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"This generation, especially of our people, has a burden, more so than any other time in history. The most important thing that we can learn to do today is think for ourselves."

Malcolm X, December 31, 1964
MALCOLM X TALKS TO YOUNG PEOPLE

The following is part of a speech given by Malcolm X on December 31, 1964 at the Hotel Theresa. In his audience were 37 teenagers from McComb, Mississippi who were on an eight day trip to New York. The trip was sponsored by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee for those youth who had been outstanding in the civil rights struggle in their area.

One of the first things I think young people, especially nowadays, should learn is how to see for yourself and listen for yourself and think for yourself. Then you can come to an intelligent decision for yourself. If you form the habit of going by what you hear others say about someone, or going by what others think about someone, instead of searching that thing out for yourself and seeing for yourself, you will be walking west when you think you're going east, and you will be walking east when you think you're going west. This generation, especially of our people, has a burden, more so than any other time in history. The most important thing that we can learn to do today is think for ourselves.

It's good to keep wide-open ears and listen to what everybody else has to say, but when you come to make a decision, you have to weigh all of what you've heard on its own, and place it where it belongs, and come to a decision for yourself; you'll never regret it. But if you form the habit of taking what someone else says about a thing without checking it out for yourself, you'll find that other people will have you hating your friends and loving your enemies. This is one of the things that our people are beginning to learn today—that it is very important to think out a situation for yourself. If you don't do it, you'll always be maneuvered into a situation where
you are never fighting your actual enemies, where you will find yourself fighting your own self.

I think our people in this country are the best examples of that. Many of us want to be nonviolent and we talk very loudly, you know, about being nonviolent. Here in Harlem, where there are probably more black people concentrated than any place in the world, some talk that nonviolent talk too. But we find that they aren't nonviolent with each other. You can go out to Harlem Hospital, where there are more black patients than any hospital in the world, and see them going in there all cut up and shot up and busted up where they got violent with each other.

My experience has been that in many instances where you find Negroes talking about nonviolence, they are not nonviolent with each other, and they're not loving with each other, or forgiving with each other. Usually when they say they're nonviolent, they mean they're nonviolent with somebody else. I think you understand what I mean. They are nonviolent with the enemy. A person can come to your home, and if he's white and wants to heap some kind of brutality on you, you're nonviolent; or he can come to take your father and put a rope around his neck, and you're nonviolent. But if another Negro just stomps his foot, you'll rumble with him in a minute. Which shows you that there's an inconsistency there.

I myself would go for nonviolence if it was consistent, if everybody was going to be nonviolent all the time. I'd say, okay, let's get with it, we'll all be nonviolent. But I don't go along with any kind of nonviolence unless everybody's going to be nonviolent. If they make the Ku Klux Klan nonviolent, I'll be nonviolent. If they make the White Citizens Council nonviolent, I'll be nonviolent. But as long as you've got somebody else not being nonviolent, I don't want anybody coming to me talking any nonviolent talk. I don't think it is fair to tell our people to be nonviolent unless someone is out there making the Klan and the Citizens Council and these other groups also be nonviolent.

Now, I'm not criticizing those here who are nonviolent. I think everybody should do it the way they feel is best, and I congratulate anybody who can be nonviolent in the face of all that kind of action in that part of the world. I don't think that in 1965 you will find the upcoming generation of our people, especially those who have been doing
some thinking, who will go along with any form of non-violence unless nonviolence is going to be practiced all the way around.

If the leaders of the nonviolent movement can go into the white community and teach nonviolence, good. I'd go along with that. But as long as I see them teaching nonviolence only in the black community, we can't go along with that. We believe in equality, and equality means that you have to put the same thing over here that you put over there. And if black people alone are going to be the ones who are nonviolent, then it's not fair. We throw ourselves off guard. In fact, we disarm ourselves and make ourselves defenseless . . . .

The Organization of Afro-American Unity is a non-religious group of black people who believe that the problems confronting our people in this country need to be re-analyzed and a new approach devised toward trying to get a solution. Studying the problem, we recall that prior to 1939 all of our people, in the North, South, East and West, no matter how much education we had, were segregated. We were segregated in the North just as much as we were segregated in the South. Even now there's as much segregation in the North as there is in the South. There's some worse segregation right here in New York City than there is in McComb, Mississippi; but up here they're subtle and tricky and deceitful, and they make you think you've got it made when you haven't even begun to make it yet.

Prior to 1939, our people were in a very menial position or condition. Most of us were waiters and porters and bellhops and janitors and waitresses and things of that sort. It was not until war was declared with Germany, and America became involved in a manpower shortage in regards to her factories plus her army, that the black man in this country was permitted to make a few strides forward. It was never out of some kind of moral enlightenment or moral awareness on the part of Uncle Sam. Uncle Sam only let the black man take a step forward when he himself had his back to the wall.

In Michigan, where I was brought up at that time, I recall that the best jobs in the city for blacks were waiters out at the country club. In those days if you had a job waiting table in the country club, you had it made. Or if you had a job at the State House. Having a job at the
State House didn't mean that you were a clerk or something of that sort; you had a shoeshine stand at the state house. Just by being there you could be around all those big-shot politicians—that made you a big-shot Negro. You were shining shoes, but you were a big-shot Negro because you were around big-shot white people and you could bend their ear and get up next to them. And oftentimes you were chosen by them to be the voice of the Negro community.

