

Malcolm x

Business



Malcolm X was a man of the immense influence at his times.

He used to sway his audience by his great oratory skills and by the use of strong language that bordered with arrogance and disdain to others.

However, he was a great inspiration to his listeners and was able to boost their morale. He was able to convince his black audience that the problem with their emancipation had existed because of the white men. He did not preach the co-existence and believed in the violent means of liberating the black community. His manner of approach can be viewed in two different ways depending on his audience. To the blacks, he was a friend, but to the whites, he was a foe.

From his early age, Malcolm X recognized the injustice prevalent in the American society. Most of black Americans shared these grievances. Indeed, Malcolm X believed there were two kinds of black people in America; there was the minority bourgeois being brainwashed by the white men to ignore the suffering of their people. Then, there was the majority who had borne the discrimination and all kinds of brutality from the white men. In the early days, even before he had joined the Nation of Islam in prison, he shared with them a hatred of the white man. He was a radical who believed every white man was responsible for the sorry state of a black man.

Life had treated him badly since the birth, defining his belief in the injustice of the society. Before joining the Nation of Islam, he had shown his defiance and rebellion through the participation in illegal activities. However, he shared the same identification of the black men plight that formed the basis for the existence of the Black Power Movement and the Nation of Islam. The

attraction that brought him to the Nation of Islam was the yearning to break from the racist society which America was and to find the meaning for his life. The racist society had socialized him to believe he had been inferior and worthless. The Black Power Movement and the Nation of Islam were proclaiming the superiority of the black men.

Infect the two movements were accused of the reverse racialism. They believed the white man was inferior to the black man. However, later after the split from the Nation of Islam, he toned down his radical rhetoric in a bid to shed the tag of a racist. Ultimately, some people believed that was one of the reasons he was assassinated by those people who had betrayed him.. In order to understand how Malcolm X identified himself in relation to the Black Power Movement and the Nation of Islam, it is important to analyze the life of Malcolm and the genesis and beliefs of these two movements.

The charged racial tension that characterized the environment in which the three entities found themselves in, defined their philosophies and attitudes towards the different facets of existence. In dealing with racism in America, different routes of changing the status were suggested. There were those who believed in non-violent means, like the Civil Rights movement, and they were not supported by the radical groups as the Black Movement and Nation of Islam, being such groups (Wendt, 2007). The Civil Rights movement propagated the use of peaceful and legal mechanisms to gain freedom and the rights that had been denied to the black men. Their steady move towards progress while achieving these goals, nevertheless, was too slow for the Black Power movement. The Black Power movement, a radical offshoot

of the Civil Rights movement, proposed a more violent solution to the racism problem.

They took an advantage that legislations could not end the racial discrimination immediately, thus, many blacks were disillusioned at their pace of changes, especially the young blacks. The Black Power movement proposed that blacks should define their own agenda by forming the exclusively black political parties, unlike the Civil Rights movement that was multiracial. They believed white men were deciding on the agenda of the Civil Rights movement, hence, they wanted to promote the racial pride of the black men and their self-esteem by breaking from any association with the white men. Blacks were encouraged to embrace their African heritage and to look inwards for any solution of their problems instead of waiting for the white men to do this. The Nation of Islam, on the other hand, although shared the belief in the supremacy of the black men, but they differed on the ultimate goal. The Nation of Islam proposed the establishment of a separate country or nation for the black people, which would be ruled with the Islamic faith. These two movements agreed on the separation of two races and the superiority of the black men but the Nation of Islam had gone further to advocate for a complete country for the black people.

The beliefs of Malcolm X in relation to these two organizations have to be viewed from the three metamorphoses that occurred in his life. As Malcolm was a little boy, he probably was more attuned to the Black Power movement as his anger and hopelessness had made him more radical and hostile towards the white men; but he did not have the Islamic religious beliefs and discipline associated with the Nation of Islam. After this he went <https://assignbuster.com/malcolm-x/>

to prison and converted to the Nation of Islam, and he became Malcolm X. Actually, he had been identified more with the Nation of Islam. He became more radical than even the founder of the group Elijah Muhammad.

It can be argued that his extra radicalism marked the fallout between these two persons, and Malcolm X left the group. He wanted the group to be more forceful and engaged into the struggle for freedom. The leader, Elijah Muhammad, preferred isolating his group and doing its own activities. After leaving the group, Malcolm X went for a pilgrimage to Mecca becoming El-Hajj Malik El-Shabbaz. He came back with the changed of few his beliefs and philosophies.

