

MALCOLM X

الحج ملك الشباز

STUDY GUIDE



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction: Malcolm X and Radical Black Tradition	3
2. <i>Autobiography of Malcolm X</i>	7
(New York: Grove Press, 1965)	
3. <i>End of White World Supremacy</i>	12
(New York: Merlin House, 1971)	
4. <i>Malcolm X Speaks</i>	13
(New York: Pathfinder Press, 1965)	
5. <i>By Any Means Necessary</i>	16
(New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970)	
6. <i>On Afro-American History</i>	16
(New York: Pathfinder Press, 1967)	
7. <i>The Last Speeches</i>	17
(New York: Pathfinder, 1989)	
8. Conclusion: A Legacy of Struggle	18
9. A Proposal for Action	21

NOTE: The best way to respect Malcolm X is to read his work in a very serious and careful way. Then, we need to have an open honest debate about his ideas in the 1960's and our own ideas right now. Our greatest challenge is to follow Malcolm X's method of critical independent thinking.

Single copies of this study guide are free. Bulk prices are available from the following:

Malcolm X Conference Office
Borough of Manhattan Community College
199 Chambers Street #S749
New York, NY 10007
212/618-1673 FAX 212/618-1915

and

21st Century Books
607 E. Muddy Waters Dr.
Chicago, IL 60653 USA
312/538-2188

MALCOLM X AND RADICAL BLACK TRADITION

SOMETHING NEW IS HAPPENING IN 1990. SOMETHING GOOD. SOMETHING WE NEED.

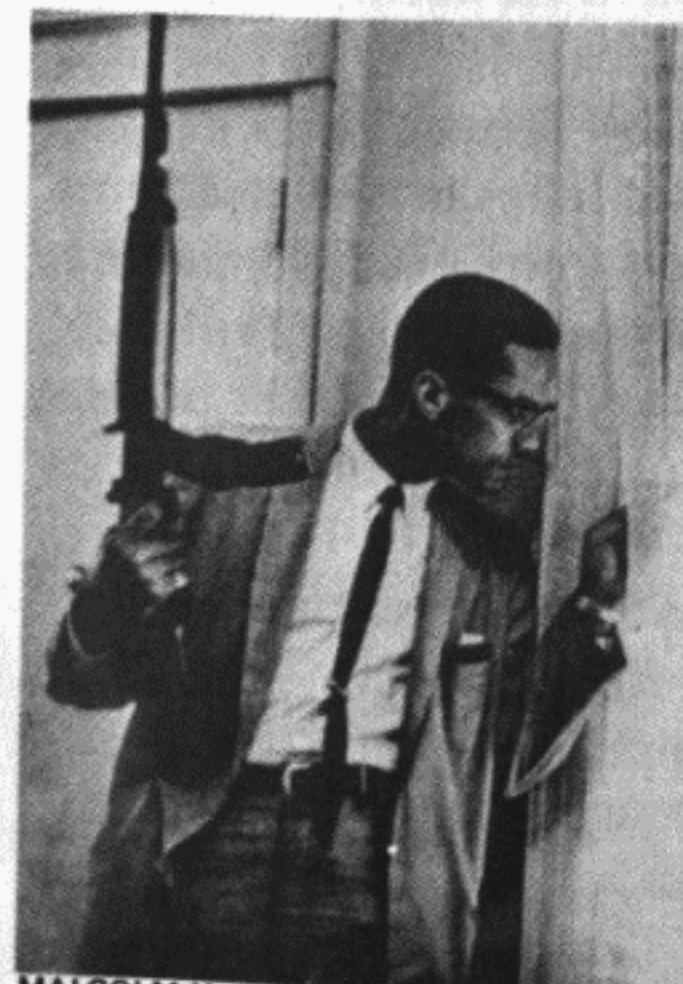
There is a rising interest in Malcolm X. People are searching for a radical Black perspective, especially young Black people who want a more militant leadership and a *By any means necessary* type of commitment. Dig the problems we face—homeless people living on the street, whole families without jobs or hope, drugs more common than soap and water, racial violence exploding on the campus and in the community—including vicious murders and police cover-ups. If ever we needed what Malcolm X stood for we need it now!

Malcolm was a great person because of his bold honesty and sacrifice, his intellectual power and brilliant rap. But not only that—Malcolm X was a living representative of our great radical tradition of struggle created by millions of people whose names we will never know. We study Malcolm because he is a window through which we can see and understand this tradition. We study Malcolm to learn how we can keep the tradition alive by making our original contribution to it.

Eurocentrism has snatched Black people out of human history, and rewritten world history based on racist lies. Denied their true history, exploited as workers, raped and ravaged of their humanity, the Europeans attempted to turn Black people into deaf, dumb, and blind slaves who hate themselves and love their oppressors.



LYNCHING, OMAHA, NEBRASKA 1919



MALCOLM X, BORN OMAHA, NE 1925

The radical Black tradition is about change. It proves that Black people have always fought for progress and a better life. This fight is clarified through militant action and vigorous debate. In the 19th century the main debate that shaped our radical tradition was the EMANCIPATION debate, how to end slavery and institutionalize freedom. In the 20th century the debate has been about SELF-DETERMINATION, freedom from urban capitalist structures, especially in terms of culture, economic life, and political power.

Radical Ideology is a BLACK TRADITION

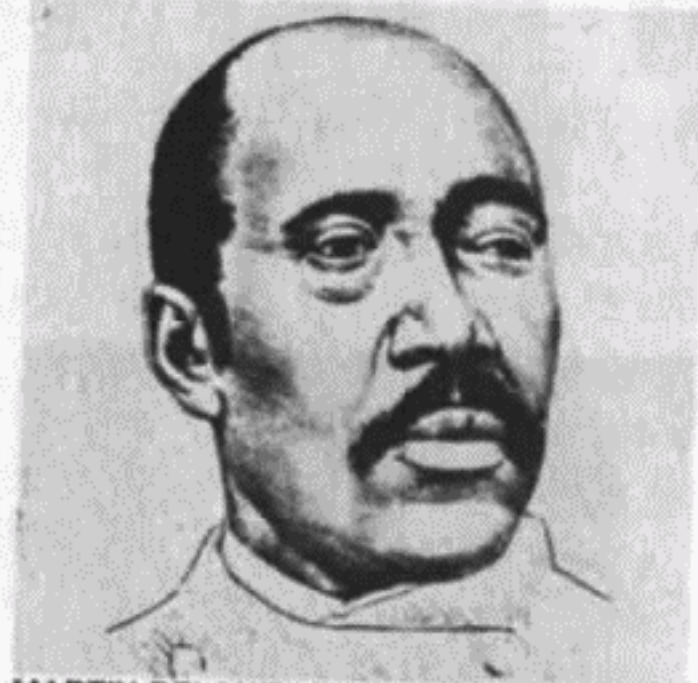
19th Century: The Emancipation Debates

From 1830 through the Civil War, Black activists and community leaders met in local, state, and national conventions to discuss their views on ending slavery and improving the lives of Black people. These meetings ranged in size from 15 to several hundred, but they reflected the views of millions. The debates were carried out by such leaders as Samuel Cornish, founder of the first Black newspaper, Richard Allen, founder of the first Black church, James Forten, Martin R Delaney, David Walker, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglas, Henry Highland Garnet, and others.

