was killed*



*Betty Shabazz at his husbands' funeral*

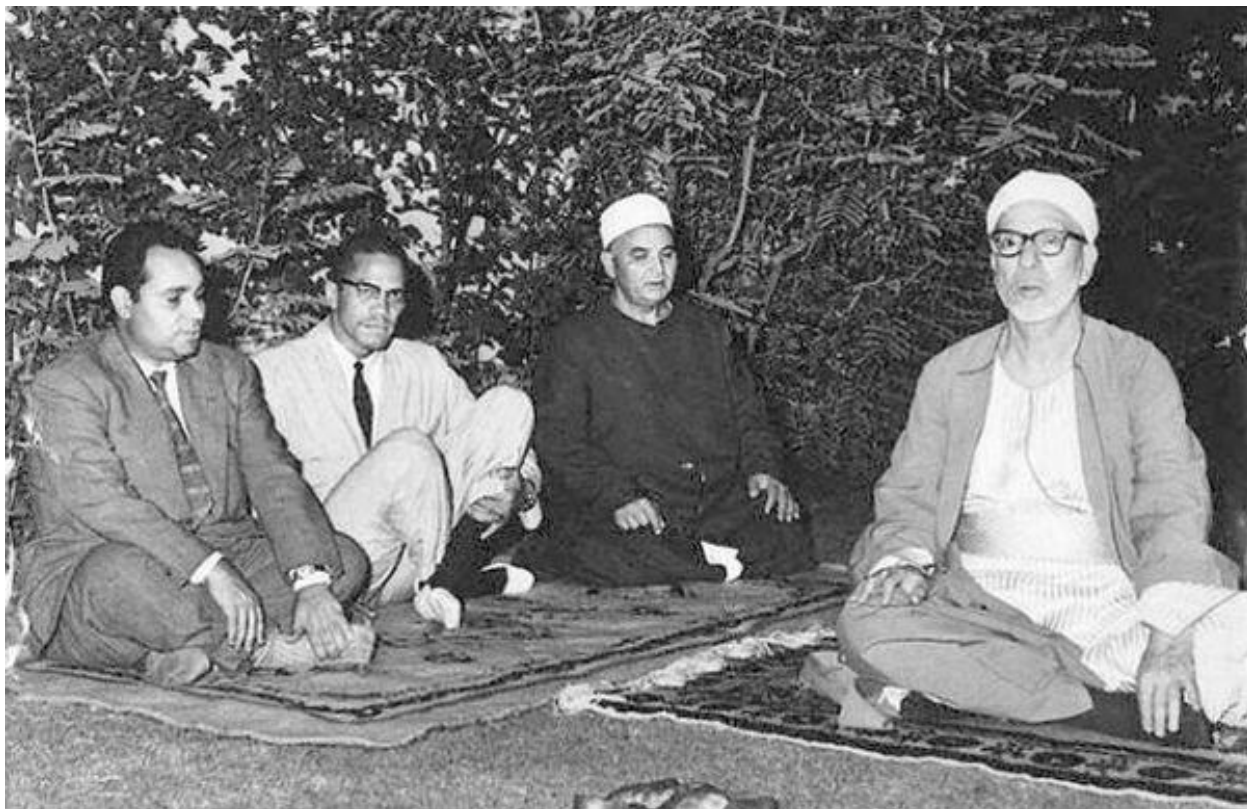
## V. THE JOURNEY TO AFRICA, OMOWALE – THE SON WHO HAS RETURNED, THE HAJJ IN MECCA AND TRUE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD ACROSS ALL RACES



On April 13, 1964 Malcolm left the United States for five weeks to visit Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Ghana, Morocco and Algeria. He took the pilgrimage to Mecca; every Muslim tries to complete this journey once in a lifetime. It entitled him to use “El Hajj” in his name, and from then on, he became known as El Hajj Malik El Shabazz in the Muslim world. Between the time he left the NOI and his death he spent around 5 months in Africa. He met with ambassadors and government leaders, members of parliament, students and journalists. He consolidated his relations with orthodox Islam overall and “never stopped talking about the race problem in America” (Malcolm X speaks: 58)

“In the past, I have permitted myself to be used to make sweeping indictments of all white people, and these generalizations have caused injuries to some white people who did not deserve them. Because of the spiritual rebirth which I was blessed to undergo as a result of my pilgrimage to the Holy City of Mecca, I no longer subscribe to sweeping indictments of one race. In the future I intend to be careful not to sentence anyone who has not been proven guilty. I am not a racist

and do not subscribe to any of the tenets of racism. In all honesty and sincerity, it can be stated that I wish nothing but freedom, justice and equality: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness – for all people. My first concern is with the group of people to which I belong, the Afro-Americans, for we, more than any other people, are deprived of these inalienable rights.” (Malcolm X speaks: 59)



*IMalcolm in Mecca with Muslim brothers, 1964*

In a letter from Jedda, Saudi Arabia dated to April 20, 1964, Malcolm writes “For the past week I have been utterly speechless and spellbound by the graciousness I see displayed all around me by people *of all colors*. (...) There were tens of thousands of pilgrims from all over the world. They were *of all colors*, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans, but were all participating in the same ritual, displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had let me to believe could never exist between the white and non-white. (America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases the race problem from its society).” Malcolm continues:

“The whites as well as non-whites who accept true Islam become a changed people. I have eaten from the same plate with people whose eyes were the bluest of blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond, and whose skin was the whitest of white – all the way from Cairo to Jedda and even in the Holy City of Mecca itself – and I felt the same sincerity in the words and deeds of these “white” Muslims that I felt among the African Muslims of Nigeria, Sudan and Ghana. True Islam removes



racism, because people of all colors and races who accept its religious principles and bow down to the one God, Allah, also automatically accept each other as brothers and sisters, regardless of differences in complexion.” (Malcolm X speaks: 59f.)

In his autobiography, written by Alex Haley he sums up “You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to *re-arrange* much of my thought-patterns previously held, and to *toss aside* some of my previous conclusions. This was not too difficult for me. Despite my firm convictions, I have been always a man who tries to face facts, and to accept the reality of life as new experience and new knowledge unfolds. I have always kept an open mind, which is necessary to the flexibility that must go hand in hand with every form of intelligent search for truth.” (Malcolm X 1984 [1964]: 340)



Malcolm on his travels, late 1964



Malcolm with Ghana's president Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana 1964

Malcolm visited Africa on three different occasions, once in 1959 and twice in 1964. During these visits he met officials, gave interviews to newspapers, and spoke on television and radio in Egypt, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Sudan, Senegal, Liberia, Algeria, and Morocco. He brought attention to the situation of the black brothers and sisters in America. He met state men of the newly liberated African countries, like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, and Ahmed Ben Bella of Algeria. His travels to Egypt, Sudan, Nigeria, and Ghana in the year 1959 were to arrange a tour for Elijah Muhammad.



On May 8, 1964 following his speech at the University of Ibadan, Malcolm was made an honorary member of the Nigerian Muslim Students' Association. During this reception the students bestowed upon him the name "Omowale", which means "the son who has come home / returned" in the Yoruba language. Malcolm wrote in his autobiography that he "had never received a more treasured honor."

On July 9, 1964, Malcolm X returned to Africa. On July 17, he was welcomed to the second meeting of the Organization of African Unity in Cairo as a representative of the Organization of Afro-American Unity.

By the time he returned to the United States on November 24, 1964, Malcolm



*Malcolm X and Maya Angelou, Ghana 1964*

had met with every prominent African leader and established an international connection between Africans on the continent and those in the diaspora.



*Malcolm in front of the Nkrumah statue at the OAU headquarter, Addis Abeba - Ethiopia*



*Malcolm in Egypt, 1964.*

## VI. THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRO-AMERICAN UNITY

“I think the single worst mistake of the American black organizations, and their leaders, is that they have failed to establish direct brotherhood lines of communication between the independent nations of Africa and the American black people.” (Malcolm X 1984 [1964]: 347)



*Malcolm at the founding conference of the OAAU, 1964*

On June 24, 1964 Malcolm X founded the Organization of Afro-American Unity in unified effort with John Henrik Clarke and other black leaders in Harlem, New York. On his travels to Africa the structure and orientation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU today AU) had impressed Malcolm. The OAU was founded only a year earlier on May 25, 1963 by His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia and other statesmen, like Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Sekou Toure of Guinea, Modibo Keita of Mali, Abdul Nasser of Egypt, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, to name a few. The OAU was a coalition of then 32 African nations (today 55) working together to provide a unified political voice for the continent.