He did not believe that the black men should return to Africa and form their own country; neither did he believe that all white men were evil as before. This change of heart alienated him from some of his supporters that believed he had sold out; so he started receiving death threats summarized by his assassination. Thus, this was how he had identified himself with the Black Power Movement and the Nation of Islam, and this all depended on the exact period of his life. It has to be said though even after the split, he still was closer to the philosophy of the Nation of Islam than that of the Black Power movement. Malcolm X's thoughts and ideologies were motivated by his experiences as a young man. This mistrust started when he had been living in Lansing, Michigan.

First of all, the Ku Klux Klan terrorists put his house on fire. Later on, his father was killed. Malcolm believed that the whites had executed this murder. Malcolm moved to Harlem, where he started engaging into criminal

activities. Because of his criminal activities, he was arrested and imprisoned. Being a prisoner, this was the time that his life took a different dimension.

It was in prison that he had made some decisions that changed his life forever. Being in prison, he converted to the Nation of Islam. Moved by the faith of Islam, Malcolm stopped using drugs, started to read more in order to gain knowledge. He started to get his education as he had received the motivation from other prisoners. And after the release, Malcolm was a different man with a different ideology (Haley, 1999). Mallcolm X had a big influence on the Black Power organizations, especially on the Black Panthers.

He created an ideology for the black people by his unrelenting push towards the black pride and self-sufficiency. Firstly, the term black power had the different meanings to do various groups. The aims and objectives of the black power organizations and the non-violent movements were the same. The two ones aimed at increasing their power, both politically and economically. However, unlike the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Power movement had a great influence on changing the black culture. At the core of the Black Power movement was the unity for the blacks, self-determination, and self-esteem in the black culture.

The characteristics of the Black Power movement were “ unique hair styles, soul music, and soul theology.” For example, the activities and practices of Malcolm X were the foundations for the Black Panthers. According to Wendt (2007), Malcolm “ represented both a militant revolutionary, with the dignity and self-respect to stand up and fight to win equality for all oppressed minorities.” (Frazier, 1968) He sought to bring the positive benefits to the

society, something that the Black Panthers had done with an amazing zeal. The Panthers “ followed Malcolm’s belief of international working class unity across the spectrum of color and gender, and thus united with various minority and white revolutionary groups.” (Wendt, 2007) Malcolm X split from the Nation of Islam.

This occurred after becoming Elijah Mohammad. Malcolm began to see things differently as he had taken a different political dimension in his life. This motivating incidence in this turn of events in the life of Malcolm and the Nation of Islam was triggered by the death of John F. Kennedy. Malcolm developed a broader view on the struggle between the oppressed people and the oppressors. Malcolm was different from other leaders of the mainstream movement as he did not show any illusions to the president of the U.

S. or the people in big business. After the assassination of J. F. Kennedy, Elijah Mohammad ordered his people to keep silence on the murder and not to make any comments on the assassination of the president.

However, when questioned by the press, Malcolm made what had been supposed to be the extremist political views on the assassination of the president. His reply to the press was that, “ The chickens have come home to roost. Being an old farm boy myself, chickens coming home to roost never did make me sad; they’ve always made me glad” (Wendt, 2007). Mohammad had argued that any quotes from the Nation of Islam at that time would be inappropriate because of the sensitivity surrounding the murder of the

president and due to the general mood of people in grief. By his sentiments, Malcolm effectively disobeyed the voice of his master.

It is worthy to note that Malcolm was motivated by the fact that Elijah Mohammad had fathered children with his young secretaries. Malcolm's statement forced Mohammed to expel him from the NOI. This ended his association with the Nation of Islam. In summary, Malcolm was a person who captivated his black audience by his radical ideas and solutions he had offered to the black community. Malcolm completely silenced his audience while using his great oratory skills and harsh language that at those times seemed to degrade his listeners.

However, at the same time he would lift their spirits high through their emotions. Through this way, he was able to convince his audience that the white men were the main obstacle to the total emancipation of the black men. Through his tactics, he was able to convince the black community that, "it's the ballot or the bullet". Indeed, to the white men he became the foe, but to the blacks, he was a good friend.