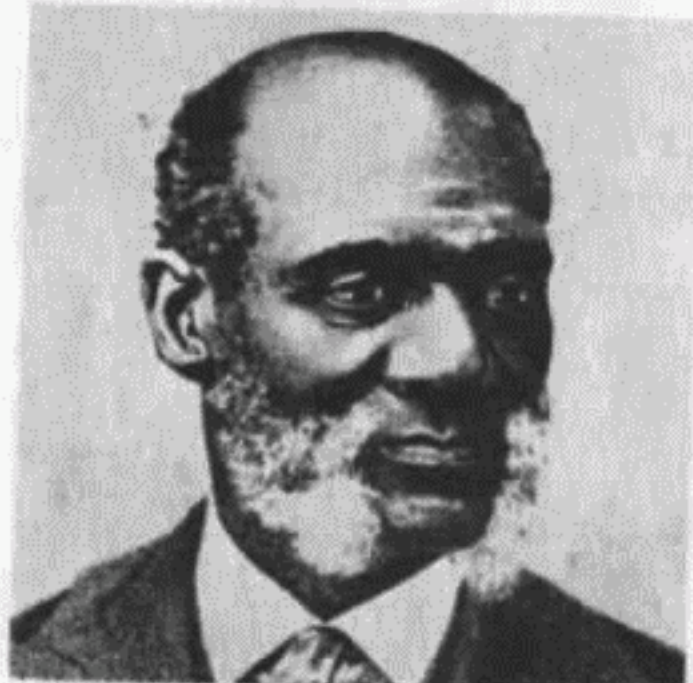
The Emancipation Debates of the National Negro Convention movement clarified a variety of strategies and tactics: united front cooperation with liberal whites, militant armed struggle, and other forms of collective self determination including emigration, moral suasion, and electoral participation. The main principle of unity was fighting slavery.

Debate without action is a waste of time, so it is important to understand that Black people did take militant action to fight against slavery. Blacks participated in the abolitionist movement, including the underground railroad. Blacks led countless armed slave insurrections (notably by Gabriel Prosser 1800, Denmark Vesey 1822, and Nat Turner 1831) and initiated armed struggle with John Brown at Harper's Ferry in 1859. Even by going to the movies to see "Glory," and an earlier film "Buck and the Preacher" it is clear to everyone that Black people fought for their freedom in and after the civil war.

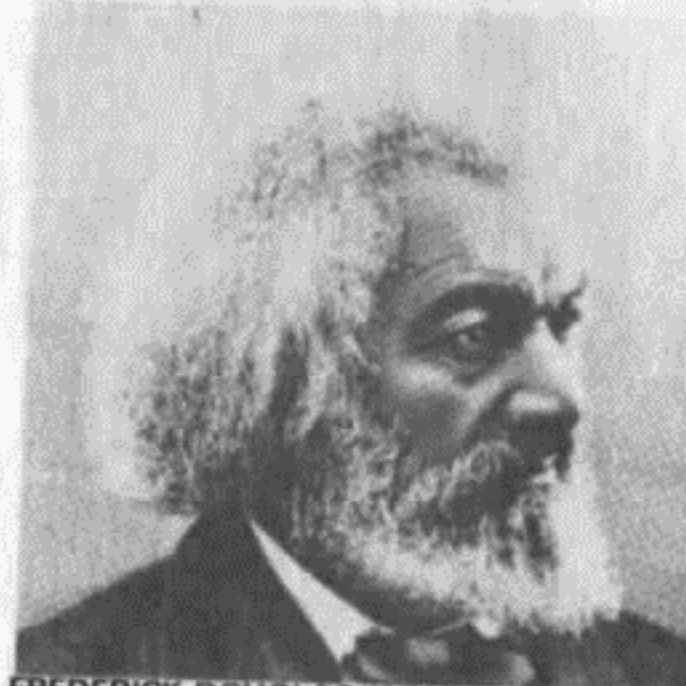
The Emancipation debate contributed to militant Black revolutionary struggle to overthrow slavery. We give thanks to those who fought, we praise radical Black tradition.



MARTIN DELANEY (1812-1885)



HENRY HIGHLAND GARNET (1815-1882)



FREDERICK DOUGLAS (1817-1895)



HARRIET TUBMAN (1826-1913)

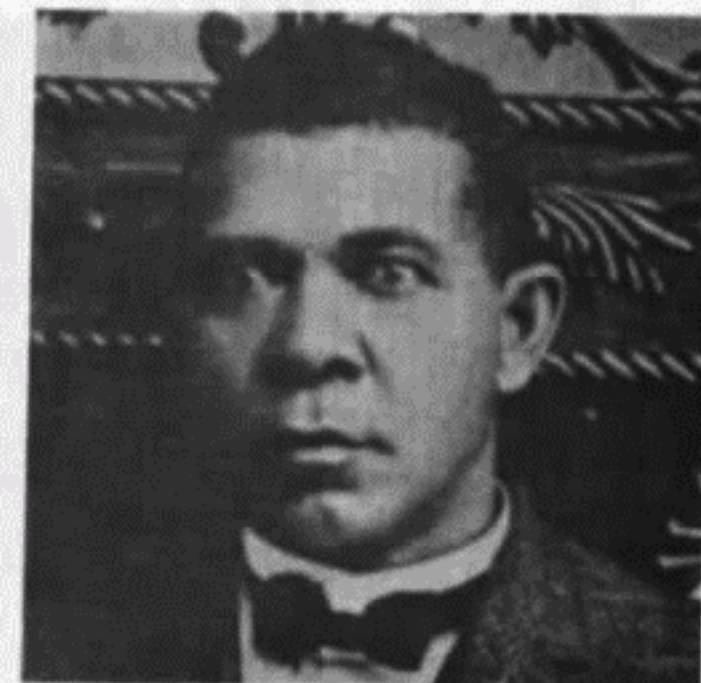
20th Century: The Self-Determination Debates

World domination by imperialism defines the 20th century. After World War II, the USA became the number one imperialist power because the economic strength of Europe had been destroyed. US political domination was based on an economic relationship, exploiting the people and natural resources of the third world for its industrial development and control of all international markets. Modern imperialism herds people into cities like cattle and transforms them into industrial workers. US imperialism did this to Black people in the first half of the 20th century.

This set the stage for the great Self-Determination debate. Part of the debate was over how Blacks who remained in the south could "catch up" with the north. This gave energy to the civil rights movement. Part of the debate was over economic issues of jobs and housing and involved both Black capitalists and workers. This ignited an ideological throw down over capitalism and socialism. And part of the debate united Blacks in the US with Blacks all over the world. This sparked new forms of modern panafricanism.

The moral power of Black religion and the collective strength of Black nationalism held the militant radical tradition together, while the leading ideological forces in the self-determination debate became panafricanism and socialism. African Americans were in the belly of the beast of US imperialism and were fighting as part of *the wretched of the earth*: workers of the world, and African peoples everywhere.

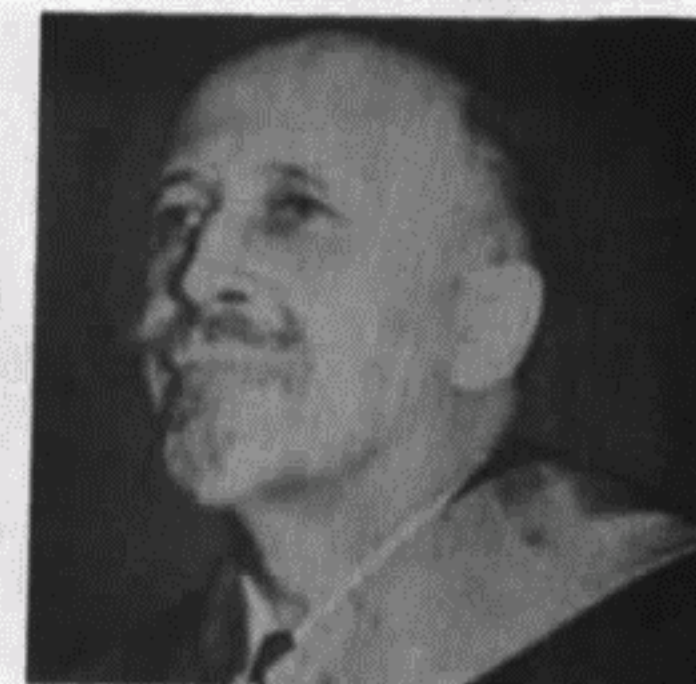
Radical Black traditions have been kept alive because the past could be remembered, but more important than that was the fact that each generation of Black people continued to fight. Through militant struggle Black activists are always led to rediscover the lessons of the past. In fact, this is a necessary process, summing up a struggle based on the lessons learned from all previous struggles. This is the kind of literature that best contributes to the rich texture of our glorious radical Black tradition.