Around that time, 1939 or '40 or '41, they weren't drafting Negroes in the army or the navy. A Negro couldn't join the navy in 1940 or '41. They wouldn't take a black man in the navy except to make him a cook. He couldn't just go and join the navy, and I don't think he could just go and join the army. They weren't drafting him when the war first started. This is what they thought of you and me in those days. For one thing, they didn't trust us; they feared that if they put us in the army and trained us in how to use rifles and other things, we might shoot at some targets that they hadn't picked out. And we would have. Any thinking man knows what target to shoot at. If a man has to have someone else to choose his target, then he isn't thinking for himself—they're doing the thinking for him.

The Negro leaders in those days were the same type we have today. When the Negro leaders saw all the white fellows being drafted and taken into the army and dying on the battlefield, and no Negroes were dying because they weren't being drafted, the Negro leaders came up and said, "We've got to die too. We want to be drafted too, and we demand that you take us in there and let us die for our country too." That was what the Negro leaders did back in 1940, I remember. A. Philip Randolph was one of the leading Negroes in those days who said it, and he's one of the Big Six right now; and this is why he's one of the Big Six.

So they started drafting Negro soldiers then, and started letting Negroes get into the navy. But not until Hitler and Tojo and the foreign powers were strong enough to put pressure on this country, so that it had its back to the wall and needed us, [did] they let us work in factories. Up until that time we couldn't work in the factories; I'm talking about the North as well as the South. And when they let us work in the factories, at first they let us in only
as janitors. After a year or so passed by, they let us work on machines. We became machinists, got a little more skill. If we got a little more skill, we made a little more money, which enabled us to live in a little better neighborhood. When we lived in a little better neighborhood, we went to a little better school, got a little better education and could come out and get a little better job. So the cycle was broken somewhat.

But the cycle was not broken out of some kind of sense of moral responsibility on the part of the government. No, the only time that cycle was broken even to a degree was when world pressure was brought to bear on the United States government. They didn't look at us as human beings—they just put us into their system and let us advance a little bit farther because it served their interests. They never let us advance a little bit farther because they were interested in us as human beings. Any of you who have a knowledge of history, sociology, or political science, or the economic development of this country and its race relations—go back and do some research on it and you'll have to admit that this is true.

It was during the time that Hitler and Tojo made war with this country and put pressure on it [that] Negroes in this country advanced a little bit. At the end of the war with Germany and Japan, then Joe Stalin and Communist Russia were a threat. During that period we made a little more headway. Now the point that I'm making is this: Never at any time in the history of our people in this country have we made advances or progress in any way based upon the internal good will of this country. We have made advancement in this country only when this country was under pressure from forces above and beyond its control. The internal moral consciousness of this country is bankrupt. It hasn't existed since they first brought us over here and made slaves out of us. They make it appear they have our good interests at heart, but when you study it, every time, no matter how many steps they take us forward, it's like we're standing on—what do you call that thing?—a treadmill. The treadmill is moving backwards faster than we're able to go forward in this direction. We're not even standing still—we're going backwards.

In studying the process of this so-called progress during the past twenty years, we of the Organization of Afro-
American Unity realized that the only time the black man in this country is given any kind of recognition, or even listened to, is when America is afraid of outside pressure, or when she's afraid of her image abroad. So we saw that it was necessary to expand the problem and the struggle of the black man in this country until it went above and beyond the jurisdiction of the United States.

I was fortunate enough to be able to take a tour of the African continent during the summer. I went to Egypt, then to Arabia, Kuwait, Lebanon, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia and Algeria. I found, while I was traveling on the African continent, I had already detected it in May, that someone had very shrewdly planted the seed of division on this continent to make the Africans not show genuine concern with our problem, just as they plant seeds in your and my minds so that we won't show concern with the African problem.

I also found that in many of these African countries the head of state is genuinely concerned with the problem of the black man in this country; but many of them thought if they opened their mouths and voiced their concern that they would be insulted by the American Negro leaders. Because one head of the state in Asia voiced his support of the civil-rights struggle [in 1963] and a couple of the Big Six had the audacity to slap his face and say they weren't interested in that kind of help—which in my opinion is asinine. So the African leaders only had to be convinced that if they took an open stand at the governmental level and showed interest in the problem of black people in this country, they wouldn't be rebuffed.

And today you'll find in the United Nations, and it's not an accident, that every time the Congo question or anything on the African continent is being debated, they couple it with what is going on, or what is happening to you and me, in Mississippi and Alabama and these other places. In my opinion, the greatest accomplishment that was made in the struggle of the black man in America in 1964 toward some kind of real progress was the successful linking together of our problem with the African problem, or making our problem a world problem. Because now, whenever anything happens to you in Mississippi, it's not just a case of somebody in Alabama getting indig-
nant. The same repercussions that you see all over the world when an imperialist or foreign power interferes in some section of Africa—you see repercussions, you see the embassies being bombed and burned and overturned—nowadays, when something happens to black people in Mississippi, you'll see the same repercussions all over the world.

I wanted to point this out to you because it is important for you to know that when you're in Mississippi, you're not alone. As long as you think you're alone, then you take a stand as if you're a minority or as if you're outnumbered, and that kind of stand will never enable you to win a battle. You've got to know that you've got as much power on your side as that Ku Klux Klan has on its side. And when you know that you've got as much power on your side as the Klan has on its side, you'll talk the same kind of language with that Klan as the Klan is talking with you . . . .

I think in 1965, whether you like it, or I like it, or they like it, or not, you will see that there is a generation of black people becoming mature to the point where they feel that they have no more business being asked to take a peaceful approach than anybody else takes, unless everybody's going to take a peaceful approach.