The OAAU was built as a secular institution which sought to reconnect and unify 22 million non-Muslim and Muslim African Americans with the people of the African Continent. Malcolm wanted to invigorate the link between African Americans and their African heritage, establishing economic independence and promoting African American self-determination.



*Founding Fathers of the Organization of African Union (OAU), 1963.*

“Speaking at the Ibadan University’s Trenchard hall I urged that Africa’s independent nations needed to see the necessity of helping to bring the Afro-American’s case before the United Nations. (...) I was convinced that it was time for all Afro-Americans to join the world’s Pan-Africanists. I said that physically we Afro-Americans might remain in America, fighting for our Constitutional rights, but that philosophically and culturally we Afro-Americans badly needed to “return” to Africa – and to develop a working unity in the framework of Pan-Africanism.” (Malcolm X 1984 [1964]: 350)

Malcolm was aspiring OAAU representation in the OAU, seeing the African Diaspora as crucial part of the African cause. Malcolm insisted that progress for African Americans was deeply tied to progress in Africa. The organization outlined a platform of five fronts for this progress called “*The Basic Unity Program*.” It was focused on Restoration, Reorientation, Education, Economic Security, and Self-Defense as a means of promoting Pan-African unity and interests. It had a strong focus on education as the primary tool for counteracting the impacts of slavery,



long lasting economic discrimination, and physical violence directed towards African Americans. The OAAU worked to promote and strengthen pan-African consciousness.

At the founding conference, Malcolm stressed the importance of escaping certain terms like “negro,” “integration,” or “emancipation,” showing that certain language was inherently heteronomous, and not empowering nor helpful to the cause. The OAAU saw African American run institutions within the black community as well as increased participation in mainstream politics as important pieces of the puzzle for empowerment and success. “So one of the first steps that we became involved in, was to come up with a program that would make our grievances international and make the world see that our problem was no longer a Negro problem or an American problem but a human problem. A problem for humanity. And a problem which should be attacked by all elements of humanity.” (Malcolm X, 1965)



Betty Shabazz and civil rights activist and writer Dick Gregory

After Malcolm’s death the newly born movement ceased to exist quite soon. Malcolm’s sister Ella Collins took over the OAAU, but Malcolm’s charismatic leadership and determined focus and vision was missing. Importantly the OAAU had major impact on various “black power” groups, like the black panther, that emerged during the next decade.

The **\*African diaspora** consists of the worldwide collection of communities descended from Africa's peoples, predominantly in the Americas. Historically ethnographers, historians, politicians and writers have used the term particularly to refer to the descendants of the West and Central Africans who were enslaved and shipped to the Americas via the Atlantic slave trade between the 16th and 19th centuries, with their largest populations in Brazil, the United States and Haiti.



Map showing the African Diaspora and motherland Africa - grey areas mark a population above 100,000 of African Descent.



## VII. THE PLOT TO KILL MALCOLM X

There are various storylines and speculations about who killed Malcolm. In the book “The Judas Factor, The Plot to Kill Malcolm X” Karl Evanzz brings details from various secret intelligence agencies in the US who were interested in seeing Malcolm X dead.

In 1964 Malcolm focused on the unification of forces. Within the USA, he networked with long time counterpart Martin Luther King. Internationally he networked with revolutionary minds and political leaders of African, South American as well as Asian countries.



*IV Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, late 1964.*

The unification of the longtime opponents posed a severe threat to the status quo. Martin Luther King has grown more and more radical. In December 1964 he told the Norwegian press that with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the nonviolent movement had gone as far as it could without international assistance and pressure. The next phase he said would be “work in the field of political action and reform”. He concluded that without international pressure African Americans lacked the political power to “take the struggle beyond the lunch counters, and so the movement will have to depend on a constructive alliance.” (Evans 1992: 266)

“While King did not spell out the nature of the alliance, FBI Director Hoover and the CIA, which monitored King’s trip [to receive the Nobel Prize in Norway], knew that he was referring to a possible alliance with Malcolm X. King’s statement

suggested clearly that he and Malcolm had arrived at a tactic agreement for cooperative action.” (266)

During his travels to Africa and Europe he was able to meet important people, and he knew the strength would come from a unified coalition against white imperialism and colonialism. He advocated that the Afro-Asian block should bring the African American issue in front of the United Nation, They should promote a categorization of the racial discrimination and violence in the US as a form of colonialism, just like in South Africa. This would target the United States as a colonial power for the first time within the United Nations.



This step got support from many representatives in the general assembly of the United Nations. It was a crucial one and a threatened the US government and its politics.

On December 1<sup>st</sup>, a close associate and friend Alex Quaison-Sackey had been elected President of the UN General Assembly. Shortly after that the FBI and CIA monitoring of Malcolm increased significantly. Realizing the two men met recently and regularly, the potential danger this alliance could have seemed obvious.

Tanzania's Abdul Rahman Babu, a major Pan-Africanist and Marxist joined Malcolm on a few occasions in New York.



*Malcolm and close associate Abdul Rahman Babu, major Pan Africanist from Tanzania*

“In the opening section of the speech [at the OAAU conference, Dec 14], Babu drew a connection between the plights of Africans and African Americans (...) Babu told the enthusiastic crowd that the same American policies creating havoc and bloodshed in South Vietnam and in the Congo were responsible for racial oppression in America.” (Evans 1992: 269)

“We don’t judge a man because of the color of his skin. We don’t judge you because you’re white; we don’t judge you because you’re black; we don’t judge you because you’re brown. We judge you because of what you do and what you practice. And as long as you practice evil, we’re against you. And for us, the most — the worst form of evil is the evil that’s based upon judging a man because of the color of his skin. And I don’t think anybody here can deny that we’re living in a society that just doesn’t judge a man according to his talents, according to his know-how, according to his possibility — background, or lack of academic background. This society judges a man solely upon the color of his skin. If you’re white, you can go forward, and if you’re Black, you have to fight your way every step of the way, and you still don’t get forward.” (Malcolm at the address delivered in the Corn Hill Methodist Church, Rochester, NY, 1965)



“As the year drew to a close, Malcolm X told friends that perhaps Milton Henry was correct when he warned him that he was dancing with death by proposing United Nations action against the United States. Coincidentally, Dr. King was reluctantly entertaining similar thoughts about himself. On January 2, 1965, during a trip to Selma, King advised his key aid Reverend Ralph Abernathy to be prepared to assume leadership of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, fearing he would be soon killed.” (Evanzz 1992: 275)

Malcolm managed to build an alliance with heads of African states and the Afro-Asian block in the United Nations supported his call to put the United States to trial for civil rights atrocities. Until December 1964 no claim was made before the General Assembly but as Evanzz writes: “To the horror and complete surprise of the Johnson administration, the situation suddenly changed, thereby establishing Malcolm X as a leader for Africans as well as African Americans and, to the intelligence community, a major threat to “national security” (Evanzz 1992: 271)

“A major threat to the national security”, because the civil rights movement and the human rights violations were around that time already at a peak in the United States South; dogs and fire hoses used against peaceful protesters in Birmingham went viral internationally; police beatings, forceful incarcerations of protesters, the freedom riders, sit ins and active calls to stop Jim Crow and segregation policies in the South. The black people of America were ready to demand their equal place within the American society.

“If Malcolm X had single-handedly persuaded the Afro-Asian bloc to include the American Civil rights struggle in UN debates, and had independently managed to



convince new African nations to charge the United States with colonialism, odds were good that unless the Johnson Administration changed its policy towards the Congo[American troops entered Congo , the new African nations might very well use Malcolm X's petition accusing America of violating the human rights of African Americans as leverage in 1965 and beyond." (Evanzz 1992: 272)

The government realized that they could be sued. They'd need to change the systemic apparatus of segregation in the South and recompense for the atrocities of slavery and what came after. African Americans have not gotten any compensation for systemic racism.