BOOKER T. WASHINGTON (1856-1915)



IDA B. WELLS (1862-1931)



W.E.B. DUBOIS (1868-1963)

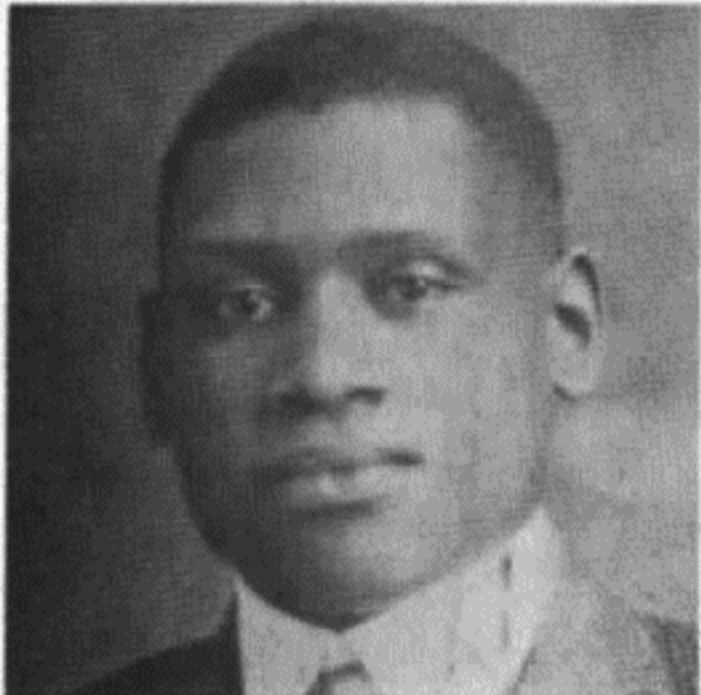


MARCUS MOSIAH GARVEY (1887-1940)

The Glorious 1960's: A



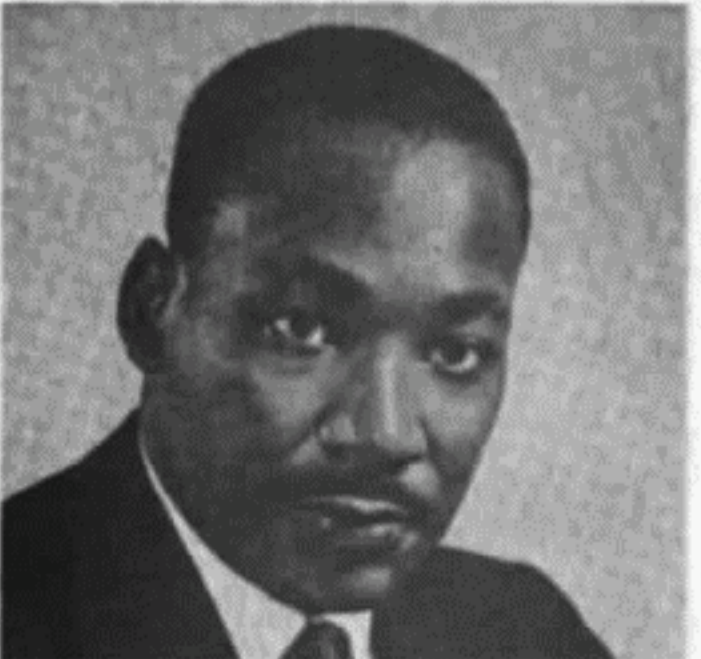
ELIJAH MUHAMMAD (1896-1975)



PAUL ROBESON (1898-1976)



ELLA BAKER (1903-1986)



MARTIN LUTHER KING (1929-1968)

The self-determination debates exploded in the 1960's. The winds of change centered a world wide storm in the third world. This was kicked off by the high points of struggle against colonialism (e.g., Ghana in 1957), and neo-colonialism (e.g., Cuba in 1959) in the third world, and the Black led civil rights movement in the USA. The fight for reform, even when successful, leads to a continuation of oppression in new forms. Everywhere the watchword became revolution, from Paris to Peking, from Mozambique to Mississippi.

Malcolm X reached his greatest level of leadership in the 1960's. He was the ideological leader for Black radicalism: Black religion (*spirituality and morality*), Black nationalism (*institution building and collective action*), Panafrikanism (*identity and internationalism*), and Socialism (*freedom/justice/ equality and anti-imperialism*).

The explosion of struggle released many forces of change. This is especially true in popular culture, because white and Latino youth began to absorb Black popular culture, and America became more Black in its styles of music, speech, dress, and sexuality. But still Blacks continued to suffer. Of course, the Black middle class began to chill, but for most Blacks life was all the way raw. This leads us to Malcolm. He talked about the difference between the house Negroes and the field Negroes. Malcolm became the field Negro that the white ruling class had nightmares about. His rap was his weapon, truth was his ammo, and the western imperialist racist system was his target.

Yo! This is addressed to all field Negroes, and all other progressive minded people, to all serious students in Black studies. Malcolm was our leader in the 1960's, and we can continue to learn from him in the 1990's. All we ask is that you check him out. We hope you use this study guide to help you.

Golden Age of Struggle

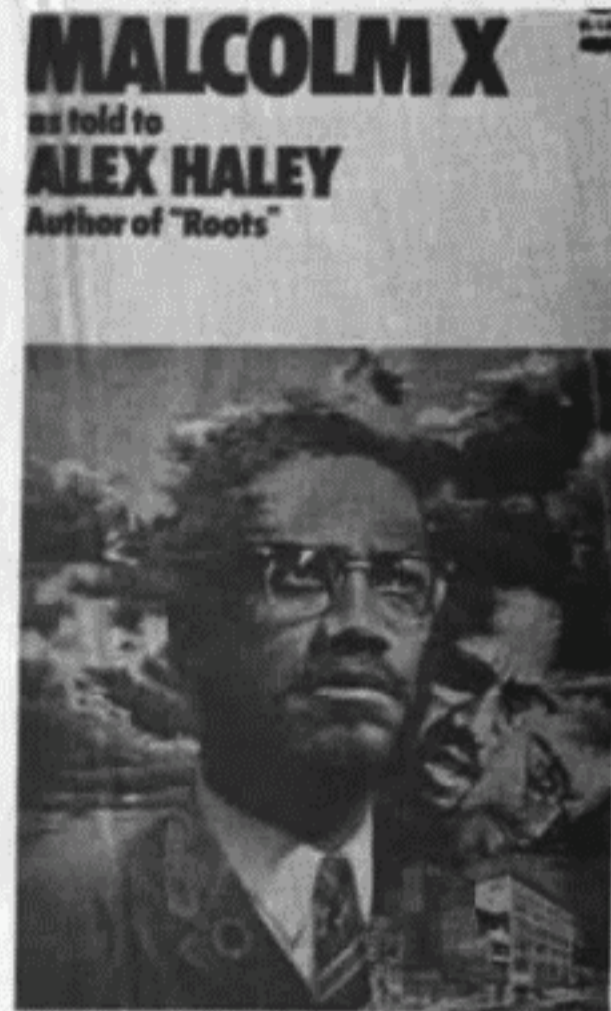
The Autobiography of Malcolm X

THE TEXT AND THE TRADITION

This is the most important book published in the 1960's. It is a classic 20th century autobiography and has been cherished by progressive people everywhere in the world. It ranks with the best. St. Augustine (the African Catholic saint), Frederick Douglas (great African American abolitionist), and Kwame Nkrumah (father of independent Africa). The autobiographical text, beginning with the innovative slave narratives, is the foundation of the Black literary tradition.

The Autobiography of Malcolm X is required reading to understand the contemporary Black experience. This book covers life as lived by the masses of people, what Malcolm called "bottom of the pile Negroes." Here are the problems of family life, street life, drugs and violence, crime and prison. But we can also find religious transformation and moral discipline, consciousness and commitment, study and struggle.