So we here in the Organization of Afro-American Unity are with the struggle in Mississippi one thousand per cent. We're with the efforts to register our people in Mississippi to vote one thousand per cent. But we do not go along with anybody telling us to help nonviolently. We think that if the government says that Negroes have a right to vote, and then some Negroes come out to vote, and some kind of Ku Klux Klan is going to put them in the river, and the government doesn't do anything about it, it's time for us to organize and band together and equip ourselves and qualify ourselves to protect ourselves. And once you can protect yourself, you don't have to worry about being hurt . . . .

If you don't have enough people down there to do it, we'll come down there and help you do it. Because we're tired of this old runaround that our people have been given in this country. For a long time they accused me of not getting involved in politics. They should've been glad I didn't get involved in politics, because anything I get in, I'm in it all the way. If they say we don't take part in the
Mississippi struggle, we will organize brothers here in New York who know how to handle these kind of affairs, and they'll slip into Mississippi like Jesus slipped into Jerusalem.

That doesn't mean we're against white people, but we sure are against the Ku Klux Klan and the White Citizens Councils; and anything that looks like it's against us, we're against it. Excuse me for raising my voice, but this thing, you know, gets me upset. Imagine that—a country that's supposed to be a democracy, supposed to be for freedom and all of that kind of stuff when they want to draft you and put you in the army and send you to Saigon to fight for them—and then you've got to turn around and all night long discuss how you're going to just get a right to register and vote without being murdered. Why, that's the most hypocritical government since the world began! . . .

I hope you don't think I'm trying to incite you. Just look here: Look at yourselves. Some of you are teen-agers, students. How do you think I feel—and I belong to a generation ahead of you—how do you think I feel to have to tell you, "We, my generation, sat around like a knot on a wall while the whole world was fighting for its human rights—and you've got to be born into a society where you still have that same fight." What did we do, who preceded you? I'll tell you what we did: Nothing. And don't you make the same mistake we made . . . .

You get freedom by letting your enemy know that you'll do anything to get your freedom; then you'll get it. It's the only way you'll get it. When you get that kind of attitude, they'll label you as a "crazy Negro," or they'll call you a "crazy nigger"—they don't say Negro. Or they'll call you an extremist or a subversive, or seditious, or a red or a radical. But when you stay radical long enough, and get enough people to be like you, you'll get your freedom . . . .

So don't you run around here trying to make friends with somebody who's depriving you of your rights. They're not your friends, no, they're your enemies. Treat them like that and fight them, and you'll get your freedom; and after you get your freedom, your enemy will respect you. And we'll respect you. And I say that with no hate. I don't have hate in me. I have no hate at all. I don't have any hate. I've got some sense. I'm not going to let some-
body who hates me tell me to love him. I'm not that way-out. And you, young as you are, and because you start thinking, you're not going to do it either. The only time you're going to get in that bag is if somebody puts you there. Somebody else, who doesn't have your welfare at heart . . . .

I want to thank all of you for taking the time to come to Harlem and especially here. I hope that you've gotten a better understanding about me. I put it to you just as plain as I know how to put it; there's no interpretation necessary. And I want you to know that we're not in way trying to advocate any kind of indiscriminate, unintelligent action. Any kind of action that you are ever involved in that's designed to protect the lives and property of mistreated people in this country, we're with you one thousand per cent. And if you don't feel you're qualified to do it, we have some brothers who will slip in, as I said earlier, and help train you and show you how to equip yourself and let you know how to deal with the man who deals with you . . . .
"The Democratic Party is responsible for the racism that exists in this country, along with the Republican Party. The leading racists in this country are Democrats. . . . The Dixiecrats are only a subdivision of the Democratic Party, and the same man over the Democrats is over the Dixiecrats."

Malcolm X, Young Socialist Interview
January 18, 1965
The next article was first printed in the MARCH–APRIL 1965 YOUNG SOCIALIST
INTERVIEW WITH MALCOLM X

The following interview was given by Malcolm X to YOUNG SOCIALIST editorial board members Jack Barnes and Barry Sheppard in 1965.

What image of you has been projected by the press?

Well, the press has purposely and skillfully projected me in the image of a racist, a race supremacist, and an extremist.

What's wrong with this image? What do you really stand for?

First, I'm not a racist. I'm against every form of racism and segregation, every form of discrimination. I believe in human beings, and that all human beings should be respected as such, regardless of their color.

Why did you break with the Black Muslims?

I didn't break, there was a split. The split came about primarily because they put me out, and they put me out because of my uncompromising approach to problems I thought should be solved and the movement could solve.

I felt the movement was dragging its feet in many areas. It didn't involve itself in the civil or civic or political struggles our people were confronted by. All it did was stress the importance of moral reformation—don't drink, don't smoke, don't permit fornication and adultery. When I found that the hierarchy itself wasn't practicing what it preached, it was clear that this part of its program was bankrupt.

So the only way it could function and be mean-
ingful in the community was to take part in the political and economic facets of the Negro struggle. And the organization wouldn't do that because the stand it would have to take would have been too militant, uncompromising and activist, and the hierarchy had gotten conservative. It was motivated mainly by protecting its own self interests. I might also point out that although the Black Muslim movement professed to be a religious group, the religion they had adopted—Islam—didn't recognize them. So, religiously it was in a vacuum. And it didn't take part in politics, so it was not a political group. When you have an organization that's neither political nor religious and doesn't take part in the civil rights struggle, what can it call itself? It's in a vacuum. So, all of these factors led to my splitting from the organization.

What are the aims of your new organization?