On December 16, 1964 Malcolm said in a speech "In the UN at this moment Africans are using more uncompromising language and are heaping hot fire upon America as the racist and neocolonial power par excellence. African statesmen have never used this language before. These statesmen are beginning to connect the criminal, racist acts practiced in the Congo with similar acts in Mississippi and Alabama." (Evanzz 1992: 270)

After Malcolm X house was firebombed in the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> of February, Malcolm was sure it was the Nation of Islam. He had been getting threats via phone after he shared internal information about Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. There was a coalition between the NOI and the KKK. Malcolm had proof about details like that.



*Malcolm in front of his house, after the bombing*

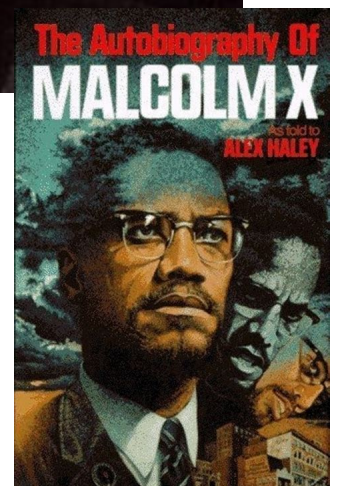
Elijah Muhammad and the NOI leadership wanted to see him dead. The American government and various right-wing groups wanted to see him silenced, or even dead. His continuous work and his international ties posed a permanent threat to the stability of the American system. Malcolm was invited to a conference of the world's emerging nonwhite revolutionaries in Algier.

“Ben Bella had invited Malcolm X, Guervara, leaders of the Southwest African Peoples Organization (SWAPO), the Palestine Liberation Organization, and leaders of sixty-five other movements to Algier for a special conference scheduled to begin on February 27. Malcolm X and Guevara were scheduled as key speakers. Notably, on the second day of the conference, a resolution would be passed charging “control and manipulation of the United Nations by United States Imperialists.” (Evanzz 1992: 289)



*Alex Haley, close friend and writer of Malcolm's Autobiography*

‘Alex Haley, who was trying to finish Malcolm X’s autobiography, telephoned him. “The more I keep thinking about this thing,” Malcolm X told Haley, “the things that have been happening lately, I’m not all sure it’s the Muslims. I know what they can do,” he said, “and what they can’t do, and they can’t do some of the stuff recently going on.”’ (Evanzz 1992: 294)



“On February 16, Malcolm told a close aide that he thinks that someone might try to kill him before or during the next OAAU rally, which was scheduled for February 21.

“I have the names of five Black Muslims who have been assigned to kill me,” he told his associate. “I will announce them at the meeting.” The list was in his jacket, Betty took it out when he was dying on stage, and never showed it to anyone except their close friend and photographer Gordon Parks. After Malcolm X got killed, Mosque 7 was set on fire. People believed it was a try by the CIA or FBI to bring more unrest between the NOI and OAAU.

Evanzz writes that “the trial of the assassins in 1966 showed a trail of a well “choreographed political assassination. There were untrustworthy witnesses and contradictory testimony.” (298)



*Malcolm, 1964*

On March 12, 1965, two weeks after Malcolm’s death, a short article appeared in the New York Times. It was about the beginning of oral proceedings in the International Court of Justice, that Malcolm X petitioned for before his death. Evanzz analyzes “Had Malcolm X lived until March 12, [his] participation and even presence at the World Court hearings on a petition he had helped to reshape might have led to the United States and South Africa being placed on equal footing. This seems to have been the intelligence community’s motivation in seeking his silence.” This was before the Bandung Conference of 1965.

“In the light of these observations, it is interesting to note the fate of some of the African leaders who pledged support of the petition. On January 15, 1965 Burundi’s Prime Minister Pierre Ngendandumwe, a protégé of Tanzania’s Abdul Rahman Babu (...) was assassinated (...). Because of the growing presence of Chinese government officials in Burundi, CIA feared that Ngendandumwe’s regime was about to turn Communist. Within two hours of his assassination, the new leader, a pro-American known as King Mwambutsa IV, expelled all diplomats at



China's embassy in Burundi." (Evanzz 1992: 312) Mao Zedong accused the CIA and Belgian government of being responsible for Ngendandumwe's murder. Lumumba had been assassinated by a joint force of USA and Belgium in 1961. On February 25, Pio Pinto, a Kenyan government official who supported Malcolm's UN petition was assassinated. The Government of Ahmed Ben Bella, another of Malcolm's associate, was overthrown on June 13, 1965. Half a year later the Indonesian government under Achmad Sukarno, and Kwame Nrumah's government in Ghana was overthrown, CIA-backed forces have been linked to both coups. Che Guevara was killed by US supported Bolivian military in 1967. The list goes on.



*Kojo Botsio, Che Guevara, Kwame Nkrumah and two Cuban officials. Ghana, late 1964*

"In the decade after the assassination of Malcolm X, the civil rights movement was marked by mayhem and murder, much of which was directly or indirectly traceable to the intelligence community." (Evanzz 1992: 313)

The formation of the Black Panther Party of Self-Defense in Oakland California shortly after Malcolm's assassination in 1966 carried on the legacy of black empowerment under the banner of black power and self-determination.



Their ideological framework included many of Malcolm's core philosophies and strategies. Highly targeted by CIA and the governments Cointelpro, most leaders were killed and the movement sabotaged. Malcolm X's message inspired leaders of african liberation groups like the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa under Bantu Stephen Biko, who was killed by the hands of the Apartheidsystem in 1977.

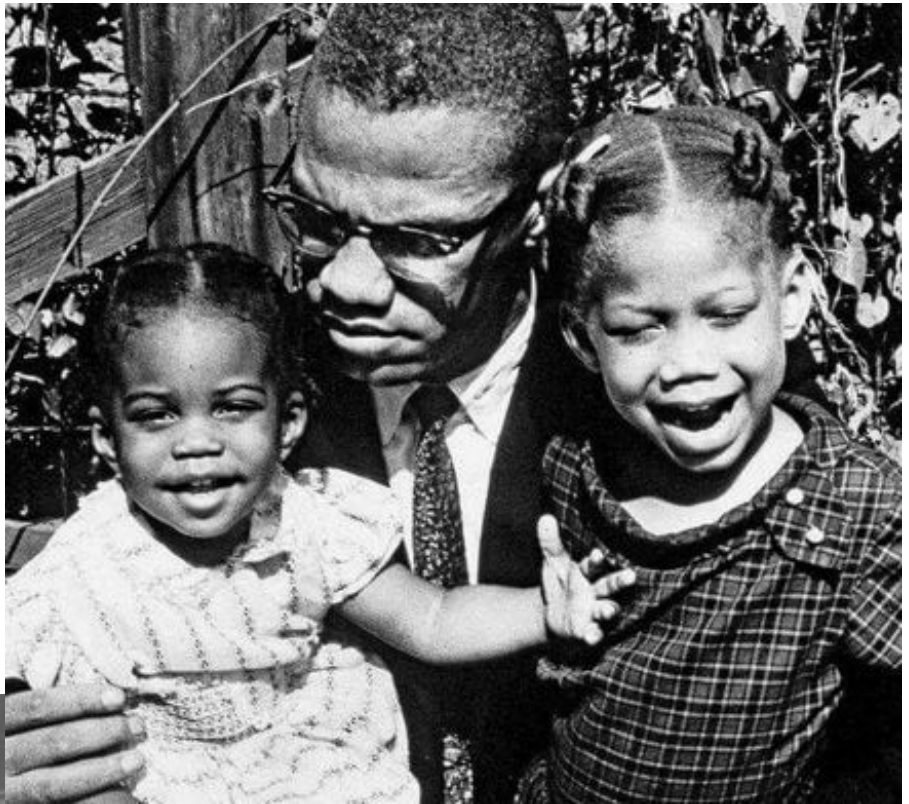


✓The Black Panther, Vol IV No.24. May 19, 1970.

