

Mary Kochiyama  
545 W. 126th Street, 3B  
New York, New York 10027

#### MALCOLM X: HIS LEGACY

Men have lived and died for freedom, but in the 400 years' history in America, perhaps <sup>five</sup> ~~only four~~ who struggled in this land, stand out in magnitude for their valor, persistence, integrity, and prescience. All <sup>five</sup> ~~four~~ are of African heritage.... Frederick Douglas, W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, <sup>Paul Robeson</sup> and Malcolm X. Malcolm could well be the composite of his <sup>four</sup> ~~three~~ predecessors, for these <sup>five</sup> ~~four~~ did more than all others to help regain for the black man, pride in his color and heritage; knowledge of his indigenous culture; repossession of his identity; and the salvaging of his true self-consciousness as initial steps toward being a free and whole entity. For this laborious work in an unfeeling, deprecating society, came the chilling vitriolic reaction of being dubbed as black racists.

However, the words of a 19th Century poet, Sir Henry Taylor, well epitomizes these remarkable titans deleted from American history:

"Such souls  
Whose sudden visitations daze the world,  
Vanish like lightning, but they leave behind  
A voice that in the distance far away  
Wakens the slumbering ages."

Malcolm's death Sunday came as a shattering blow to the untold numbers who followed him; comprehended and believed in his concepts, and were willing to follow his precepts.



The newspapers immediately attributed the assassination to the assumption that Malcolm was going to name his assailants publicly, and for this reason was killed to be silenced. Playing heavily on that angle, and building a crescendo on the fending of the two Muslim factions, the real reason may have been diverted. <sup>Could it not be</sup> It is more plausible that he was stilled because the week prior, he stated that he was going to announce his proposed plan of action, something the power structure feared, knowing that if such a program was declared and launched, a giant step for freedom might begin.

Like Lumumba, whose life was snatched through insidious means at the height of the Congo's struggle against paternalism and towards Africa's independence, Malcolm's life, too, was whisked away at a crucial hour of Afro-American liberation. Malcolm was also the only current link who bridged the gap between Africa and Afro-Americans.

Though castigated and villified invidiously by the Establishment and the press, Malcolm stalwartly challenged and exposed the immorality of the power structure; the illusion of the constitution; the duplicity of the system; the impiety of the Christian conscience; the hypocrisy of the American Dream; the misconception of the American way of life; the ambiguity and deviating tactics of the mass news media; and the odium and malignancy of the perpetrations and perpetuation of racism cloaked in respectability, propriety, do-good-ism, and even elegance and dignity.



Only a week earlier, the newspaper head-lines whipped up hysteria, screaming out that three Afro-Americans and one Canadian had girded their efforts plotting to destroy cherished American shrines. Whether this was a police fabrication and/or provocation, or a means of subverting and inciting fear of black militancy and depicting Afro-Americans as terrorists, the fact is, these selected symbols never exacted their significance in reality, and stand today, rather as platitudes than monuments to greatness, attesting to the sham and pretense, the hollowness of many American emblems. Their assumed plan evoked furor and uproar, but it should reveal the need to rectify distortions or concede to the pretext and misrepresentation of gloried monuments.

Whatever disposition of these cases, whatever punishment may be meted out to those <sup>"allegedly"</sup> involved, such a bold act would have exposed truth to the core. It is notable that should such a story have any validity, their imagination did not choose human lives to wreak their vindication, as did the bombers in a Birmingham, Mississippi Sunday School.

Also in context with this news-story, was the part dealing with the divisive measure used by the power structure (now known as terror structure) and police force in enticing a chosen, "trustable" Afro-American to infiltrate militant groups as an investigative agent. During the African slave trade, white men pitted tribes against tribes in capturing slaves, and rewarding the cooperative tribe with guns, food, etc. On Southern plantations, the house-Negro's life, often emulating the master's, was a far cry from the course, imbruting life of the field Negroes. Mal-



Malcolm often reiterated these tactics used to destroy unity and cohesiveness among his people. Unfortunately, the same unreconcilable cleavage still exists: the house-Negro versus the ghetto-ized field Afro-Americans.

Last year, for every dribble of civil rights "bestowed" upon black people, the nation patted each other on the back. To Malcolm, this was gross insult and an affront, as rightfully should be felt--as all others are granted their rights, immunities, and protection through the constitution.