There are two organizations—there's the Muslim Mosque, Inc., which is religious. Its aim is to create an atmosphere and facilities in which people who are interested in Islam can get a better understanding of Islam. The aim of the other organization, the Organization of Afro-American Unity, is to use whatever means necessary to bring about a society in which the 22 million Afro-Americans are recognized and respected as human beings.

How do you define black nationalism, with which you have been identified?

I used to define black nationalism as the idea that the black man should control the economy of his community, the politics of his community, and so forth.

But, when I was in Africa in May, in Ghana, I was speaking with the Algerian ambassador who is extremely militant and is a revolutionary in the true sense of the word (and has his credentials as such for having carried on a successful revolution against oppression in his country). When I told him that my political, social and economic philosophy was black nationalism, he asked me very frankly, well, where did that leave him? Because he was white. He was an African, but he was Al-
gerian, and to all appearances, he was a white man. And he said if I define my objective as the victory of black nationalism, where does that leave him? Where does that leave revolutionaries in Morocco, Egypt, Iraq, Mauritania? So he showed me where I was alienating people who were true revolutionaries dedicated to overturning the system of exploitation that exists on this earth by any means necessary.

So, I had to do a lot of thinking and reappraising of my definition of black nationalism. Can we sum up the solution to the problems confronting our people as black nationalism? And if you notice, I haven't been using the expression for several months. But I still would be hard pressed to give a specific definition of the overall philosophy which I think is necessary for the liberation of the black people in this country.

*Is it true, as is often said, that you favor violence?*

I don't favor violence. If we could bring about recognition and respect of our people by peaceful means, well and good. Everybody would like to reach his objectives peacefully. But I'm also a realist. The only people in this country who are asked to be non-violent are black people. I've never heard anybody go to the Ku Klux Klan and teach them non-violence, or to the Birch society and other right-wing elements. Non-violence is only preached to black Americans and I don't go along with anyone who wants to teach our people non-violence until someone at the same time is teaching our enemy to be non-violent. I believe we should protect ourselves by any means necessary when we are attacked by racists.

*What do you think is responsible for race prejudice in the U.S.?*

Ignorance and greed. And a skillfully designed program of miseducation that goes right along with the American system of exploitation and oppression.

If the entire American population were properly educated—by properly educated, I mean given a true picture of the history and contributions of
the black man—I think many whites would be less racist in their feelings. They would have more respect for the black man as a human being. Knowing what the black man's contributions to science and civilization have been in the past, the white man's feelings of superiority would be at least partially negated. Also, the feeling of inferiority that the black man has would be replaced by a balanced knowledge of himself. He'd feel more like a human being. He'd function more like a human being, in a society of human beings.

So it takes education to eliminate it. And just because you have colleges and universities, doesn't mean you have education. The colleges and universities in the American educational system are skillfully used to miseducate.

What were the highlights of your trip to Africa?

I visited Egypt, Arabia, Kuwait, Lebanon, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanganyika, Zanzibar (now Tanzania), Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Guinea and Algeria. During that trip I had audiences with President Nasser of Egypt, President Nyerere of Tanzania, President Jomo Kenyatta (who was then Prime Minister) of Kenya, Prime Minister Milton Obote of Uganda, President Azikiwe of Nigeria, President Nkrumah of Ghana, and President Sekou Toure of Guinea. I think the highlights were the audiences I had with those persons because it gave me a chance to sample their thinking. I was impressed by their analysis of the problem, and many of the suggestions they gave went a long way toward broadening my own outlook.

How much influence does revolutionary Africa have on the thinking of black people in this country?

All the influence in the world. You can't separate the militancy that's displayed on the African continent from the militancy that's displayed right here among American blacks. The positive image that is developing of Africans is also developing in the minds of black Americans, and, consequently they develop a more positive image of themselves. Then they take more positive steps—actions.
So you can't separate the African revolution from the mood of the black man in America. Neither could the colonization of Africa be separated from the menial position that the black man in this country was satisfied to stay in for so long. Since Africa has gotten its independence through revolution, you'll notice the stepped up cry against discrimination that has appeared in the black community.

*How do you view the role of the U.S. in the Congo?*

As criminal. Probably there is no better example of criminal activity against an oppressed people than the role the U.S. has been playing in the Congo, through her ties with Tshombe and the mercenaries. You can't overlook the fact that Tshombe gets his money from the U.S. The money he uses to hire these mercenaries—these paid killers imported from South Africa—comes from the United States. The pilots that fly these planes have been trained by the U.S. The bombs themselves that are blowing apart the bodies of women and children come from the U.S. So I can only view the role of the United States in the Congo as a criminal role. And I think the seeds she is sowing in the Congo she will have to harvest. The chickens that she has turned loose over there have got to come home to roost.

*What about the U.S. role in South Vietnam?*

The same thing. It shows the real ignorance of those who control the American power structure. If France, with all types of heavy arms, as deeply entrenched as she was in what then was called Indochina, couldn't stay there, I don't see how anybody in their right mind can think the U.S. can get in there—it's impossible. So it shows her ignorance, her blindness, her lack of foresight and hindsight and her complete defeat in South Vietnam is only a matter of time.

*How do you view the activity of white and black students who went to the South last summer and attempted to register black people to vote?*
The attempt was good—I should say the objective to register black people in the South was good because the only real power a poor man in this country has is the power of the ballot. But I don't believe sending them in and telling them to be non-violent was intelligent. I go along with the effort toward registration but I think they should be permitted to use whatever means at their disposal to defend themselves from the attacks of the Klan, the White Citizens Council and other groups.

What do you think of the murder of the three civil rights workers and what's happened to their killers?