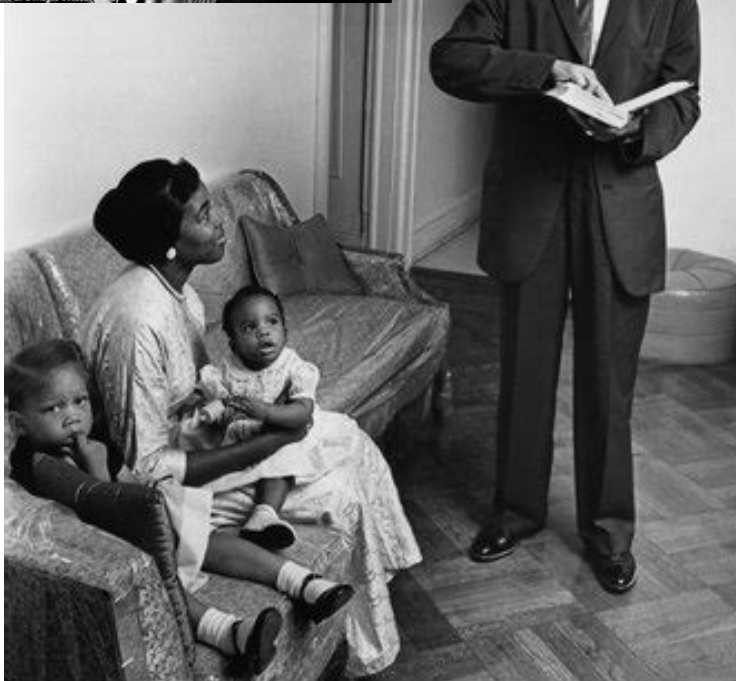


Malcolm left behind not only his political and humanitarian legacy, but also his wife Betty Shabazz, who was at the time he was killed pregnant with girl twins, and four daughters. He was a loving and devoted husband and father.

Attallah, born in 1958 and named after Attila the Hun, Qubilah, born in 1960 named after the "qiblah" the

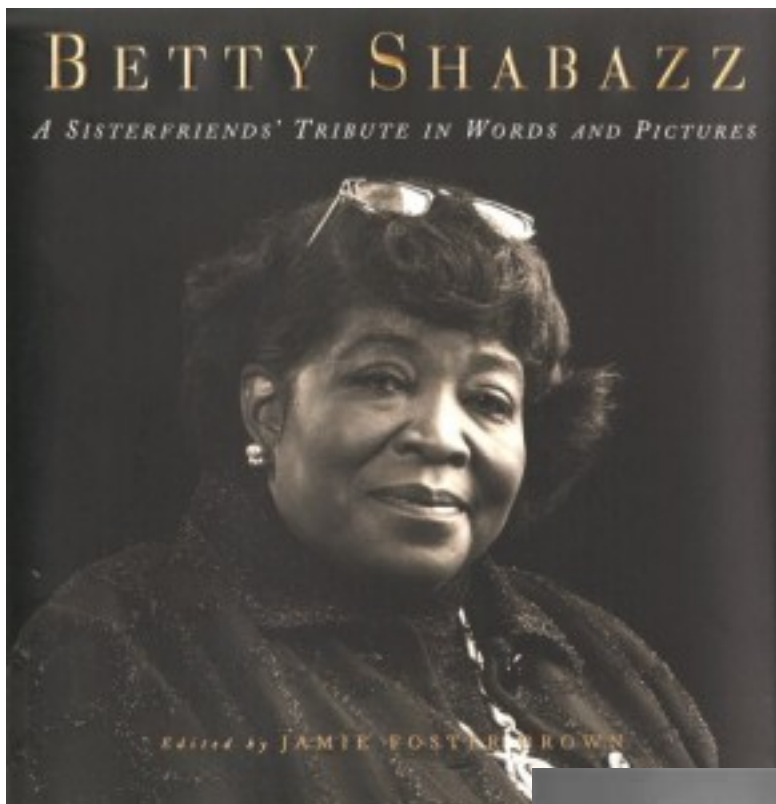


east- direction in which Muslim's pray. Ilyasah, born in 1962 named after Elijah Muhammad, Gamilah Lumumba, born in 1964 named after Patrice Lumumba, and twins, Malaak and Malikah, born in 1965 after their father's assassination and named for him.





Though Betty Shabazz was facing the challenge of raising six daughters, she managed to earn a Nursing Degree, a Bachelor of Arts in Public Health and Education from Jersey City State College and a Ph.D. in Education Administration from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Before her transition, she established the Malcolm X Medical Scholarship program for outstanding students attending



Columbia University—where the recipient must commit to provide medical service to the underserved for at least one year. Columbia University established the Betty Shabazz Nursing Scholarship program.

Dr. Shabazz also formed a coalition of community, political, and educational leaders to establish the Malcolm X Memorial Center (MXM) at the Audubon to honor her husband's legacy, renamed after her transition to honor her life as well to 'The Malcolm X & Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center' in N.Y.



## APPENDIX



### MALCOLM X- SPEECH ON THE FOUNDING OF THE OAAU JUNE 28, 1964

Salaam Alaikum, Mr. Moderator, our distinguished guests, brothers and sisters, our friends and our enemies, everybody who's here.

As many of you know, last March when it was announced that I was no longer in the Black Muslim movement, it was pointed out that it was my intention to work among the 22 million non-Muslim Afro-Americans and to try and form some type of organization, or create a situation where the young people - our young people, the students and others - could study the problems of our people for a period of time and then come up with a new analysis and give us some new ideas and some new suggestions as to how to approach a problem that too many other people have been playing around with for too long. And that we would have some kind of meeting and determine at a later date whether to form a black nationalist party or a black nationalist army.

There have been many of our people across the country from all walks of life who have taken it upon themselves to try and pool their ideas and to come up with some kind of solution to the problem that confronts all of our people. And tonight we are here to try and get an understanding of what it is they've come up with.

Also, recently when I was blessed to make a religious pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca where I met many people from all over the world, plus spent many weeks in Africa trying to broaden my own scope and get more of an open mind to look at the problem as it actually is, one of the things that I realized, and I realized this even before going over there, was that our African brothers have gained their independence faster than you

and I here in America have. They've also gained recognition and respect as human beings much faster than you and I.

Just ten years ago on the African continent, our people were colonized. They were suffering all forms of colonization, oppression, exploitation, degradation, humiliation, discrimination, and every other kind of -ation. And in a short time, they have gained more independence, more recognition, more respect as human beings than you and I have. And you and I live in a country which is supposed to be the citadel of education, freedom, justice, democracy, and all of those other pretty-sounding words.

So it was our intention to try and find out what it was our African brothers were doing to get results, so that you and I could study what they had done and perhaps . gain from that study or benefit from their experiences. And my traveling over there was designed to help to find out how.

One of the first things that the independent African nations did was to form an organization called the Organization of African Unity. This organization consists of all independent African states who have reached the agreement to submerge all differences and combine their efforts toward eliminating from the continent of Africa colonialism and all vestiges of oppression and exploitation being suffered by African people. Those who formed the organization of African states have differences. They represent probably every segment, every type of thinking. You have some leaders that are considered Uncle Toms, some leaders who are considered very militant. But even the militant African leaders were able to sit down at the same table with African leaders whom they considered to be Toms, or Tshombes, or that type of character. They forgot their differences for the sole purpose of bringing benefits to the whole. And whenever you find people who can't forget their differences, then they're more interested in their personal aims and objectives than they are in the conditions of the whole.

Well, the African leaders showed their maturity by doing what the American white man said couldn't be done. Because if you recall when it was mentioned that these African states were going to meet in Addis Ababa, all of the Western press began to spread the propaganda that they didn't have enough in common to come together and to sit down together. Why, they had Nkrumah there, one of the most militant of the African leaders, and they had Adoula from the Congo. They had Miserere there, they had Ben Bella there, they had Nasser there, they had Sekou Toure, they had Obote; they had Kenyatta- I guess Kenyatta was there, I can't remember whether Kenya was independent at that time, but I think he was there. Everyone was there and despite their differences, they were able to sit down and form what was known as the Organization of African Unity, which has formed a coalition and is working in conjunction with each other to fight a common enemy.

Once we saw what they were able to do, we determined to try and do the same thing here in America among Afro-Americans who have been divided by our, enemies. So we have formed an organization known as the Organization of American-American Unity which has the same aim and objective-to fight whoever gets in our way, to bring about the complete independence of people of African descent here in the Western Hemisphere, and first here in the United States, and bring about the freedom of these people by any means necessary.