Malcolm X dictated this book to Alex Haley who provided him with editorial support. He finished it shortly before he died, but it was published after he was murdered.

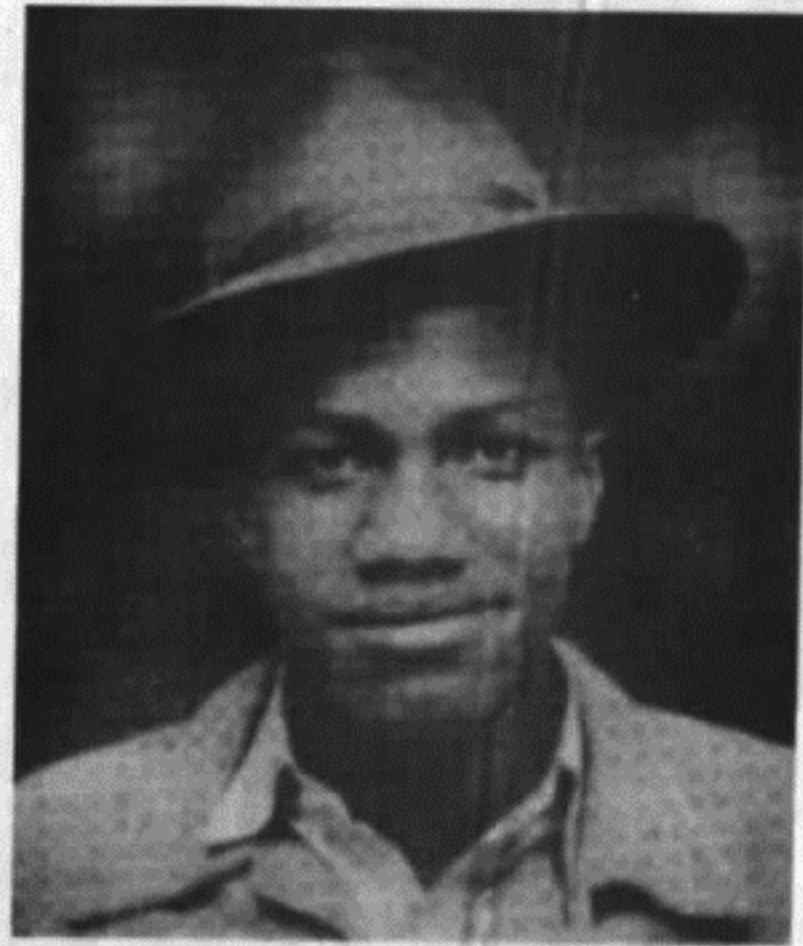


HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

1. Read this book in relation to its historical context, from 1925 to 1965.
2. Keep in mind Malcolm X went through four stages, and *The Autobiography* should be read in four parts as well.
 - A. Malcolm Little (1925-1941): chapters 1-2;
 - B. Detroit Red (1941-1952): chapters 3-10;
 - C. Malcolm X (1952-1964): chapters 11-15; and
 - D. Omawole (1964-1965): chapters 16-19.
3. Malcolm X was stopped. We face the challenge of going forward. Thus, this book must be read as a guide to action: use it to examine your own life, use it to evaluate leadership, use it to think about the future.

MALCOLM LITTLE

(1925 - 1941)



Malcolm Little was an average youngster who wanted a good life but was stopped by racism.

Somehow, I happened to be alone in the classroom with Mr. Ostrowski, my English teacher (in 8th grade)...I had gotten some of my best marks under him, and he had always made me feel that he liked me...He told me, "Malcolm, you ought to be thinking about a career. Have you been giving it thought?" The truth is, I hadn't. I never have figured out why I told him, "Well, yes, sir, I've been thinking I'd like to be a lawyer."...He kind of half-smiled and said, "Malcolm, one o 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. The more I thought afterwards about what he said, the more uneasy it made me...It was then that I began to change—inside.

(Autobiography pp 36-37)

DISCUSSION:

The family is the basic social organization of every society. Malcolm was born into a strong family, but it was destroyed. How did this happen? What role did racism play? Furthermore, discuss how Malcolm was discouraged by a racist teacher in school. How typical were the experiences of Malcolm Little?

DETROIT RED

(1941 - 1952)



Detroit Red was a drug dealing criminal who was a danger to himself and to the Black community.

I was a true hustler - uneducated, unskilled at anything honorable, and I considered myself nerry and cunning enough to live by my wits, exploiting any prey that presented itself. I would risk just about anything. Right now, in every big city ghetto, tens of thousands of yesterdays and today's school drop outs are keeping body and soul together by some form of hustling in the same way I did. And they inevitably move into more and more, worse and worse, illegality and immorality. Full time hustlers never can relax to appraise what they are doing and where they are bound. As is the case in any jungle, the hustler's every waking hour is lived with both the practical and the subconscious knowledge that if he ever relaxes, if he ever slows down, the other hungry, restless foxes, ferrets, wolves, and vultures out there with him won't hesitate to make him their prey.

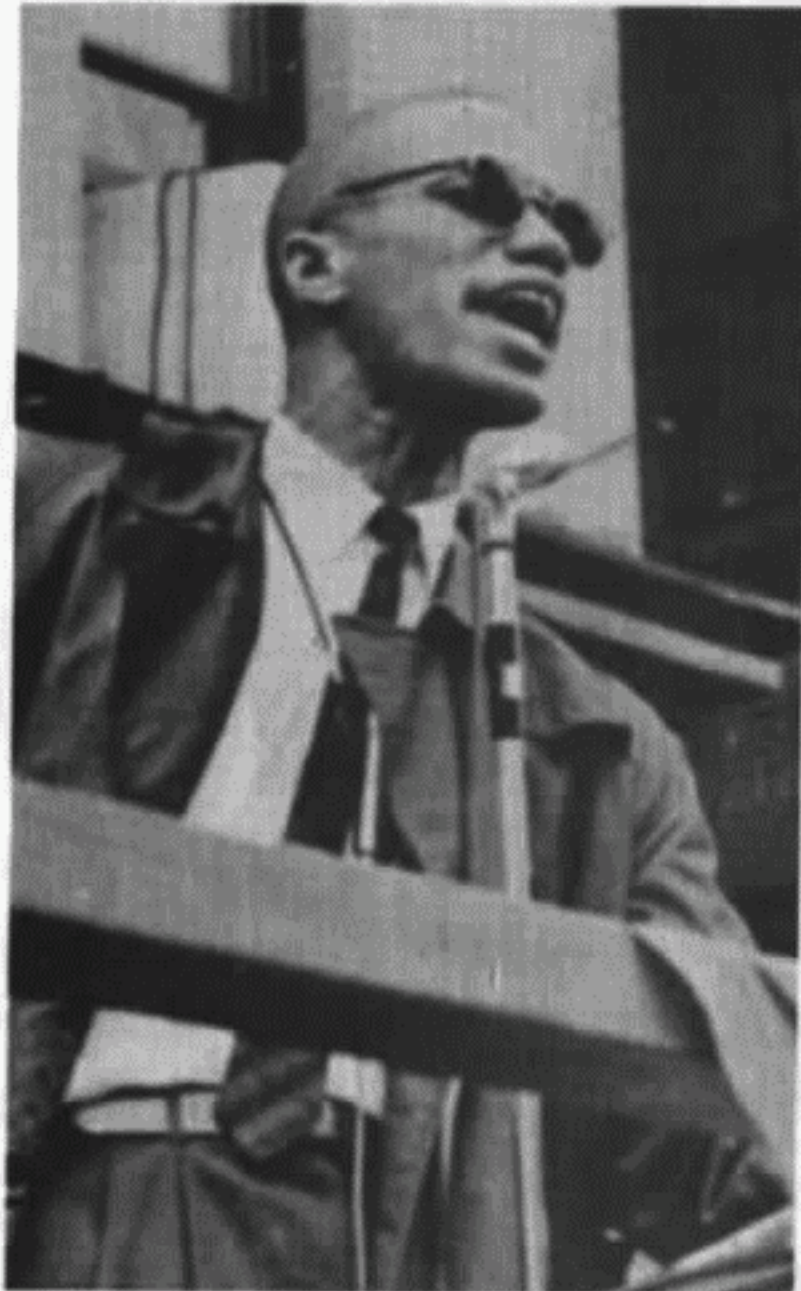
(Autobiography, pp 109-110)

DISCUSSION:

Most of us know people who survive in an underground economy, sometimes through illegal means. Fast money means drugs and guns, including stealing and robbery. Then comes either the cemetery or prison. Why do people use drugs? Who profits? What can be done to stop drugs? In this context discuss Malcolm's description of the hustler.