It shows that the society we live in is not actually what it tries to represent itself as to the rest of the world. This was murder and the federal government is helpless because the case involves Negroes. Even the whites involved, were involved in helping Negroes. And concerning anything in this society involved in helping Negroes, the federal government shows an inability to function. But it can function in South Vietnam, in the Congo, in Berlin and in other places where it has no business. But it can't function in Mississippi.

In a recent speech you mentioned that you met John Lewis of SNCC in Africa. Do you feel that the younger and more militant leaders in the South are broadening their views on the whole general struggle?

Sure. When I was in the Black Muslim movement I spoke on many white campuses and black campuses. I knew back in 1961 and '62 that the younger generation was much different from the older, and that many students were more sincere in their analysis of the problem and their desire to see the problem solved. In foreign countries the students have helped bring about revolution—it was the students who brought about the revolution in the Sudan, who swept Syngman Rhee out of office in Korea, swept Menderes out in Turkey. The students didn't think in terms of the odds against them, and they couldn't be bought out.

In America students have been noted for involv-
ing themselves in panty raids, goldfish swallowing, seeing how many can get in a telephone booth—not for their revolutionary political ideas or their desire to change unjust conditions. But some students are becoming more like their brothers around the world. However, the students have been deceived somewhat in what's known as the civil rights struggle (which was never designed to solve the problem). The students were maneuvered in the direction of thinking the problem was already analyzed, so they didn't try to analyze it for themselves.

In my thinking, if the students in this country forgot the analysis that has been presented to them, and they went into a huddle and began to research this problem of racism for themselves, independent of politicians and independent of all the foundations (which are a part of the power structure), and did it themselves, then some of their findings would be shocking, but they would see that they would never be able to bring about a solution to racism in this country as long as they're relying on the government to do it. The federal government itself is just as racist as the government in Mississippi, and is more guilty of perpetuating the racist system. At the federal level they are more shrewd, more skillful at doing it, just like the FBI is more skillful than the state police and the state police are more skillful than the local police. The same with politicians. The politician at the federal level is usually more skilled than the politician at the local level, and when he wants to practice racism, he's more skilled in the practice of it than those who practice it at the local level.

What is your opinion of the Democratic party?

The Democratic party is responsible for the racism that exists in this country, along with the Republican party. The leading racists in this country are Democrats. Goldwater isn't the leading racist—he's a racist but not the leading racist. The racists who have influence in Washington, D.C. are Democrats. If you check, whenever any kind of legislation is suggested to mitigate the injustices that Negroses
suffer in this country, you will find that the people who line up against it are members of Lyndon B. Johnson's party. The Dixiecrats are Democrats. The Dixiecrats are only a subdivision of the Democratic party, and the same man over the Democrats is over the Dixiecrats.

What contribution can youth, especially students, who are disgusted with racism in this society, make to the black struggle for freedom?

Whites who are sincere don't accomplish anything by joining Negro organizations and making them integrated. Whites who are sincere should organize among themselves and figure out some strategy to break down the prejudice that exists in white communities. This is where they can function more intelligently and more effectively, in the white community itself, and this has never been done.

What part in the world revolution are youth playing, and what lessons may this have for American youth?

If you've studied the captives being caught by the American soldiers in South Vietnam, you'll find that these guerrillas are young people. Some of them are just children and some haven't yet reached their teens. Most are teenagers. It is the teenagers abroad, all over the world, who are actually involving themselves in the struggle to eliminate oppression and exploitation. In the Congo, the refugees point out that many of the Congolese revolutionaries are children. In fact, when they shoot captive revolutionaries, they shoot all the way down to seven years old—that's been reported in the press. Because the revolutionaries are children, young people. In these countries, the young people are the ones who most quickly identify with the struggle and the necessity to eliminate the evil conditions that exist. And here in this country, it has been my own observation that when you get into a conversation on racism and discrimination and segregation, you will find young people more incensed over it—they feel more filled with an urge to eliminate it.

I think young people here can find a powerful example in the young Simbas in the Congo and the
young fighters in South Vietnam.

Another point—as the dark-skinned nations of this earth become independent, as they develop and become stronger, that means that time is on the side of the American Negro. At this point the American Negro is still hospitable and friendly and forgiving. But if he is continually tricked and deceived and so on, and if there is still no solution to his problems, he will become completely disillusioned, disenchanted and disassociate himself from the interest of America and its society. Many have done that already.

What is your opinion of the world-wide struggle now going on between capitalism and socialism?

It is impossible for capitalism to survive, primarily because the system of capitalism needs some blood to suck. Capitalism used to be like an eagle, but now it's more like a vulture. It used to be strong enough to go and suck anybody's blood whether they were strong or not. But now it has become more cowardly, like the vulture, and it can only suck the blood of the helpless. As the nations of the world free themselves, then capitalism has less victims, less to suck, and it becomes weaker and weaker. It's only a matter of time in my opinion before it will collapse completely.

What is the outlook for the Negro struggle in 1965?