That's our motto. We want freedom by any means, necessary. We want justice by any means necessary. We want equality by any means necessary. We don't feel that in 1964, living in a country that is supposedly based upon freedom, and supposedly the leader of the free world, we don't think that we should have to sit around and wait for some segregationist congressmen and senators and a President from Texas in Washington, D. C., to make up their minds that our people are due now some degree of civil rights. No, we want it now or we don't think anybody should have it.

The purpose of our organization is to start right here in Harlem, which has the largest concentration of people of African descent that exists anywhere on this earth. There are more Africans in Harlem than exist in any city on the African continent. Because that's what you and I are-Africans. You catch any white man off guard in here right now, you catch him off guard and ask him what he is, he doesn't say he's an American. He either tells you he's Irish, or he's Italian, or he's German, if you catch him off guard and he doesn't know what you're up to. And even though he was born here, he'll tell you he's Italian. Well, if he's Italian, you and I are African - even though we were born here.

So we start in New York City first. We start in Harlem - and by Harlem we mean Bedford-Stuyvesant, any place in this area where you and I live, that's Harlem- with the intention of spreading throughout the state, and from the state throughout the country, and from the country throughout the Western Hemisphere.



Because when we say Afro-American, we include every- one in the Western Hemisphere of African descent. South America is America. Central America is America. South America has many people in it of African descent. And everyone in South America of African descent is an Afro- American. Everyone in the Caribbean, whether it's the West Indies or Cuba or Mexico, if they have African blood, they are Afro-Americans. If they're in Canada and they have African blood, they're Afro-Americans. If they're in Alaska, though they might call themselves Eskimos, if they have African blood, they're Afro-Americans.

So the purpose of the Organization of Afro-American Unity is to unite everyone in the Western Hemisphere of African descent into one united force. And then, once II we are united among ourselves in the Western Hemi- sphere, we will unite with our brothers on the motherland, on the continent of Africa. So to get right with it, I would like to read you the "Basic Aims and Objectives if of the Organization of Afro-American Unity," started if here in New York, June, 1964.

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

"We, the members of the Organization of Afro-American Unity, gathered together in Harlem, New York: "Convinced that it is the inalienable right of all our people to control our own destiny; "Conscious of the fact that freedom, equality, justice and dignity are central objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the people of African descent here in the Western Hemisphere, we will endeavor to build a bridge of understanding and create the basis for Afro-American unity;

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

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

"Convinced that, in order to translate this determination into a dynamic force in the cause of human progress conditions of peace and security must be established and maintained;" - And by "conditions of peace and security," [we mean] we have to eliminate the barking of the police dogs, we have to eliminate the police clubs, we have to eliminate the water hoses, we have to eliminate all of these things that have become so characteristic of the American so-called dream. These have to be eliminated. Then we will be living in a condition of peace and security. We can never have peace and security as long as one black man in this country is being bitten by a police dog. No one in the country has peace and security.

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

"Persuaded that the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights are the principles in which we believe and that these documents if put into practice represent the essence of mankind's hopes and good intentions;

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

"We are resolved to reinforce the common bond of purpose between our people by submerging all of our differences and establishing a nonsectarian, constructive program for human rights;

"We hereby present this charter.

## "I - Establishment

"The Organization of American-American Unity shall include all people of African descent in the Western Hemisphere, as well as our brothers and sisters on the African continent." Which means anyone of African descent, with African blood, can become a member of the Organization of American-American Unity, and also anyone of our brothers and sisters from the African continent. Because not only it is an organization of American-American unity meaning that we are trying to unite our people in the West, but it's an organization of American-American unity in the sense that we want to unite all of our people who are in North America, South America, and Central America with our people on the African continent. We must unite together in order to go forward together. Africa will not go forward any faster than we will and we will not go forward any faster than Africa will. We have one destiny and we've had one past.

In essence, what it is saying is instead of you and me running around here seeking allies in our struggle for freedom in the Irish neighborhood or the Jewish neighborhood or the Italian neighborhood, we need to seek some allies among people who look something like we do. It's time now for you and me to stop running away from the wolf right into the arms of the fox, looking for some kind of help. That's a drag.

## "II Self Defense.

"Since self-preservation is the first law of nature, we assert the Afro-American's right to self-defense. "The Constitution of the United States of America clearly affirms the right of every American citizen to

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

"We assert that in those areas where the government is either unable or unwilling to protect the lives and property of our people, that our people are within our rights to protect themselves by whatever means necessary." I repeat, because to me this is the most important thing you need to know. I already know it. "We assert that in those areas where the government is either unable or unwilling to protect the lives and property of our people, that our people are within our rights to protect themselves by whatever means necessary."

This is the thing you need to spread the word about among our people wherever you go. Never let them be brainwashed into thinking that whenever they take steps to see that they're in a position to defend themselves that they're being unlawful. The only time you're being unlawful is when you break the law. It's lawful to have something to defend yourself. Why, I heard President Johnson either today or yesterday, I guess it was today, talking about how quick this country would go to war to defend itself. Why, what kind of a fool do you look like, living in a country that will go to war at the drop of a hat to defend itself, and here you've got to stand up in the face of vicious police dogs and blue-eyed crackers waiting for somebody to tell you what to do to defend yourself!

Those days are over, they're gone, that's yesterday. The time for you and me to allow ourselves to be brutalized nonviolently is passé. Be nonviolent only with those who are nonviolent to you. And when you can bring me a nonviolent racist, bring me a nonviolent segregationist, then I'll get nonviolent. But don't teach me to be nonviolent until you teach some of those crackers to be nonviolent. You've never seen a nonviolent cracker. It's hard for a racist to be nonviolent. It's hard for anyone intelligent to be nonviolent. Everything in the universe does something when you start playing with his life, except the American Negro. He lays down and says, "Beat me, daddy."

So it says here: "A man with a rifle or a club can only be stopped by a person who defends himself with a rifle or a club." That's equality. If you have a dog, I must have a dog. If you have a rifle, I must have a rifle. If you have a club, I must have a club. This is equality. If the United States government doesn't want you and me to get rifles, then take the rifles away from those racists. If they don't want you and me to use clubs, take the clubs away from the racists. If they don't want you and me to get violent, then stop the racists from being violent. Don't teach us nonviolence while those crackers are violent. Those days are over.

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

I might say right here that instead of the various black groups declaring war on each other, showing how militant they can be cracking each other's heads, let them go down South and crack some of those crackers' heads. Any group of people in this country that has a record of having been attacked by racists- and there's no record where they have ever given the signal to take the heads of some of those racists-why, they are insane giving the signal to take the heads of some of their ex- brothers. Or brother X's, I don't know how you put that.

### "III - Education

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

And I must point out right there, when I was in Africa I met no African who wasn't standing with open arms to embrace any Afro-American who returned to the African continent. But one of the things that all of them have said is that everyone of our people in this country should take advantage of every type of educational opportunity available before you even think about talking about the future. If you're surrounded by schools, go to that school.

"Our children are being criminally shortchanged in the public school system of America. The Afro- American schools are the poorest-run schools in the city of New York. Principals and teachers fail to understand the nature of the problems with which they work and as a result they cannot do the job of teaching our children." They don't understand us, nor do they understand our problems; they don't. "The textbooks tell our children nothing about the great contributions of Afro-Americans to the growth and development of this country."

And they don't. When we send our children to school in this country they learn nothing about us other than that we used to be cotton pickers. Every little child going to school thinks his grandfather was a cotton picker. Why, your grandfather was Nat Turner; your grandfather was Toussaint L'Ouverture; your grandfather was Hannibal. Your grandfather was some of the greatest black people who walked on this earth. It was your grandfather's hands who forged civilization and it was your grandmother's hands who rocked the cradle of civilization. But the textbooks tell our children nothing about the great contributions of Afro-Americans to the growth and development of this country.

"The Board of Education's integration plan is expensive and unworkable; and the organization of principals and supervisors in New York City's school system has refused to support the Board's plan to integrate the schools, thus dooming it to failure before it even starts.

"The Board of Education of this city has said that even with its plan there are 10 percent of the schools in Harlem and the Bedford-Stuyvesant community in Brooklyn that they cannot improve." So what are we to do? "This means that the Organization of Afro-American Unity must make the Afro-American community a more potent force for educational self-improvement.