MALCOLM X

(1952 - 1963)



Malcolm X was a Black nationalist Muslim minister who exposed the racist barbarism of American life.

Elijah Muhammad spoke of how in this wilderness of North America, for centuries the "blue-eyed devil white man" had brainwashed the "so-called Negro." He told us how, as one result, the Black man in America was "mentally, morally and spiritually dead." Elijah Muhammad spoke of how the Black man was the Original Man, who had been kidnapped from his homeland and stripped of his language, his culture, his family structure, his family name, until the Black man in America did not even realize who he was. He told us, and showed us, how his teachings of the true knowledge of ourselves would lift up the Black man from the bottom of the white man's society and place the Black man back where he had begun, at the top of civilization.

(Autobiography, page 199)

DISCUSSION:

Religion and nationalism are major aspects of our radical Black tradition. What role did each play in the transformation of Malcolm X? Discuss each of the points Malcolm makes in relation to the teaching of Elijah Muhammad.

OMAWOLE

(1964 - 1965)



Omawole (A NAME MALCOLM RECEIVED IN NIGERIA) was an anti-imperialist, pan-africanist who expanded his religion and nationalism toward world brotherhood.

It was a big order—the organization that I was creating in my mind, one which would help to challenge the American Black man to gain his human rights, and to cure his mental, spiritual, economic, and political sicknesses. But if you ever intend to do anything worthwhile, you have to start with a worthwhile plan. Substantially, as I saw it, the organization I hoped to build would differ from the Nation of Islam in that it would embrace all faiths of Black men, and it would carry into practice what the Nation of Islam had only preached...One of the major troubles that I was having in building the organization that I wanted—an all-Black organization whose ultimate objective was to help create a society in which there could exist honest white-Black brotherhood — was that my earlier public image, my so-called "Black Muslim" image, kept blocking me. I was trying to gradually reshape that image. I was trying to turn a corner, into a new regard by the public, especially Negroes; I was no less angry than I had been, but at the same time the true brotherhood I had seen in the Holy World had influenced me to recognize that anger can blind human vision.

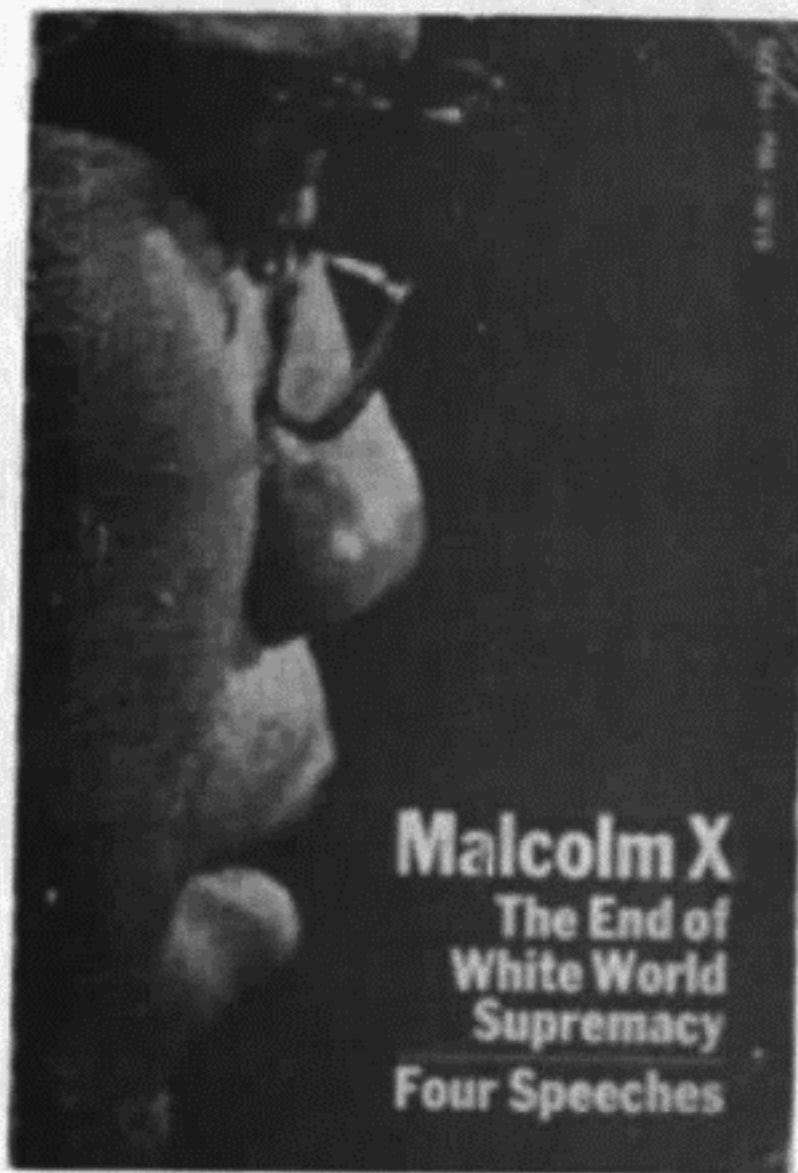
(Autobiography, pp 320, 381)

DISCUSSION:

In the last year of his life Malcolm created two organizations: Muslim Mosque Inc. and Organization of Afro-American Unity. What are the differences between them? Also, one of the greatest points of controversy about Malcolm is the extent to which his life change in the last 2 or 3 years. Discuss what changes took place in Malcolm's point of view?

The End of White World Supremacy: Four Speeches

MALCOLM X, THE END OF WHITE WORLD SUPREMACY: FOUR SPEECHES (NEW YORK: MERLIN HOUSE, 1971). This text consists of 4 speeches given by Malcolm X while he was a minister in the Nation of Islam during 1962 and 1963, edited by Benjamin Goodman.



One of the greatest strengths of our radical Black tradition is its relentless opposition to Eurocentrism. The Eurocentric viewpoint is that Greece and Rome laid the foundation for the eternal white European dominance of the world. Elijah Muhammad continued the radical Black tradition of exposing this lie and in its place articulated an Afrocentric philosophy of history that links the fall of countries to the extent that their wealth was based on exploitation, "the sin of slavery." Malcolm X stressed this point to liberate our consciousness to consider a post-American history of the world.

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us that as it was the evil sin of slavery that caused the downfall and destruction of ancient Egypt and Babylon, and of ancient Greece, as well as ancient Rome, so it was the evil sin of colonialism (slavery, nineteenth-century European style) that caused the collapse of the white nations in present-day Europe as world powers. Unbiased scholars and unbiased observers agree that the wealth and power of white Euhrope has rapidly declined during the nineteen-year period between World War II and today. So we of this present generation are also witnessing how the enslavement of millions of Black people in this country is now bringing White America to her hour of judgment, to her downfall as a respected nation. And even those Americans who are blinded by childlike patriotism can see that it is only a matter of time before White America too will be utterly destroyed by her own sins, and all traces of her former glory will be removed from this planet forever. (pp 121-122)

December, 1963

DISCUSSION:

While in the Nation of Islam, Malcolm spoke out against US imperialism based on world history and religion. One aspect of this was limited to a Black perspective, while in another sense it suggests a universal understanding of history. How and why does Malcolm explain the rise and fall of countries? What "sins" are being committed against Black people in the USA? Why will the USA fall?

Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements

MALCOLM X SPEAKS: SELECTED SPEECHES AND STATEMENTS (NEW YORK: PATHFINDER PRESS, 1965). This is a classic collection of material organized in 15 sections, edited by George Breitman.

Malcolm X was the greatest Black nationalist leader and he also articulated his views as a universal statement for progressive people of all nationalities. Malcolm was a leader who ran down revolutionary views that became popular themes for everyone in struggle. His speeches are full of analyses and comment, and his impact was to unify progressive forces, first and foremost in the Black liberation movement, then in the broader anti-imperialist movement as well. He clarified the role of religion in struggle and laid the basis for Black liberation theology. Malcolm also put the race/class struggle of Blacks in the USA in a universal world context of the oppressed fighting their oppressors.



Malcolm on Religion and Resistance

There is nothing in our book, the Koran, that teaches us to suffer peacefully. Our religion teaches us to be intelligent. Be peaceful, be courteous, obey the law, respect everyone; but if someone puts his hand on you, send him to the cemetery. That's a good religion. If fact, that's that old time religion. That's the one that Ma and Pa used to talk about: an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, and a head for a head, and a life for a life. That's a good religion. And nobody resents that kind of religion being taught but a wolf, who intends to make you his meal...No, preserve your life, it's the best thing you've got. And if you've got to give it up, let it be even-steven. (Malcolm X Speaks, pp 12-13)

November, 1963

Malcolm on Global Rebellion

I believe that there will ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those that 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 systems of exploitation...It is incorrect to classify the revolt of the Negro as simply a racial conflict of Black against white, or as a purely American problem. Rather we are today seeing a global rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor, the exploited against the exploiter. (Malcolm X Speaks, pp 232-233)

January, 1965

Malcolm X Speaks:

Selected Speeches and Statements

MESSAGE TO THE GRASS ROOTS

During the 1960's the term "grass roots" gained in popularity in opposition to "elite" civil rights leaders. One of the most important speeches by Malcolm X is his *Message to the Grass Roots*. This speech was delivered all over the country in late 1963 and laid the basis for the Black liberation movement that coalesced with the war cry of "Black Power" in 1966.

Malcolm on Common Problems

... America has a very serious problem. Not only does America have a very serious problem, but our people have a very serious problem. America's problem is us. We're her problem... Once you face this as a fact, then you can start plotting a course that will make you appear intelligent, instead of unintelligent... We have a common enemy. We have this in common: We have a common oppressor, a common exploiter, and a common discriminator. But once we all realize that we have a common enemy, then we unite—on the basis of what we have in common. And what we have foremost in common is that enemy—the white man. He's an enemy to all of us. I know some of you all think that some of them aren't enemies. Time will tell.

(Malcolm X Speaks, pp 4-5)

November, 1963



DISCUSSION:

In this speech Malcolm discusses common problems and Black nationalism. In this way he lays the basis for Black unity in an overall way. However, he also discusses the differences between the house slaves and the field slaves, a difference that still exists today. Both issues need to be discussed.

The issue also involves leadership: how can we develop progressive working class leadership within the Black community?

THE BALLOT OR THE BULLET

Malcolm X made a great contribution in helping to clarify the relationship between reform and revolution, between solving problems through electoral action versus solving problems through retaliatory violence. He stressed that Blacks were kept down through the force of racist violence and murder. But Malcolm X did more than this, because he attempted to lay down a program of Black unity, what he called Black nationalism. The issue he raised is the relationship of Black nationalism to reform and to revolution. This is an ideological issue of great importance.

Malcolm on Common Solutions

The political philosophy of Black nationalism means that the Black man should control the politics and the politicians in his own community... The economic philosophy of Black nationalism is pure and simple. It only means that we should control the economy of our community... The social philosophy of Black nationalism only means that we have to get together and remove the evils, the vices, alcoholism, drug addiction, and other evils that are destroying the moral fiber of our community. We our selves have to lift the level of our community, the standard of our community to a higher level, make our own society beautiful so that we will be satisfied.... We've got to change our own minds about each other. We have to see each other with new eyes. We have to see each other as brothers and sisters. We have to come together with warmth so we can develop unity and harmony that's necessary to get this problem solved ourselves... if we see fit then to form a Black nationalist party, we'll form a Black nationalist party. If it's necessary to form a Black nationalist army, we'll form a Black nationalist army. It'll be the ballot or the bullet. It'll be liberty or it'll be death.

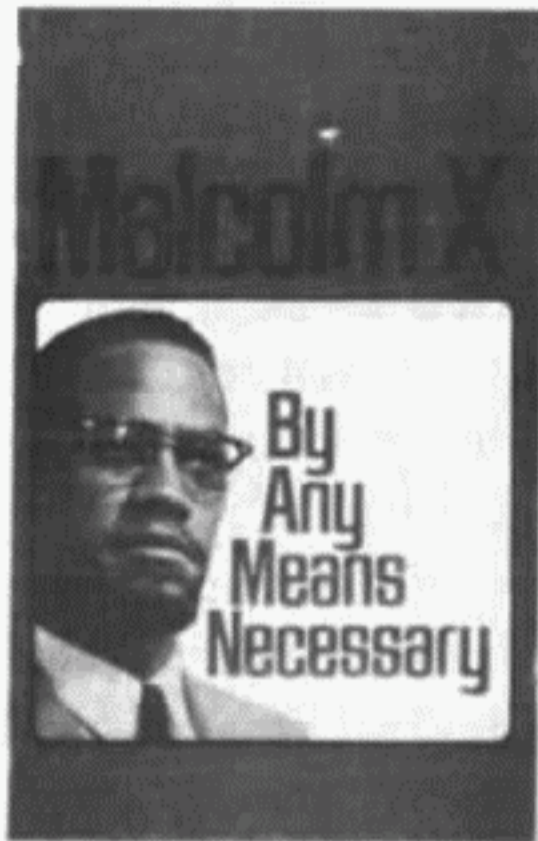
(Malcolm X Speaks, pp 38, 39, 40, 41)

April, 1964

DISCUSSION:

Over the last 25 years there has been a great practical struggle, most dealing with electoral struggle (especially with the election of Black mayors, and campaign on the state and national levels). The electoral experience needs to be summed up, and discussed in terms of who benefits and whose life has remained the same or gotten worse. Furthermore, we have to discuss how to carry out Malcolm X's program at the grass roots level?

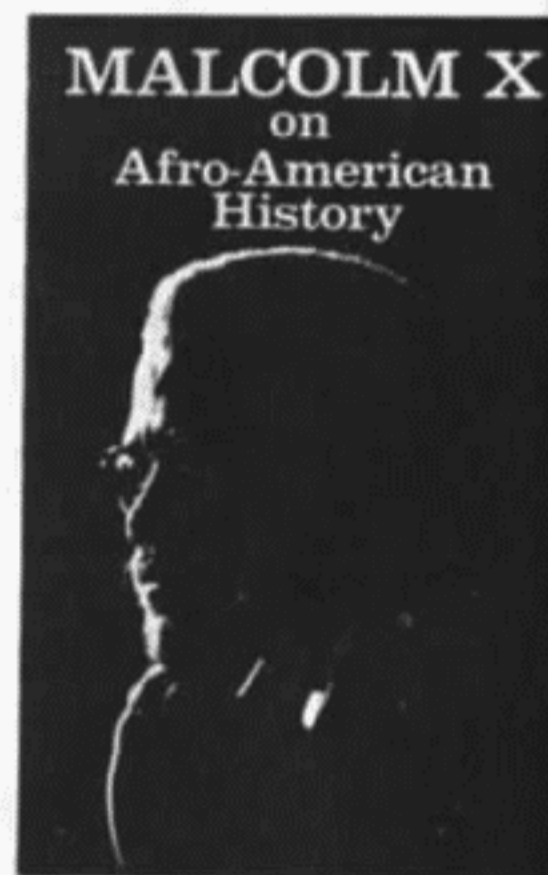
By Any Means Necessary



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 ... 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 ... under this system that 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...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. (pp, 47,48)