Bloody. It was bloody in 1963, it was bloody in 1964, and all of the causes that created this bloodshed still remain. The March on Washington was designed to serve as a vent or valve for the frustration that produced this explosive atmosphere. In 1964 they used the Civil Rights bill as a valve. What can they use in 1965? There is no trick that the politicians can use to contain the explosiveness that exists right here in Harlem. And look at New York Police Commissioner Murphy. He's coming out in headlines trying to make it a crime now to even predict that there's going to be trouble. This shows the caliber of American thinking. There's going to be an explosion, but don't talk about it. All the ingredients that produce explosions exist, but don't talk about it, he says. That's like saying
700 million Chinese don't exist. This is the same approach. The American has become so guilt ridden and filled with fear that instead of facing the reality of any situation he pretends the situation doesn't exist. You know, in this country it's almost a crime to say there's a place called China—unless you mean that little island called Formosa. By the same token, it's almost a crime to say that people in Harlem are going to explode because the social dynamite that existed last year is still here. So I think 1965 will be most explosive—more explosive than it was in '64 and '63. There's nothing they can do to contain it. The Negro leaders have lost their control over the people. So that when the people begin to explode—and their explosion is justified, not unjustified—the Negro leaders can't contain it.
Malcolm X being interviewed by reporters at JFK International Airport upon his return from Africa.

"Malcolm's impact on Africa was just fantastic. In every country he was known and served as the main criteria for categorizing other Afro-Americans and their political views."

John Lewis and Donald Harris in a report to SNCC, December 14, 1964
In the fall of 1964 John Lewis and Donald Harris made a tour of several African countries as representatives of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Their report to SNCC, dated Dec. 14, 1964, contained several references to Malcolm X, who was on the last leg of his second tour of the African continent when they arrived. The following excerpts from their report give some indication of his impact on Africans.

**GHANA**

"There were two factors that we had to deal with while in Ghana. The first was the fact that the Non-Allied Nations conference was taking place in Cairo at the time, drawing most of the important government, party, journalist, and exiled freedom fighters away to Egypt...

"The second thing we had to cope with—was that Malcolm X had just left Ghana some few days before we arrived and had made fantastic impressions. Because of this, very often people's first attitude or impression of us was one of skepticism and distrust. Among the first days we were in Accra someone said, 'Look, you guys might really be doing something—I don't know, but if you are to the right of Malcolm, you might as well start packing right now 'cause no one'll listen to you.'

"Among the first questions we were continually asked was, 'What's your organization's relationship with Malcolm's?' We ultimately found that this situation was not peculiar to Ghana; the pattern repeated itself in every country. After a day of this we found that we must, immediately on meeting people, state our own position in regard to where we stood on certain issues—Cuba, Vietnam, the Congo, Red China and the UN, and what
SNCC's role, guidelines, and involvement in the Rights Struggle was.

"Malcolm's impact on Africa was just fantastic. In every country he was known and served as the main criteria for categorizing other Afro-Americans and their political views. Only because we were able to point out quite directly SNCC's involvement in the Struggle, that is, programs, successes, John's involvement in the March [on Washington in 1963] (and the cutting of his speech) and the fact that we were on the Continent attempting to bridge the gap between Africa and the States were we able to gain the kind of respect and create the kind of interest that was vital to the trip. . . ."

KENYA

"The first person we saw on arrival at our hotel [in Nairobi] was Malcolm X, who had just come in from Tanzania with Kenyatta. This was a chance meeting, but in many ways very important meeting.

"We spent the rest of that day and evening as well as a good part of the following day talking with Malcolm about the nature of each of our trips. At that point he had been to eleven countries, talked with eleven heads of state and had addressed the parliaments in the majority of these countries. Although he was very tired he planned to visit five more countries.

"He felt that the presence of SNCC in Africa was very important and that this was a significant and crucial aspect of the 'human-rights struggle' that the American civil-rights groups had too long neglected.

"He pointed out (and our experience proves him correct) that the African leaders and people are strongly behind the Freedom Movement in this country; that they are willing to do all they can to support, encourage and sustain the Movement, but they will not tolerate factionalism or support particular groups or organizations within the Movement as a whole. It was with this in mind that he formed his Organization of Afro-American Unity.

"Discussion also centered around Malcolm's proposed plan to bring the case of the Afro-American before the General Assembly of the United Nations and hold the United States in violation of the Human Rights Charter. The question was at that time (and ultimately was evident) that support from the civil-rights voices in this country
was not forthcoming and the American black community was too splintered to attempt such a move without looking like complete asses and embarrassing our most valuable allies. We departed with Malcolm giving us some contacts and the hope that there would be greater communication between the OAU (the U.S. version) [OAAU] and SNCC. . . ."

**EGYPT**

"We spoke first with Mr. Ebrahim of the PAC [Pan Africanist Congress] because we had been in contact with PAC people in Ghana and Zambia. We talked for nearly three hours before he began to warm up to us. In the beginning he was very suspicious, said almost nothing and although interested, not quite certain how far he could trust us.

"One of his first questions was, 'What is your organization's relationship to Malcolm X?' (Malcolm is most widely known and respected in Cairo.) . . .

"We called Ebrahim the next day, expecting nothing. He said he had arranged for us to address the entire African Association. We were surprised and flattered. (We later found out that Malcolm had been the only Afro-American who had previously been given this honor.) . . ."
"Our job . . . is to teach the revolutionary youth of this country to tell the difference between the nationalism of the oppressed and the nationalism of the oppressor, to teach them to differentiate the forces of liberation from the forces of the exploiters; to teach them to hear the voices of the revolution regardless of the forms they take; to teach them to differentiate between the self-defense of the victim and the violence of the aggressor; to teach them to refuse to give an inch to white liberalism and to reach out to Malcolm’s heirs, the vanguard of the ghetto, as brothers and comrades."

Jack Barnes, National Chairman of the Young Socialist Alliance
The following article consists of excerpts from a speech delivered by Jack Barnes at a memorial meeting for Malcolm X held by the New York Militant Labor Forum on March 5, 1965.

I would like to speak tonight not only for the socialist youth of the Young Socialist Alliance, but also for the young revolutionists in our movement around the world who would want to speak at a memorial for Malcolm X but who cannot be here. This is especially true of those in Africa, the Middle East, France and England, who recently had a chance to see and hear Malcolm.