"A first step in the program to end the existing system of racist education is to demand that the 10 percent of the schools the Board of Education will not include in its plan be turned over to and run by the Afro-American community itself." Since they say that they can't improve these schools, why should you and I who live in the community, let these fools continue to run and produce this low standard of education? No, let them turn those schools over to us. Since they say they can't handle them, nor can they correct them, let us take a whack at it.

What do we want? "We want Afro-American principals to head these schools. We want Afro-American teachers in these schools." Meaning we want black principals and black teachers with some textbooks about



black people. "We want textbooks written by Afro-Americans that are acceptable to our people before they can be used in these schools.

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

"Through these steps we will make the 10 percent of the schools that we take over educational showplaces that will attract the attention of people from all over the nation." Instead of them being schools turning out pupils whose academic diet is not complete, we can turn them into examples of what we can do ourselves once given an opportunity.

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

"The Organization of American-American Unity recognizes the tremendous importance of the complete involvement of American-American parents in every phase of school life. The American-American parent must be willing and able to go into the schools and see that the job of educating our children is done properly." This whole thing about putting all of the blame on the teacher is out the window. The parent at home has just as much responsibility to see that what's going on in that school is up to par as the teacher in their schools. So it is our intention not only to devise an education program for the children, but one also for the parents to make them aware of their responsibility where education is concerned in regard to their children.

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

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

"TV - Politics and Economics."

And the two are almost inseparable, because the politician is depending on some money; yes, that's what he's depending on.

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

"The Organization of Afro-American Unity will organize the Afro-American community block by block to make the community aware of its power and its potential; we will start immediately a voter registration drive to make every unregistered voter in the Afro-American community an independent voter."

We won't organize any black man to be a Democrat or a Republican because both of them have sold us out. Both of them have sold us out; both parties have sold us out. Both parties are racist, and the Democratic Party is more racist than the Republican Party. I can prove it. All you've got to do is name everybody who's running the government in Washington, D. C. right now. He's a Democrat and he's from either Georgia, Alabama, Texas, Mississippi, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, from one of those cracker states. And they've got more power than any white man in the North has. In fact, the President is from a cracker state. What's he talking about? Texas is a cracker state, in fact, they'll hang you quicker in Texas than they will in Mississippi. Don't you ever think that just because a cracker becomes president he ceases being a cracker. He was a

cracker before he became president and he's a cracker while he's president. I'm going to tell it like it is. I hope you can take it like it is.

"We propose to support and organize political clubs, to run independent candidates for office, and to support any Afro-American already in office who answers to and is responsible to the Afro-American community." We don't support any black man who is controlled by the white power structure. We will start not only a voter registration drive, but a voter education drive to let our people have an understanding of the science of politics so they will be able to see what part the politician plays in the scheme of things; so they will be able to understand

when the politician is doing his job and when he is not doing his job. And any time the politician is not doing his job, we remove him whether he's white, black, green, blue, yellow or whatever other color they might invent.

"The economic exploitation in the American-American community is the most vicious form practiced on any people in America." In fact, it is the most vicious practiced on any people on this earth. No one is exploited economically as thoroughly as you and I, because in most countries where people are exploited they know it. You and I are in this country being exploited and sometimes we don't know it. "Twice as much rent is paid for rat-infested, roach-crawling, rotting tenements."

This is true. It costs us more to live in Harlem than it costs them to live on Park Avenue. Do you know that the rent is higher on Park Avenue in Harlem than it is on Park Avenue downtown? And in Harlem you have everything else in that apartment with you- roaches, rats, cats, dogs, and some other outsiders-disguised as landlords. "The American-American pays more for food, pays more for clothing, pays more for insurance than anybody else." And we do. It costs you and me more for insurance than it does the white man in the Bronx or somewhere else. It costs you and me more for food than it does them. It costs you and me more to live in America than it does anybody else, and yet we make the greatest contribution.

You tell me what kind of country this is. Why should we do the dirtiest jobs for the lowest pay? Why should we do the hardest work for the lowest pay? Why should we pay the most money for the worst kind of food and the most money for the worst kind of place to live in? I'm telling you we do it because we live in one of the rottenest countries that has ever existed on this earth. It's the system that is rotten; we have a rotten system. It's a system of exploitation, a political and economic system of exploitation, of outright humiliation, degradation, discrimination - all of the negative things that you can run into, you have run into under this system that disguises itself as a democracy, disguises itself as a democracy. And the things that they practice against you and me are worse than some of the things that they practiced in Germany against the Jews. Worse than some of the things that the Jews ran into. And you run around here getting ready to get drafted and go someplace and defend it. Someone needs to crack you up 'side your head.

"The Organization of Afro-American Unity will wage an unrelenting struggle against these evils in our community. There shall be organizers to work with our people to solve these problems, and start a housing self-improvement program." Instead of waiting for the white man to come and straighten out our neighborhood, we'll straighten it out ourselves. This is where you make your mistake. An outsider can't clean up your house as well as you can. An outsider can't take care of your children as well as you can. An outsider can't look after your needs as well as you can. And an outsider can't understand your problems as well as you can. Yet you're looking for an outsider to do it. We will do it or it will never get done.

"We propose to support rent strikes." Yes, not little, small rent strikes in one block. We'll make Harlem a rent strike. We'll get every black man in this city; the Organization of Afro-American Unity won't stop until there's not a black man in the city not on strike. Nobody will pay any rent. The whole city will come to a halt And they can't put all of us in jail because they've already got the jails full of us.

Concerning our social needs - I hope I'm not frightening anyone. I should stop right here and tell you if you're the type of person who frights, who gets scared, you should never come around us. Because we'll scare you to death. And you don't have far to go because you're half dead already. Economically you're dead- dead broke. Just got paid yesterday and dead broke right now.

"V - Social.

"This organization is responsible only to the Afro-American people and the Afro-American community." This organization is not responsible to anybody but us. We don't have to ask the man downtown can we demonstrate. We don't have to ask the man downtown what tactics we can use to demonstrate our resentment against his criminal abuse. We don't have to ask his consent; we don't have to ask his endorsement; we don't have to ask his permission. Anytime we know that an unjust condition exists and it is illegal and unjust, we will strike at it by any means necessary. And strike also at whatever and whoever gets in the way.

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

"The community must reinforce its moral responsibility to rid itself of the effects of years of exploitation, neglect, and apathy, and wage an unrelenting struggle against police brutality." Yes. There are some good policemen and some bad policemen. Usually we get the bad ones. With all the police in Harlem, there is too much crime, too much drug addiction, too much alcoholism, too much prostitution, too much gambling.

So it makes us suspicious about the motives of Commissioner Murphy when he sends all these policemen up here. We begin to think that they are just his errand boys, whose job it is to pick up the graft and take it back downtown to Murphy. Anytime there's a police commissioner who finds it necessary to increase the strength numerically of the policemen in Harlem and, at the same time, we don't see any sign of a decrease in crime, why, I think we're justified in suspecting his motives. He can't be sending them up here to fight crime, because crime is on the increase. The more cops we have, the more crime we have. We begin to think that they bring some of the crime with them.

So our purpose is to organize the community so that we ourselves - since the police can't eliminate the drug traffic, we have to eliminate it. Since the police can't eliminate organized gambling, we have to eliminate it. Since the police can't eliminate organized prostitution and all of these evils that are destroying the moral fiber of our community, it is up to you and me to eliminate these evils ourselves. But in many instances, when you unite in this country or in this city to fight organized crime, you'll find yourselves fighting the police department itself because they are involved in the organized crime. Wherever you have organized crime, that type of crime cannot exist other than with the consent of the police, the knowledge of the police and the cooperation of the police.

You'll agree that you can't run a number in your neighborhood without the police knowing it. A prostitute can't turn a trick on the block without the police knowing it. A man can't push drugs anywhere along the avenue without the police knowing it. And they pay the police off so that they will not get arrested. I know what I'm talking about- I used to be out there. And I know you can't hustle out there without police setting you up. You have to pay them off.

The police are all right. I say there's some good ones and some bad ones. But they usually send the bad ones to Harlem. Since these bad police have come to Harlem and have not decreased the high rate of crime, I tell you brothers and sisters it is time for you and me to organize and eliminate these evils ourselves, or we'll be out of the world backwards before we even know where the world was.