Malcolm's disagreement with civil rightsers who were striving for integration was based on the kind of integration manifested in American society, whether North or South, East or West, in school, business, or social world. Integration was a matter of token desegregation, superficial acceptance, or a gesture of condescendence. Malcolm was wise in knowing that integration could be a form of slavery, that in order to be "acceptable" one must bleach his values to conform with <sup>that of</sup> the power structure. ~~It is only assimilation, to be made similar to the larger majority.~~

As Hoover says: Denounced as a hater, it is enlightening to note that what he hated, were: tyranny, oppression, disfranchisement, exploitation; enslavement--whether physical, mental, or psychological; race humiliation, stigmatizing; stultifying conditions; economic and political aggression internationally; foreign intervention and encroachment; and the degrading and wasting of human resources. In his brief life-time, he hated with intensity, the horrendous, confining, and unjust prerequisites revealed in this country, in Africa, and elsewhere, which decent people anywhere should hate and counter.



Few, however, have such courage. Most people in movements today assuage and mollify their protest for the sake of racial harmony and ameliorating race relations, thus, digressing from the struggle for freedom. But how could non-Afro people understand anyway? As immigrants, they were never placed in "solitary confinement" and immobilized, for they were part of the homogenized American fabric that helped to weave the demarcation lines, walling in black people in their prisons. And, this sophisticated, "righteous" society has made the emotion, hate, a crime; not caring what or where the hate is aimed.

What Malcolm loved was carefully omitted, or never mentioned in the white press. He loved humanity; the quality of being a human being. He loved dignity; the attribute of being esteemed. He loved justice; the principle of dealing justly with men. He loved freedom; the state of being free, the absence of restraint or repression. He loved life in its wholeness and beauty unconfined; and with passionate compassion.

He died young, an ebullient, energizing package of vitality, strength, knowledge and perception. Physically magnificent and eloquently articulate, he exuded fortitude and intrepidity while digesting and diffusing information, wisdom, and truth. Despite being a marked man by some of his own people, he never turned against any of his race, nor sought retaliation.

*Malcolm was not just a teacher & leader* He was a scholar, but not dogmatic nor pedantic. He spoke the language of his people; he understood what they were subjected to; and ardently dedicated himself to the most rejected, the most degraded--the ghetto-ized. *the wretched of the earth* He could electrify a room by

*His collage was the street, the prison, Islam, & the struggle.*

*He was elegant & fine. He was his life. Malcolm was transformed.*



his presence; magnetize an audience, but he was no mystic. His ~~abstruse~~ source of <sup>profoundness</sup> profundity was his sincerity, humility, forbearance, selflessness, and a keen sensitivity to the needs of others. His most generous gift to his people were the hours, days, months, and years--the unlimited time that he spent speaking to them on the streets and in halls to liberate and renovate the heretofore indoctrinated <sup>colonized</sup> minds and wills.

He also traveled widely, speaking to colleges throughout the country, always spelling out the grievances of his people penetratingly. <sup>He debates with college professors at Ox-Bow Univ.</sup> Last year he made <sup>the</sup> a trip to the Middle East which <sup>reinforced</sup> augmented his faith in the Islamic religion, and impelled his confidence in the brotherhood of all men. He conferred with dignitaries throughout Africa, relaying the conditions of "apart-  
heid" in America and rallying their concern.

Freedom, he oft emphasized, was inherent; that man has no right to the audacity of giving freedom to another. Man only withholds it from another. Thus, if robbed of freedom, man must retrieve what is rightfully and inherently his, was his belief.

Despite the intensity of his commitment to the freedom struggle, Malcolm exalted family life. On the occasion that he introduced Abdul Rahman Mohammed Babu, the Tanzanian leader, to his people, he mentioned that Babu is proof that a "revolutionary" can also be a good family man. Malcolm's own life illustrated the point succinctly in the unity and kinship of his immediate family.

He was a devoted husband to the woman who exemplified to him, the finest in womanhood, and who in turn, radiated the love



she received. He was a patient, soft-speaking father to his four children whom he adored; the fifth, whom he shall never see. As a leader, he was unusual in his appreciation of his followers, reciprocating his allegiance with attentiveness and concern.

As to his quotation, "the chickens coming home to roost," it is still as he explicated it, that "what goes out, comes back"; "that whatever is sown is reaped"; "that what is planted, will grow! The seeds of violence can only create violence. The question, however, is who first sowed the violence?"