Malcolm was the leader of the struggle for black liberation. He was, as stated at his funeral by Ossie Davis, the black shining prince, the manhood of the Harlems of the world. To his people he first and foremost belongs.

But he was also the teacher, inspirer and leader of a much smaller group, the revolutionary socialist youth of America. He was to us the face and the authentic voice of the forces of the American revolution. And above all, he spoke the truth for our generation of revolutionists.

What attracted revolutionary youth to Malcolm X? More important, what often made youth—including white youth—who listened to him, revolutionists? I think there were two main things. First, he spoke the simple truth—unadorned, unvarnished and uncompromising. Second, was the evolution and content of Malcolm's political thought.

Malcolm saw the depth of the hypocrisy and falsehood that covers the real social relations in American society. To him the key was not so much the lies that the ruling class and its spokesmen propagated, but the lies and the falsehoods about his people, their past and their potentialities, which they accepted.
Malcolm's message to the ghetto, his agitation against racism, was a special kind. What he had to say and what he did stemmed from a study of the history of the Afro-Americans. He explained that in order for black Americans to know what to do — to know how to go about winning freedom — they had to first answer three questions: Where did you come from? How did you get here? Who is responsible for your condition?

Malcolm's truth was so explosive because it stemmed from a careful study of how the Afro-American was enslaved and de-humanized. He publicized the facts that have been suppressed from the regular history books and kept out of the schools.

While in the Black Muslims and after he left, Malcolm taught that the process by which the Africans were made into slaves was one of de-humanizing them. Through barbarous cruelty, comparable to the worst Nazi concentration camps, they were taught to fear the white man. They were systematically stripped of their language, culture, history, names, religion, of all connections with their home in Africa — of their identity. They were named "Negro" signifying this lack of identity and this denial of their African origin.

Especially after their "emancipation" they were taught the christianity of meekness and submission and of their reward in heaven. They were taught that Africa was a jungle where people lived in mud huts, and that the white man had done them a great favor in bringing them to America.

Malcolm asked the black American: Who taught you to hate yourself? Who taught you to be a pacifist? Was he a pacifist? Who said black people cannot defend themselves? Does he defend himself? Who taught you not to go too far and too fast in your fight for freedom? — Did he stand to lose something by the speed of your victory? Who taught you to vote for the fox to escape the wolf? What does the fox give you in return?

All these questions and so many more needed no answers. All the questions were directed to those who had nothing to lose and no stake in the system as it exists now.

His political thought was the other important factor in the development of those who were taught by him. First, he believed in and explained the need for Afro-American unity. He felt it was necessary to base your alliances on
your own unity, and reject unconditionally any degrading or compromising alliances. It is only upon the basis of this unity, and the dignity and self-respect that goes along with it, that the battle for freedom can be waged. Those who would by-pass this step would condemn the black Americans to be a tail to the kite of other more conservative forces.

"We cannot think of uniting with others, until after we have first united among ourselves. We cannot think of being acceptable to others until we have first proven acceptable to ourselves. One can't unite bananas with scattered leaves." Malcolm knew that Afro-Americans had enough of this kind of unity—with the liberals, the Communist Party, and the Socialist Party.

Secondly, he spoke of self-defense, and the real meaning of violence. He continually pointed out that the source of violence was the oppressor, not the oppressed. He continually pointed to the use of violence by the oppressor. Out of one side of its mouth the government and the press preach pacifism to the American Negro while out of the other side comes the cold announcement that they will destroy as many North Vietnamese as they wish. Malcolm never tired of pointing out the hypocrisy of this form of pacifism, its ineffectuality and its degrading and masochistic character.

Malcolm told us, at the first Militant Labor Forum at which he spoke, that "If George Washington didn't get independence in this country non-violently, and if Patrick Henry didn't come up with a non-violent statement, and you taught me to look on them as patriots and heroes, then it is time for you to realize that I have studied your books well. . . . No white person would go about fighting for freedom in the same manner that he has helped you and me fight for our freedom. When it comes to black freedom, he freedom rides and sits-in. He is non-violent. He sings, 'We Shall Overcome,' and all that sort of stuff. But when the property of the white man is threatened, or his freedom is threatened, he's not non-violent."

Thirdly, unlike any other black leader, and unlike any other mass leader in my life-time, he continually exposed the real role of the Democratic Party, and pointed to the mistake in believing the federal government of this country would free the Afro-American. He said, "The Democrats get Negro support, yet the Negroes get nothing in return.
The Negroes put the Democrats first, and the Democrats put the Negroes last. And the alibi that the Democrats use—they blame the Dixiecrats. But a Dixiecrat is nothing but a Democrat in disguise. . . . Because Dixie in reality means all that territory south of the Canadian border."

Malcolm X always sought to expose those who were really responsible for maintaining the racism of this society rather than directing his fire at the puppets. When New York Police Commissioner Murphy attacked him and others as "irresponsible," Malcolm responded that Murphy was only doing his job. Mayor Wagner, Murphy's boss, was the one responsible for the charge, he said.

Malcolm never tired of explaining and demonstrating that it was the federal government headed by President Johnson that was responsible for maintaining racism in the North and South. In doing this he showed the continuity of the inhuman treatment of Negroes and the responsibility of those who run this society for the condition of the black people. As one of his followers, Benjamin, pointed out at a meeting of the Organization of Afro-American Unity, the North is responsible for the racism in the South, because "they won the civil war."