Drug addiction turns your little sister into a prostitute before she gets into her teens; makes a criminal out of your little brother before he gets in his teens - drug addiction and alcoholism. And if you and I aren't men enough to get at the root of these things, then we don't even have the right to walk around here complaining about it in any form whatsoever. The police will not eliminate it. "Our community must reinforce its moral responsibility to rid itself of the effects of years of exploitation, neglect, and apathy, and wage an unrelenting struggle against police brutality."

Where this police brutality also comes in - the new law that they just passed, the no-knock law, the stop- and-frisk law, that's an anti-Negro law. That's a law that was passed and signed by Rockefeller. Rockefeller with his old smile, always he has a greasy smile on his face and he's shaking hands with Negroes, like he's the Negro's pappy or granddaddy or great-uncle. Yet when it comes to passing a law that is worse than any law



that they had in Nazi Germany, why, Rockefeller couldn't wait till he got his signature on it. And the only thing this law is designed to do is make legal what they've been doing all the time.

They've passed a law that gives them the right to knock down your door without even knocking on it. Knock it down and come on in and bust your head and frame you up under the disguise that they suspect you of something. Why, brothers, they didn't have laws that bad in Nazi Germany. And it was passed for you and me, it's an anti-Negro law, because you've got an anti- Negro governor sitting up there in Albany - I started to say Albany, Georgia-in Albany, New York. Not too much difference. Not too much difference between Albany, New York, and Albany, Georgia. And there's not too much difference between the government that's in Albany, New York, and the government in Albany, Georgia.

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

This is absolutely necessary. When a person is a drug addict, he's not the criminal; he's a victim of the criminal. The criminal is the man downtown who brings this drug into the country. Negroes can't bring drugs into this country. You don't have any boats. You don't have any airplanes. You don't have any diplomatic immunity. It is not you who is responsible for bringing in drugs. You're just a little tool that is used by the man downtown. The man that controls the drug traffic sits in city hall or he sits in the state house. Big shots who are respected, who function in high circles - those are the ones who control these things. And you and I will never strike at the root of it until we strike at the man downtown.

"We must create meaningful, creative, useful activities for those who were led astray down the avenues of vice.

"The people of the Afro-American community must be prepared to help each other in all ways possible; we must establish a place where unwed mothers can get help and advice." This is a problem, this is one of the worst problems in our. . .

[A short passage is lost here as the tape is turned.]

"We must set up a guardian system that will help our youth who get into trouble." Too many of our children get into trouble accidentally. And once they get into trouble, because they have no one to look out for them, they're put in some of these homes where others who are experienced at getting in trouble are. And immediately it's a bad influence on them and they never have a chance to straighten out their lives. Too many of our children have their entire lives destroyed in this manner. It is up to you and me right now to form the type of organizations wherein we can look out for the needs of all of these young people who get into trouble, especially those who get into trouble for the first time, so that we can do something to steer them back on the right path before they go too far astray.

"And we must provide constructive activities for our own children. We must set a good example for our children and must teach them to always be ready to accept the responsibilities that are necessary for building good communities and nations. We must teach them that their greatest responsibilities are to themselves, to their families and to their communities.

"The Organization of Afro-American Unity believes that the Afro-American community must endeavor to do the major part of all charity work from within the community. Charity, however, does not mean that to which we are legally entitled in the form of government benefits. The Afro-American veteran must be made aware of all the benefits due to him and the procedure for obtaining them."

Many of our people have sacrificed their lives on the battlefield for this country. There are many government benefits that our people don't even know about. Many of them are qualified to receive aid in all forms, but they don't even know it. But we know this, so it is our duty, those of us who know it, to set up a system wherein our people who are not informed of what is coming to them, we inform them, we let them know how they can lay claim to everything that they've got coming to them from this government. And I mean you've got

much coming to you. "The veterans must be encouraged to go into business together, using GI loans." and all other items that we have access to or have available to us.

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

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

Lastly, concerning culture and the cultural aspect of the Organization of Afro-American Unity.

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

"Our history and our culture were completely destroyed when we were forcibly brought to America in chains. And now it is important for us to know that our history did not begin with slavery. We came from Africa, a great continent, wherein live a proud and varied people, a land which is the new world and was the cradle of civilization. Our culture and our history are as old as man himself and yet we know almost nothing about it."

This is no accident. It is no accident that such a high state of culture existed in Africa and you and I know nothing about it. Why, the man knew that as long as you and I thought we were somebody, he could never treat us like we were nobody. So he had to invent a system that would strip us of everything about us that we could use to prove we were somebody. And once he had stripped us of all human characteristics - stripped us of our language, stripped us of our history, stripped us of all cultural knowledge, and brought us down to the level of an animal- he then began to treat us like an animal, selling us from one plantation to another, selling us from one owner to another, breeding us like you breed cattle.

Why, brothers and sisters, when you wake up and find out what this man here has done to you and me, you won't even wait for somebody to give the word. I'm not saying all of them are bad. There might be some good ones. But we don't have time to look for them. Not nowadays.

"We must recapture our heritage and our identity if we are ever to liberate ourselves from the bonds of white supremacy. We must launch a cultural revolution to un-brainwash an entire people." A cultural revolution. Why, brothers, that's a crazy revolution. When you tell this black man in America who he is, where he came from, what he had when he was there, he'll look around and ask himself, "Well, what happened to it, who took it away from us and how did they do it?" Why, brothers, you'll have some action just like that When you let the black man in America know where he once was and what he once had, why, he only needs to look at himself now to realize something criminal was done to him to bring him down to the low condition that he's in today.

Once he realizes what was done, how it was done, where it was done, when it was done, and who did it, that knowledge in itself will usher in your action program. And it will be by any means necessary. A man doesn't know how to act until he realizes what he's acting against. And you don't realize what you're acting against until you realize what they did to you. Too many of you don't know what they did to you, and this is what makes you so quick to want to forget and forgive. No, brothers, when you see what has happened to you, you will never forget and you'll never forgive. And, as I say, all of them might not be guilty. But most of them are. Most of them are.

"Our cultural revolution must be the means of bringing us closer to our African brothers and sisters. It must begin in the community and be based on community participation. Afro-Americans will be free to create only when they can depend on the Afro-American community for support, and Afro-American artists must realize that they depend on the Afro-American community for inspiration."

Our artists - we have artists who are geniuses; they don't have to act the Stepin Fetchit role. But as long as they're looking for white support instead of black support, they've got to act like the old white supporter wants them to. When you and I begin to support the black artists, then the black artists can play that black role. As long as the black artist has to sing and dance to please the white man, he'll be a clown, he'll be clowning, just another clown. But when he can sing and dance to please black men, he sings a different song and he dances

a different step; When we get together, we've got a step all our own. We have a step that nobody can do but us, because we have a reason for doing it that nobody can understand but us.

"We must work toward the establishment of a cultural center in Harlem, which will include people of all ages and will conduct workshops in all of the arts, such as film, creative writing, painting, theater, music, and the entire spectrum of Afro-American history.

"This cultural revolution will be the journey to our rediscovery of ourselves. History is a people's memory, and without a memory man is demoted to the level of the lower animals." When you have no knowledge of your history, you're just another animal; in fact, you're a Negro; something that's nothing. The only black man on earth who is called a Negro is one who has no knowledge of his history. The only black man on earth who is called a Negro is one who doesn't know where he came from. That's the one in America. They don't call Africans Negroes.

Why, I had a white man tell me the other day, "He's not a Negro." Here the man was black as night, and the white man told me, "He's not a Negro, he's an African." I said, "Well, listen to him." I knew he wasn't, but I wanted to pull old whitey out, you know. But it shows you that they know this. You are Negro because you don't know who you are, you don't know what you are, you don't know where you are, and you don't know how you got here. But as soon as you wake up and find out the positive answer to all these things, you cease being a Negro. You become somebody.

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

And to quote a passage from "Then We Heard the Thunder" by John Killens, it says: "He was a dedicated patriot: Dignity was his country, Manhood was his government, and Freedom was his land." Old John Killens.

This is our aim. It's rough, we have to smooth it up some. But we're not trying to put something together that's smooth. We don't care how rough it is. We don't care how tough it is. We don't care how backward it may sound. In essence it only means we want one thing. We declare our right on this earth to be a man, to be a human being, to be respected as a human being, to be given the rights of a human being in this society, on this earth, in this day, which we intend to bring into existence by any means necessary.