The dictionary definition of violence is: "the exertion of force, physical or moral, with its reference to its effect on other than the agent; the violent treatment, procedure, profanation; the desecration and defilement; the infringement, outrage, and assault on another; forcible or destructive action; unjustifiable alteration of wording or senses." All these are then the perpetrations, the very acts of violence on Afro-American peoples.

Thus, it is true that Malcolm lived and died in a state of violence; a violence that he did not create; it was already there. The American climate, from the beginning of its history, was entrenched in violence, obvious and palpable from its system of slavery and segregation; and almost annihilating of this land to a demeaning life on reservations. *transferring the land of Negroes to the white* *abuse of the west* *Govt* *of African people* *en* *human* *manifest destiny!* It was this same violence that won for this nation, the accumulation of power, wealth, resources, and land, under the guise of adventurous spirit, building new frontiers, creating new worlds, economic assistance, and humanitarian concern.

Malcolm was surrounded with violence, as were all his people. It ensnared his every move. The supposed violence of Malcolm's,



artfully created by the newspapers was misleading and converse as to the direction that the violence was aimed. The forces of destructive action (and newspapers played a prime role) were against him. <sup>But all his people - even King, a religious person</sup> But no amount of intimidations, terrorizing, defilement, or pressure, could still his vociferations, curtail his dauntlessness; nor emasculate his manhood. Unwaveringly, he said what was needed to be said.

The American poet, Douglas Mallock, wrote: "Courage is to feel the daily daggers of relentless steel, and keep on living." This he did every day of the past two years, feeling the "daily daggers" courageously, until his last breath Sunday, Feb. 21, 1965.

Norman Douglas, a Scotch writer, once quoted: "No great man is ever born too soon or too late. When we say that the time is not ripe for this or that celebrity, we confess by implication that this very man and no other is required."

Malcolm, however, was more than a great man. He was an Anathema to those who profligated the rights of <sup>his</sup> black people. He was an Epic, who personified heroic action. He was an Epoch, the starting point of a new period or a striking event. He was a Phenomena, a rare fact or an exceptional person. He was a Fountainhead, a source of a stream from which emanated strength and hope.

Yet, because of the System's wily ways of destroying his image, the most irreparable anguish, is that many of his own people depreciated his efforts, were embarrassed by his vocalizing, or censored his activities. He was the giant-killer, often



alone, with no allies but words to expose the hypocrisy and duplicity of lofty pronouncements, and to pierce the swelling vanity of a nation that might have known true greatness had they let him and his people enter their wall of stone.

His profound legacy is his infinite love for his black <sup>But also in the eyes of people who would</sup> race, and the hope that he prepared them for freedom. <sup>the struggle, but this legacy he left all opposing people</sup> ~~To all others,~~ he leaves the fact to ponder, that a man can endure the denunciations, alienation, constrictions, indignities, insults; all the combined forces of vitriolizing iniquities, without mitigating and equivocating his stand. <sup>violence</sup> ~~What a source of power if all Afro-Americans in the same manner coalesced their efforts in tossing the shackles that bind them.~~

Regardless of one's race, religion, citizenship, <sup>as we see</sup> ~~to~~ have lived in the same era as this remarkable man, should be a personal gain of new perceptions and proportions in the affirmation of humanity.

Malcolm's idea of freedom is likened to that of Robert Hayden, the Afro-American poet, who personified it in his tribute to Frederick Douglas, as:

"This beautiful and terrible thing  
As needful to man as air, as usable as earth;  
Truly instinct, brain matter, reflex action, diastole,  
systole;

Not the gaudy mumbo-jumbo of politicians...."

<sup>the international community</sup>  
May Harlem proudly and unitedly exalt this peerless Spartan ~~by some memorial or monument,~~ that the memory of his greatness and sacrifice, the love and esteem of his people can be comm



*condemnation of the*  
 communicated to the world, and his ~~vociferations~~ *condemnation* against  
*of this world* evil *& more everywhere* reverberate, that men will have the courage to continue  
*a more humane society*  
 the unfinished struggle towards a ~~truer brotherhood~~, for which  
 he gave his life.

But more than monuments, memorials, and tributes, may he be remembered, as Hayden eloquently transmits:

"Remembered.....

Not only by statues rhetoric,

Not just by legends, and poems, and wreaths of bronze  
 alone,

But by the lives grown out of his life,

The lives fleshing his dream of the beautiful,  
 needful, thing."