It was in talking about the Democratic Party that another aspect of Malcolm came clearly to the fore. This was his ability to translate the complicated and important ideas which he developed and absorbed into the language of those he knew would change the world. The ability to speak clearly to the oppressed has been the unique genius of all great revolutionary leaders in history.

*The Militant* reported that Malcolm, at his press conference, spoke of President Johnson as being hypocritical. He pointed out that LBJ's closest friend in the Senate, Richard Russell, was leading the fight against the civil rights bill. Malcolm was challenged by a reporter who doubted that Johnson's friendship with Russell proved anything. Malcolm looked at him with his usual smile and said, off the cuff, "If you tell me you are against robbing banks, and your best friend is Jesse James, I have grounds to doubt your sincerity."

The final point in his political development which was so important for the education of those young people who followed him, looked to him, and in many ways were educated by him, was his revolutionary internationalism.

Malcolm gave at least three reasons for his international
outlook. First, was the common identity of the power structure which practiced racism in this country and which practiced imperialism abroad. "This system is not only ruling us in America, it is ruling the world," he said.

Second, only through Afro-Americans realizing that they were part of a great majority of non-whites in the world who were fighting for and winning freedom would they have the courage to fight the battle for freedom with whatever means necessary.

Malcolm said that "Among the so-called Negroes in this country, as a rule the civil rights groups, those who believe in civil rights, they spend most of their time trying to prove they are Americans. Their thinking is usually domestic, confined to the boundaries of America, and they always look upon themselves on the American stage, the American stage is a white stage. So a black man standing upon that stage in America automatically is in a minority. He is the underdog and in his struggle he always has a begging, hat-in-hand approach." But he said, "We don't beg, we don't thank you for giving us what you should have given us a hundred years ago."

Last, was the fact that in the final analysis freedom could only be won in one place when it was won everywhere. In Africa, he said, "Our problem is your problem . . . your problems will never be fully solved until and unless ours are solved. You will never be fully respected, until and unless we are also respected. You will never be recognized as free human beings until and unless we are also recognized and treated as human beings."

Though Malcolm X came from the American ghetto, spoke for the American ghetto and directed his message to the American ghetto first of all, he is a figure of world importance, and developed his ideas in relation to the great events of world history in his time.

If Malcolm X is to be compared with any international figure, the most striking parallel is with Fidel Castro. Both of them belong to the generation that was shaped ideologically under the twin circumstances of World War II and the monstrous betrayals and defaults of the Stalinized Communist Parties. These men found their way independently to the revolutionary struggle by-passing both Social-Democracy and Stalinism.

Each started from the struggle of his own oppressed people for liberation. Each embraced the nationalism of his
people as necessary to mobilize them to struggle for their freedom. Each stressed the importance of the solidarity of the oppressed all over the world in their struggle against a common oppressor.

Fidel did not start out as a thorough-going Marxist or as a revolutionary socialist. Like Malcolm, he was determined to pursue the national liberation of his people by "whatever means necessary" and without any compromises with those with any stake in the status quo.

Fidel Castro's dedication to political independence and to economic development for Cuba led him eventually to opposition to capitalism. So, also, Malcolm's uncompromising stand against racism brought him to identify with the revolutions of the colonial people who were turning against capitalism, and finally to conclude that the elimination of capitalism in this country was necessary for freedom. Just as Fidel Castro discovered that there can be no political independence and economic development in a colonial country without breaking from capitalism, so Malcolm had come to the conclusion that capitalism and racism were so entangled in the United States that you had to uproot the system in order to eliminate racism.

Malcolm's black nationalism was aimed at preparing black people to struggle for their freedom. "The greatest mistake of the movement," he said in an interview in the February 25 Village Voice, "has been trying to organize sleeping people around specific goals. You have to wake the people up first, then you'll get action."

"Wake them up to their exploitation?" the interviewer asked.

"No, to their humanity, to their own worth, and to their heritage," he answered.

Everything he said to the black people was designed to raise their confidence, to organize them independently of those who oppressed them, to teach them who was responsible for their condition and who their allies were. He explained that they were part of the great majority—the non-whites and the oppressed of the world. He taught that freedom could be won only by fighting for it; it has never been given to anyone. He explained that it could only be won by making a real revolution that uproots and changes the entire society.

Thus it is not surprising that many who considered themselves socialist, radicals and even Marxists could not rec-
ognize and identify with Malcolm's revolutionary character. They could not recognize the revolutionary content of this great leader clothed in the new forms, language, and dark colors of the American proletarian ghetto.

Even with all his uniqueness and greatness as an individual, he could not have reached this understanding unless the conditions in this country were such that it was possible. Even though no one can fill his shoes, the fact that he did what he did, developed as the revolutionary leader he was, is the proof of more Malcolms to come.

He was a proof as Fidel was a proof. Fidel stood up 90 miles away from the most powerful imperialism in the world and thumbed his nose and showed us, "see, it can be done. They can't go on controlling the world for ever."

Malcolm went even further than Fidel, because Malcolm challenged American capitalism from right inside. He was the living proof for our generation of revolutionists that it can and will happen here.

Our job, the job of the YSA, is to teach the revolutionary youth of this country to tell the difference between the nationalism of the oppressed and the nationalism of the oppressor, to teach them to differentiate the forces of liberation from the forces of the exploiters; to teach them to hear the voices of the revolution regardless of the forms they take; to teach them to differentiate between the self-defense of the victim and the violence of the aggressor; to teach them to refuse to give an inch to white liberalism and to reach out to Malcolm's heirs, the vanguard of the ghetto, as brothers and comrades.
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