Malcolm X on Afro-American History

... when you go back into the past and find out where you once were, then you will know that you weren't always at this level, that you once had attained a higher level, had made great achievements, contributions to society, civilization, science and so forth. And you know that if you once did it, you can do it again; you automatically get the incentive, the inspiration and the energy necessary to duplicate what our forefathers formerly did. But by keeping us completely cut off from our past, it is easy for the man who has power over us to make us willing to stay at this level because we feel that we were always at this level, a low level. That's why I say it is so important for you and me to spend time today learning something about the past so that we can better understand the present, analyze it, and then do something about it. (pp 4-5)



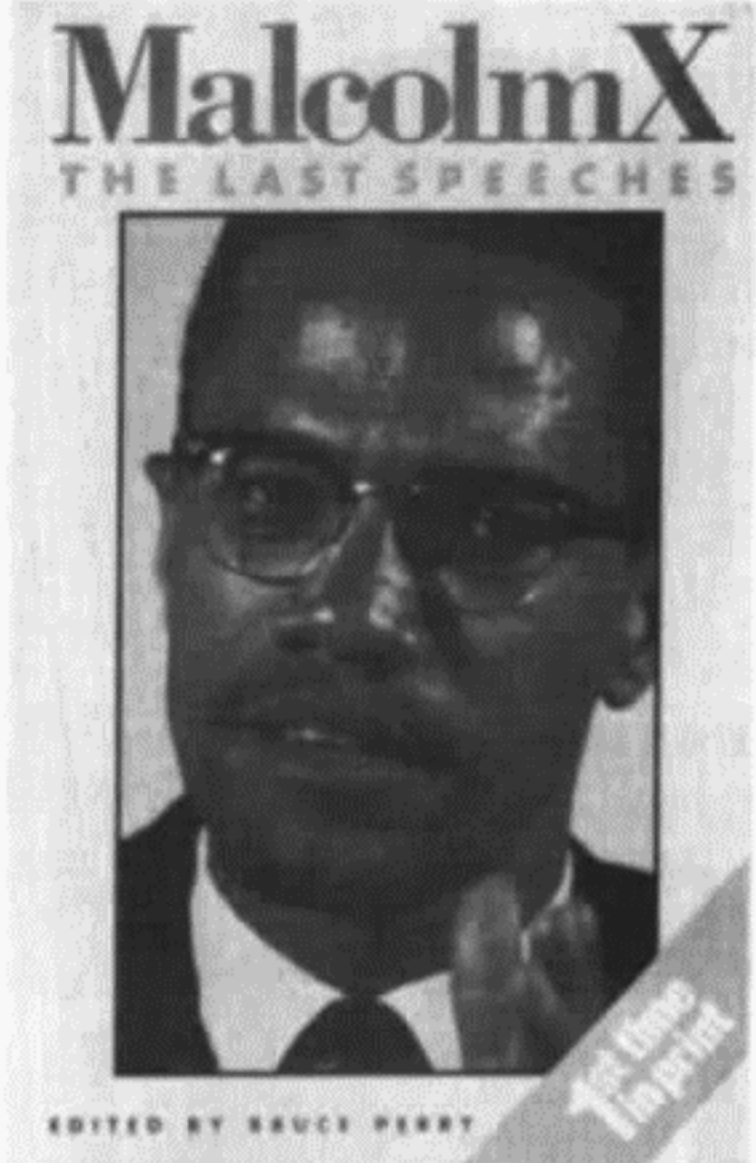
- DISCUSSION:**
1. What kind of economic system is Malcolm X talking about? Was Malcolm a Black capitalist or a Black socialist?
 2. Our history can be understood in economic, political, and or cultural terms. We have always had to fight for progress, so the main discussion should focus on our best examples of struggle in each area.

Malcolm X: The Last Speeches

MALCOLM X: THE LAST SPEECHES (NEW YORK: PATHFINDER PRESS, 1989). A collection of 4 speeches and 2 interviews, edited by Bruce Perry.

There are over 100 speeches given by Malcolm X that have yet to be published. *Malcolm X: The Last Speeches* is a great publishing event, especially for the two speeches given in Malcolm's last month. Malcolm is clear: the world is dominated by imperialism and the solution can only come through united independent action.

One thing I noticed in both the Middle East and Africa, in every county that was progressive, the women were progressive. In every country that was underdeveloped and backward, it was to the same degree that the women were undeveloped, or underdeveloped, and backward. (page 98)



There is a worldwide revolution going on...what is it revolting against? The power structure. The American power structure? No. The French power structure? No. The English power structure? No. Then what power structure? An international Western power structure. An international power structure consisting of American interests, French interests, English interests, Belgian interests, European interests. These countries that formerly colonized the dark man formed into a giant international combine. A structure, a house that has ruled the world up until now. And in recent times there has been a revolution taking place in Asia and Africa, whacking away at the strength or at the foundation of the power structure. (page 127)

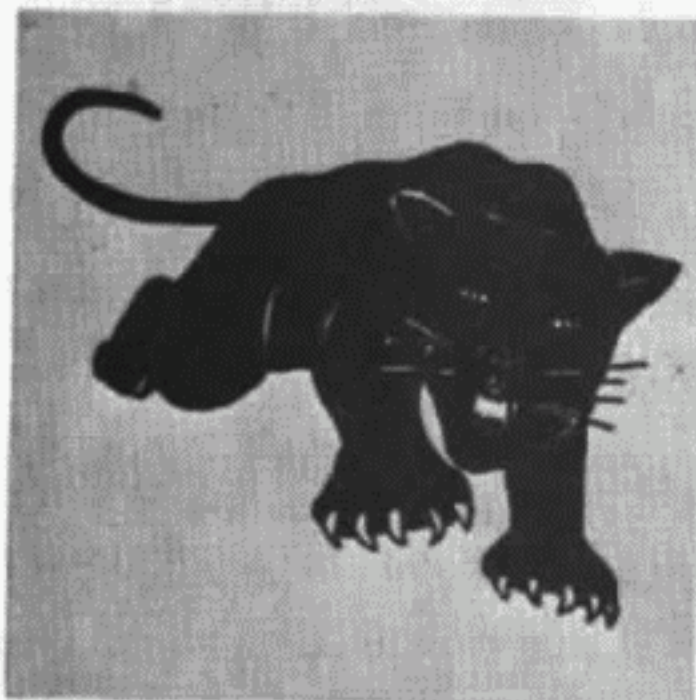
*... we set up the Organization of Afro-American Unity in which anybody in the community could participate in an action program designed to bring about complete recognition and respect of Black people as human beings. And the motto of the Organization of Afro-American Unity is *By Any Means Necessary*. We don't believe in fighting a battle...in which the ground rules are to be laid down by those who suppress us. We don't believe that we can win a battle where the ground rules are laid down by those who exploit us. We don't believe that we can carry on a struggle trying to win the affection of those who for so long have oppressed and exploited us. (page 175)*

- DISCUSSION:**
- Discuss the "international power structure" today. How will the unity of Europe in 1992 change things; and what kind of OAAU do we need to build today? What rules of struggle should we follow?

The Legacy of Malcolm X is **MILITANT ACTION**



BLACK LIBERATION THEOLOGY



BLACK POWER



BLACK STUDIES (HOWARD U)



BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL

Malcolm X / Malik Shabazz was killed on February 21, 1965 and from that point forward he entered the all time hall of fame of revolutionary fighters. The following year his legacy burst forth when SNCC activists advanced a new slogan—BLACK POWER. This slogan expressed the rage and fury of Black people. The legacy of Black radicalism once again was grounded in militant action. The power of the movement was its mass mobilization in local communities, its moral authority over evil, and not the talents of a single personality. For over a decade militant action implemented the politics expressed by Malcolm X.