I'm sorry I took so long.



## SELECTED QUOTES

“Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.”

“People don't realize how a man's whole life can be changed by one book.”

“I have often reflected upon the new vistas that reading has opened to me. I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life. As I see it today, the ability to read awoke inside me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive.”

“I could spend the rest of my life reading, just satisfying my curiosity -because you can hardly mention anything I am not curious about.”

“We need more light about each other. Light creates understanding, understanding creates love, love creates patience, and patience creates unity.”

“Don't be in a hurry to condemn because he doesn't do what you do or think as you think or as fast. There was a time when you didn't know what you know today.”

“If you have no critics you'll likely have no success.”

“Why am I as I am? To understand that of any person, his whole life, from Birth must be reviewed. All of our experiences fuse into our personality. Everything that ever happened to us is an ingredient.”

“To have once been a criminal is no disgrace. To remain a criminal is the disgrace”

“A wise man can play the part of a clown, but a clown can't play the part of a wise man.”

“Children have a lesson adults should learn, to not be ashamed of failing, but to get up and try again. Most of us adults are so afraid, so cautious, so 'safe,' and therefore so shrinking and rigid and afraid that it is why so many humans fail. Most middle-aged adults have resigned themselves to failure.”

“I remember one night at Muzdalifa with nothing but the sky overhead I lay awake amid sleeping Muslim brothers and I learned that pilgrims from every land--every color, and class, and rank; high officials and the beggar alike--all snored in the same language.”

“One day, may we all meet together in the light of understanding.”

“It is the process of mis-education that inhibits the full potential of a nation.”

“If you don’t stand for something you fall for everything.”

“There is no better than adversity. Every defeat, every heartbreak, every loss, contains its own seed, its own lesson on how to improve your performance next time.”

I believe in human beings, and that all human beings should be respected as such, regardless of their color”

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“You're not to be so blind with patriotism that you can't face reality. Wrong is wrong, no matter who does it or says it.”

“The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses.”

“If you're not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing.”

“Usually when people are sad, they don't do anything. They just cry over their condition. But when they get angry, they bring about a change.”

“Truth is on the side of the oppressed.”

“Hence I have no mercy or compassion in me for a society that will crush people, and then penalize them for not being able to stand up under the weight.”

“The only way we'll get freedom for ourselves is to identify ourselves with every oppressed people in the world. We are blood brothers to the people of Brazil, Venezuela, Haiti, Cuba -- yes Cuba too.”

“I believe that there will be ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those who do the oppressing. I believe that there will be a clash between those who want freedom, justice and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the system of exploitation. I believe that there will be that kind of clash, but I don't think it will be based on the color of the skin...”

“The greatest mistake of the movement has been trying to organize a sleeping people around specific goals. You have to wake the people up first, then you'll get action.”

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

“Truth does not change, only our awareness of it.”

“I've had enough of someone else's propaganda... I'm for truth, no matter who tells it. I'm for justice, no matter who it is for or against. I'm a human being first and foremost, and as such I'm for whoever and whatever benefits humanity as a whole.”

“They cripple the bird's wing, and then condemn it for not flying as fast as they.”

“When I am dead--I say it that way because from the things I know, I do not expect to live long enough to read this book in its finished form--I want you to just watch and see if I'm not right in what I say: that the white man, in his press, is going to identify me with "hate". He will make use of me dead, as he has made use of me alive, as a convenient symbol, of "hatred"--and that will help him escape facing the truth that all I have been doing is holding up a mirror to reflect, to show, the history of unspeakable crimes that his race has committed against my race.”

“You can't have capitalism without racism.”

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“I tell sincere white people, 'Work in conjunction with us- each of us working among our own kind.' Let sincere white individuals find all other white people they can who feel as they do- and let them form their own all-white groups, to work trying to convert other white people who are thinking and acting so racist. Let sincere whites go and teach non-violence to white people!

We will completely respect our white co-workers. They will deserve every credit. We will give them every credit. We will meanwhile be working among our own kind, in our own black communities- showing and teaching black men in ways that only other black men can- that the black man has got to help himself. Working separately, the sincere white people and sincere black people actually will be working together.

In our mutual sincerity we might be able to show a road to the salvation of America's very soul.”



“Where the really sincere white people have got to do their “proving” of themselves is not among the black victims, but out on the battle lines of where America’s racism really is—and that’s in their own home communities; America’s racism is among their own fellow whites. That’s where the sincere whites who really mean to accomplish something have got to work. Aside”

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“We don’t judge a man because of the color of his skin. We don’t judge you because you’re white; we don’t judge you because you’re black; we don’t judge you because you’re brown. We judge you because of what you do and what you practice. And as long as you practice evil, we’re against you. And for us, the most — the worst form of evil is the evil that’s based upon judging a man because of the color of his skin. And I don’t think anybody here can deny that we’re living in a society that just doesn’t judge a man according to his talents, according to his know-how, according to his possibility — background, or lack of academic background. This society judges a man solely upon the color of his skin. If you’re white, you can go forward, and if you’re Black, you have to fight your way every step of the way, and you still don’t get forward.”

“The OAAU is so structured organizationally to allow for active participation of any Afro- American, any Black American, in a program that is designed to eliminate the negative political, economic, and social evils that our people are confronted by in this society. And we have that set up because we realize that we have to fight against the evils of a society that has failed to produce brotherhood for every member of that society. This in no way means that we’re antiwhite, antiblue, antigreen, or antiyellow. We’re antiwrong. We’re antidiscrimination. We’re antisegregation.”

“You cannot separate peace and freedom. Because noone can be at peace unless he has his freedom.”

“Don’t be bitter [Betty]. Remember Lot’s wife when they kill me, and they surely will. You have to use all of your energy to do what it is you have to do.”

“I’m for truth, no matter who tells it. I’m for justice, no matter who it’s for or against.”

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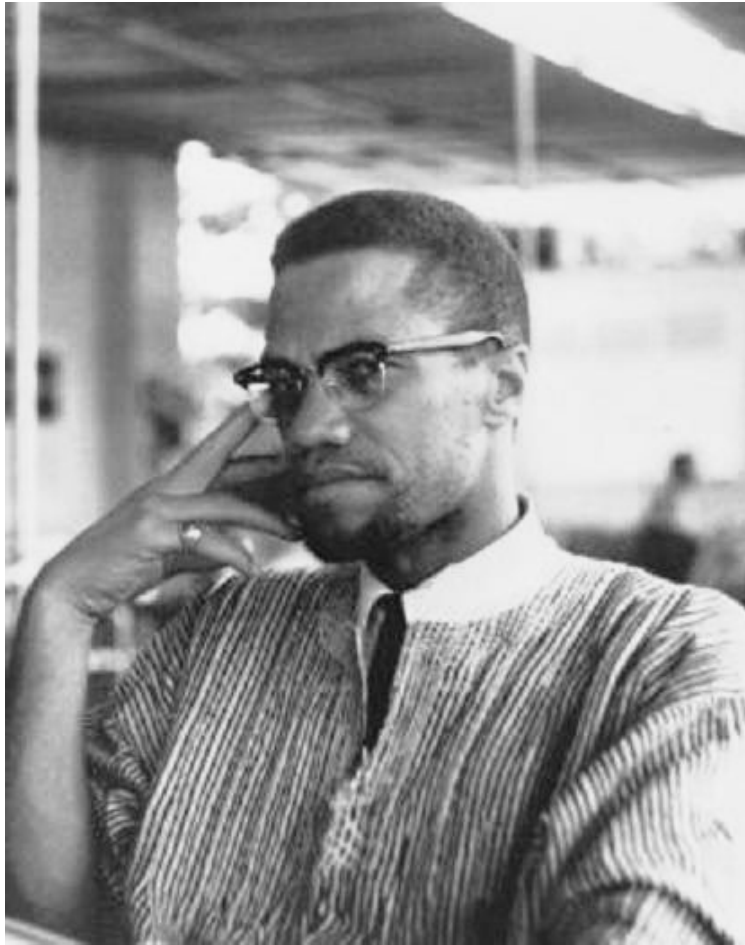
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REST IN POWER

MAY 19, 1925 – FEBRUARY 21, 1965