

Malcolm x's legacy essay sample



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Malcolm X's legacy to the struggle for black equality in the USA went far beyond focusing on solely equality. Malcolm X hardly forgot the fact that he was the 'servant' and not the 'master' of the black nation's aspirations and dreams. Malcolm X resisted the objective of integration and encouraged blacks to build their own society. 'We can never win freedom and justice and equality until we do something for ourselves'.^[i] He felt they should shield themselves against violence, 'by any means necessary'. Malcolm X confronted the United States to protect its own hypothetical qualities. He held up a mirror for the country to scrutinize itself, now was the reflection showing too much for some white individuals in America?

Malcolm X still remains a powerful force and is marketed in countless business events and is fashionably labelled on clothing. His life and legacy can be seen via movies and documentaries, for example the famous film by Spike Lee. Malcolm X's popularity can be seen through poems. 'He was the sun that tagged the western sky and melted tiger- scholars while they searched for stripe.'^[ii] Sonia Sanchez, a play writer wrote a poem in contribution to Malcolm's assassination, and the above shows a line from her poem. Malcolm X advocated education, respect, freedom and equality. These things are natural to the structure of the elevated American Dream that at times seems indefinite.

The years between 1946- 1952 highlight Malcolm's time in prison, which marked the beginning of astonishing alterations he experienced in exploring the truth regarding himself and his relation to firstly, black religion, secondly, unity and black freedom and lastly black consciousness. Malcolm infatuated a composed superiority; he fixed his prospect on the racial goals to be

achieved and practised them with invariable passion. This distinct mindedness is particularly true of the period when, under the curse of Nation of Islam leader, Elijah Muhammad's system of evil by colours, he beat the notion of black cultural inadequacy with excellent skill.

Malcolm X was arrested for armed robbery in 1946 and it's in prison where he was drawn towards the Nation of Islam as it promoted a strong prominence on black pride. Malcolm became a national spokesman and under his leadership the number of members increased dramatically. Regardless of his highly recognised status in the Nation, he left. Malcolm, in his own words states, ' I spoke less and less of religion. I taught social doctrine to Muslims and current events and politics...my faith had been shaken in a way that I can never fully describe. For I had discovered Muslims had been betrayed by Elijah Muhammad himself.'[iii]

Malcolm X reduced his ' anti- white' stand once he departed from the Nation of Islam." I must repeat that I am not a racist. I wish nothing but freedom, justice and equality, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all people."[iv] This is evidence of Malcolm X's political and racial philosophies becoming ethnically comprehensive. The core reason for this change in philosophy was, after his pilgrimage to Mecca, Malcolm X realised, universal Islam did not only include blacks, but whites too. During a press conference, Malcolm stated that, ' my pilgrimage broadened my scope. It blessed me with a new insight,' [v] showing, Malcolm returning with a diverse belief of race relations. ' We don't judge a man because of the colour of his skin. We don't judge you because you're white; because you're black; because you're brown. We judge you because of what you do and what you practice'[vi]

Thus Malcolm supported a new organisation of Afro- American unity that would maintain enhanced race relations with the whites.

As Malcolm moved out of the Nation of Islam he wilfully stimulated towards the Civil rights movement. He was independent and proposed to utilize a new flexible approach in regards to working with others, such as Martin Luther King in achieving the same aim. Malcolm X, contributed a thought of black nationalism that was solely devoted to the social, political and economic development of the black community. Malcolm was motivated to accomplish and fight through the struggle for black equality in the USA. We can witness the dramatic changes in Malcolm X's philosophy, as, whilst he was a part of the Nation of Islam, he discouraged anyone who was converted to Black Nationalism to enter a church whereby white nationalism would be advocated. However, the innovative Malcolm put aside his philosophy for the importance of black unity, defined by the Black Nationalism's politics. Malcolm X stated, ' join any kind of organization- civic, religious, fraternal, political...lifting the black man up and making him master of his community.'[vii] This shows one step forward in accomplishing a solution to the problem of black unity.

Malcolm's famous ' Ballot or bullet' speech intended to motivate blacks to be in control of their own political fortune by restructuring their lives, eliminating their given role as submissive victims and recognising their ' God- given' role as dynamic freedom fighters. ' We cannot think of uniting with others, until after we have first united among ourselves.'[viii] This shows, it wasn't vital to alter the white guy's mind, if there was warmth amongst the blacks, nothing else mattered.

“ Without education, you're not going anywhere in this world.”[ix] Malcolm believed the only way a black individual would go far was with education. However, due to discrimination, there were no fair opportunities for them. Moreover, even if a person accomplished a degree, they would still be denied any job opportunities, which was something Malcolm X promoted alongside equal wages. Towards the end of his life, in 1964, the Civil Rights Act was introduced. It was influential as it persisted on an effortless independent right. It became a mass society, which succeeded support of white working people. It altered the perception of millions of black and white workers, as well as other minorities and women. Also, organisations, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was created to thrust for equal opportunity.

Malcolm expressed, ‘.. And if I can die...having exposed any meaningful truth...help to destroy the racist cancer that is malignant in the body of America- then, all of the credit is due to Allah.’[x] We can argue, since his death in 1965, Malcolm's life has progressively obtained mythic importance. Malcolm X made a substantial character for himself in two major directions. Firstly, he was a victorious, charismatic preacher for the Nation of Islam, with skills of winning hundreds of new converts. Secondly, he put across various ideas involving black power and pride. James Cone emphasises that, ‘ Malcolm X's achievement at this stage was to make clear the depth of anti - black feeling in many parts of the USA and not just in the Deep South.’[xi]

The late 1960s witnessed black activists becoming more radical. Malcolm X and his teachings were part of the foundation on which they built their movements. For example, the Black Power movement and the Black Panther

Party can both trace their roots to Malcolm X. The Black Panther Party catered for all the essential needs black individuals in the United States had been longing for. The party implemented a 'ten-point program', which included what they want and what they believe in. For example, 'we want land, bread, housing education, clothing, justice and peace.'^[xii] This shows exactly what Malcolm X fought and stood for, therefore it highlights his legacy. Unfortunately, he was not alive to witness the aftermath of results.

Manning Marable gave a speech in 1992, named 'By any means necessary', which is the famous quote Malcolm stood up for. He positively had the essential power on emerging Black Power. Not violent himself, however Malcolm mocked the idea that blacks should allow discrimination without even reacting. 'You get freedom by letting your enemy know that you'll do anything to get your freedom; then you'll get it.'^[xiii] Malcolm X, to Marable is a 'brother', and her speech indicates great passion for him and shows us that Malcolm's legacy does live on today but hasn't received the recognition he deserves. She states, Malcolm X, did a lot more than other author's believe. His work was not only evolved around the Nation of Islam, but instead he facilitated a complete race.

To conclude, I believe Malcolm X, till this day is recognized with, elevating self-respect of black African Americans. His image flourishes in the urban areas of America. His great encouragement of black self-defence alongside white racist violence led to his heroic rise. Malcolm X has gained a place in the collective consciousness of exploited individuals, employees and Africans globally. The USA has an equal state, encouraging integrity and freedom. 2008 was made possible by black individual's extensive struggle to be

publicly American and publicly black. The first black president in the USA marks a new era and altered history. The president is Barack Obama; however, after all, this is Malcolm X's America.

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