One major aspect of this legacy of struggle is aggressive self-defense by any means necessary. Tactics were expanded beyond non-violence to include armed action if necessary. The critical organizational leap was the formation of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense and Justice, and hundreds of local groups that followed. New organizations are needed today.

Another form of self defense emerged among students who fought for Black Studies to protect their minds from the miseducation of white racist lies and distortions. The struggle for Black studies required militant action, mass protests and building seizures. These tactics are being used today to defend Black studies.

Self Defense continues to be at the top of our agenda today as Black youth continue to be victimized by killer cops and white racist lynch mobs, in the cities and on the campus. The drug wars have added a new dimension to the need for self defense, but the answer is the same—violence against the community has to be stopped, as Malcolm X said, **BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY!**

In many ways the 1960's was a replay of the SELF DETERMINATION debates/struggles that had dominated the 20th century, updated with increased militancy. For the first few years action was centered in the South until national legislation "appeared" to update and democratize the segregationist system. Six months after Malcolm X was murdered Watts (Los Angeles) led inner city ghettos in insurrection, and exposed the racism experienced by urban Black workers in the north. The greatest organization of Black workers was the League of Revolutionary Black Workers formed in Detroit by Black auto workers.

Malcolm X always directed his comments to Black people at the bottom, the people who suffered the most. He was a revolutionary working class Black leader who refused to be seduced into the "chill out" careerism of the Black middle class.

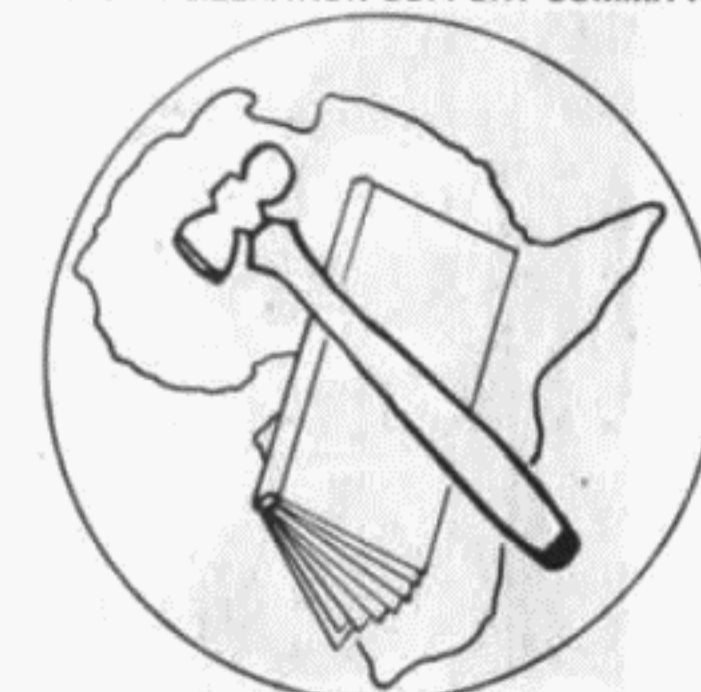
Malcolm X had insisted that Black people in the USA become more internationalist, both in their cultural identity as African Americans, as well as in their political solidarity and support of liberation struggles. Just as people today champion the cause of Nelson Mandela in South Africa, Malcolm X tried to get Black people to support the cause of Patrice Lumumba in the Congo. The legacy of Malcolm X was taken up in 1972 with a massive African Liberation Day demonstration in Washington, DC and other cities, and the subsequent formation of the African Liberation Support Committee. The ALSC convened the highest ideological discussions in the 1970's, and from that point forward Black radicals have been anti-imperialists.



LEAGUE OF REVOLUTIONARY BLACK WORKERS



AFRICAN LIBERATION SUPPORT COMMITTEE



PEOPLES COLLEGE



YOUTH ORGAN FOR BLACK UNITY (YOBUI)

Everyone has a role to play



FANNIE LOU HAMER (1917-1977)

One of the great leaps that Malcolm X achieved is when he changed his views on women. In his last year or so of rapid transformation he rejected the sexism of conservative tradition and moved toward a revolutionary position that insisted on the principle of absolute equality between men and women. He frequently repeated the revolutionary maxim that the progress of a society can best be gauged by the condition of women in that society, therefore a revolutionary society can exist only when women have been liberated from the chains of male supremacy.



GEORGE JACKSON (1941-1971)

Black women have always played essential roles in radical movements, usually doing most of the "shit" work and getting damn little credit for it. In the 1960's, the spirit of Tubman, Truth, Wells, and others was reborn as the sisters spoke out and began to fight against their oppression both in the society as well as in the movement itself. The Black women of SNCC, the Black Panther Party, and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, along with other groups like the National Welfare Rights Organization and the Third World Womens Alliance led to a new Black women who claimed the radical Black tradition as her own!



WALTER RODNEY (1942-1980)

In the final analysis, the only tradition worth having is one that has a useful purpose as it lives today, as it can be reborn by each generation making its own original contribution to it. Otherwise, we can be imprisoned by tradition, held in check by it. The point of this study guide is to get you into Malcolm X so you can grasp the tradition as a guide to action.

The good news in 1990 is that more and more people want to learn about Malcolm X. This is a sound basis on which to rebuild our movement.



STEPHEN BIKO (1946-1977)

PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION

The Campaign to Remember Malcolm in the 1990's is designed to encourage the militant rebirth of radical consciousness and mass action. These principles should guide us:

1. FOLLOW MALCOLM X'S EXAMPLE

There are more myths than truth about Malcolm X. The first task is to study what Malcolm actually said and what he did. It is important to follow his entire life and not just one part of it. He went through four stages. The challenge for us is to begin where Malcolm X left off, therefore the most important speeches are those he gave in the last 6 months of his life. There are no easy answers, no ready made solutions. We have to be serious, disciplined, and we have to study.

2. SPREAD THE WORD

In order that others will be able to follow Malcolm X's example we have to make sure that his books are available to as many people as possible. We have to make sure his books are in every library, and bookstore. Every home library should have books by Malcolm X, and toward this end his books should be given as gifts on birthdays and holidays. Students should do research on Malcolm X in school.

3. ORGANIZE COMMUNITY SELF DEFENSE

Self respect requires self defense against all forms of attack. Black people are attacked on all fronts, mentally, culturally, socially, politically, and physically. In the USA racist attacks have always threatened the survival of Black people. What we need is the local organization of militant activist study groups. These groups have to be independent, engage in study, use only community based resources, develop collective democratic decision making, and stay away from the news media. The main tactic of self defense is to educate and mobilize the community to arm themselves with knowledge, and then to fight their oppressors *by any means necessary* to gain freedom and justice.

4. RESPECT AND PROTECT BLACK WOMEN

Black women have the responsibility to build an independent movement to fight for their special rights, and to make a special contribution to building the overall self defense of the community. Special effort should be made to develop women as leaders, mastering the skills of public speaking and political analysis.

5. BUILD INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Malcolm X directed us to a global analysis, and he stressed unity with friends. It is critical now to unite through concrete acts of solidarity with our friends in South Africa, Eritrea, Palestine, Cuba, El Salvador, and Haiti. Moreover, we must prepare for the overall world struggle against new forms of imperialism and the neo colonial state in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

WFOC



Radical Tradition and a Legacy of Struggle
Tradición Radical y una Legado de Esfuerzo
La Tradition Radicale et un Héritage de Lutte
تراث الجذرية السياسية و وصية المقاومة

NOVEMBER 1-4, 1990 / BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE / NEW YORK CITY

1990 REMEMBER MALCOLM CONFERENCE
CRN / BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
199 CHAMBERS STREET #S749
NEW YORK, NY 10007
Conference Hot Line: 212/618-1673
FAX 212/618-1915

PLAN TO ATTEND THIS HISTORIC CONFERENCE / NOVEMBER 1-4, 1990