

Ballot or the bullet



People would come from all over the country to Harlem, New York in the year 1964 to listen to Malcolm Little, better known as Malcolm X, give his speeches about having more civil rights for the black community. He claimed that they should try to spend money inside of their community to help it prosper and prevent it from becoming a slum or a ghetto. He compared their situation many times to when America was first starting and how they had to fight for their freedom from Britain.

Malcolm X talked about Patrick Henry and how he said, “ Give me liberty or give me death” and was saying that they need to stand up for what they want. He said that there can not be a revolution with blood shed but America is in a position right now where they can be involved in a “ Bloodless revolution. ” One thing that he repeated throughout his speech was that it would be the “ ballot or the bullet” (Malcolm X). This meant that they would either get what they asked for or they would have to fight for it.

In Malcolm X’s speech he addressed different rhetorical strategies to convey his message to the people of Harlem. One way the speaker attempted to sway his audience to feel the way that he did was by telling the people that he was educated about how the white people felt when they were suppressed by Britain. The white people of the time were being taxed without representation. He learned who Patrick Henry was and how he would rise up and say “ Liberty or death” which is the equivalent to what Malcolm X’s slogan was, ballot or the bullet.

He said that, the statement “ Liberty or death” brought freedom to the white people in this country and that if they could do it, so could he and his supporters. He also talked about how he knew the new generations of black

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people in this country didn't care how far the odds were against them; they wanted to fight for their rights to be equals to the white people of America. They would ignore the odds altogether until they had succeeded in what they have come to do.

Later, Malcolm uses emotion to get his message across to his audience when he talks about how America right now could be the only place to have ever had a bloodless revolution by simply succumbing to what the black population wanted and give them their civil rights. He said that usually you aren't in a position where you love your enemy but here is a time where they love America but just would like to be treated as equals along with the rest of the population.

Malcolm also said that Uncle Sam was the one that created this problem in the first place and going to his court expecting him to fix the problem would do absolutely nothing because he is the criminal and he is the one that needs to be fixed. A little bit later he talks about how Afro-American churches are being bombed, little girls getting murdered, and leaders of the black population getting shot in broad daylight. He asks why this isn't being brought to the UN when these sorts of things that happen in other countries go directly to the UN. Then Malcolm says that it is their turn to take their case to the UN.

He says that there he will have the support of all different ethnicities, including the 800 million Chinese people out there. Malcolm also talks about how Uncle Sam is able to stand up and represent himself as the leader of the free world when he is violating the human rights of over 22 million Afro-Americans. Malcolm used different methods to try to get his feelings across

to his audience but they all were directed towards the same purpose; to try to get the civil rights of the black population in America at the time. This worked to a degree, it got people all riled up to fight for their civil rights.

He first talked about how when America was first starting they didn't like it when their civil rights were suppressed and that the Afro-Americans feel the same way they want their rights. Then Malcolm talks about how this revolution doesn't have to include any death as long as America listens to the black communities requests. He purposes that it is time to go to the UN and have them help sort this out with the help of other countries. He sums up his whole speech in four words and those words are “ ballot or the bullet” they will get what they want or they will fight for it.