



# MALCOLM X

*“Not just an American problem,  
but a world problem”*

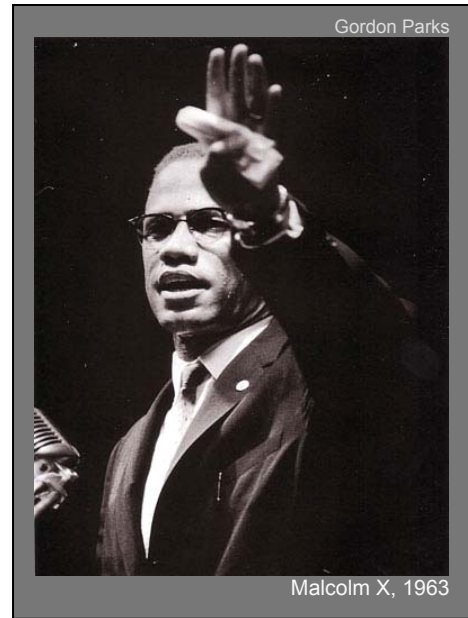
Address delivered in the Corn Hill Methodist Church,  
Rochester, New York, 16 February 1965

**F**IRST, brothers and sisters, I want to start by thanking you for taking the time to come out this evening and especially for the invitation for me to come up to Rochester and participate in this little informal discussion this evening on matters that are of common interest to all elements in the community, in the entire Rochester community. My reason for being here is to discuss the Black revolution that is going on, that’s taking place on this earth, the manner in which it’s taking place on the African continent, and the impact that it’s having in Black communities, not only here in America but in England and in France and in other of the former colonial powers today.

Many of you probably read last week I made an effort to go to Paris and was turned away. And Paris doesn’t turn anybody away. You know anybody is supposed to be able to go to France, it’s supposed to be a very liberal place. But France is having problems today that haven’t been highly publicized. And England is also having problems that haven’t been highly publicized, because America’s problems have been so highly publicized. But all of these three partners, or allies, have troubles in common today that the Black American, or Afro-American, isn’t well enough up on.

And in order for you and me to know the nature of the struggle that you and I are involved in, we have to know not only the various ingredients involved at the local level and national level, but also the ingredients that are involved at the international level. And the problems of the Black man here in this country today have ceased to be a problem of just the American Negro or an American problem. It has become a problem that is so complex, and has so many implications in it, that you have to study it in its entire world, in the world context or in its international context, to really see it as it actually is. Otherwise you can’t even follow the local issue, unless you know what part it plays in the entire international context. And when you look at it in that context, you see it in a different light, but you see it with more clarity.

And you should ask yourself why should a country like France be so concerned with a little insignificant American Negro that they would prohibit him from going there, when almost anybody else can go to that country whenever they desire. And it’s primarily because the three countries have the same problems. And the problem is this: That in the Western Hemisphere, you and I haven’t realized it, but we aren’t exactly a minority on this earth. In the Western Hemisphere there are — there’s the people in Brazil, two-thirds of the people in Brazil are dark-skinned people, the same as you and I. They are people of African origin, African ancestry — African background. And not only in Brazil, but throughout Latin America, the Caribbean, the United States, and Canada, you have people here who are of African origin.



Many of us fool ourselves into thinking of Afro-Americans as those only who are here in the United States. America is North America, Central America, and South America. Anybody of African ancestry in South America is an Afro-American. Anybody in Central America of African blood is an Afro-American. Anybody here in North America, including Canada, is an Afro-American if he has African ancestry — even down in the Caribbean, he's an Afro-American. So when I speak of the Afro-American, I'm not speaking of just the 22 million of us who are here in the United States. But the Afro-American is that large number of people in the Western Hemisphere, from the southernmost tip of South America to the northernmost tip of North America, all of whom have a common heritage and have a common origin when you go back to the roots of these people.

Now, there are four spheres of influence in the Western Hemisphere, where Black people are concerned. There's the Spanish influence, which means that Spain formerly colonized a certain area of the Western Hemisphere. There's the French sphere of influence, which means that area that she formerly colonized. The area that the British formerly colonized. And then those of us who are in the United States.

The area that was formerly colonized by the Spanish is commonly referred to as Latin America. They have many dark-skinned people there, of African ancestry. The area which the French colonized here in the Western Hemisphere is largely referred to as the French West Indies. And the area that the British colonized are those that are commonly referred to as the British West Indies, and also Canada. And then again, there's the United States. So we have these four different classifications of Black people, or nonwhite people, here in the Western Hemisphere.

Because of the poor economy of Spain, and because it has ceased to be an influence on the world scene as it formerly was, not very many of the people from — not very many of the black-skinned people from the Spanish sphere of influence migrate to Spain. But because of the high standard of living in France and England, you find many of the Black people from the British West Indies have been migrating to Great Britain, many of the Black people from the French West Indies migrate to France, and then you and I are already here.

So it means that the three major allies, the United States, Britain, and France, have a problem today that is a common problem. But you and I are never given enough information to realize that they have a common problem. And that common problem is the new mood that is reflected in the overall division of the Black people within continental France, within the same sphere of England, and also here in the United States. So that — and this mood has been changing to the same degree that the mood on the African continent has been changing. So when you find the African revolution taking place, and by African revolution I mean the emergence of African nations into independence that has been going on for the past ten or twelve years, has absolutely affected the mood of the Black people in the Western Hemisphere. So much so that when they migrate to England, they pose a problem for the English. And when they migrate to France, they pose a problem for the French. And when they — already here in the States — but when they awaken, and this same mood is reflected in the Black man in the States, then it poses a problem to the white man here in America.

And don't you think that the problem that the white man in America has is unique. France is having the same problem. And Great Britain is having the same problem. But the only difference between the problem in France and Britain and here is there have been many Black leaders that have risen up here in the Western Hemisphere, in the United States, that have created so much sort of militancy that has frightened the American whites. But that has been absent in France and England. And it has only been recently that the American Negro community and the British West Indian community, along with the African community in France, have begun to organize among themselves, and it's frightening France to death. And the same thing is happening in England. It is — up until recently it was disorganized completely. But recently, the West Indians in England, along with the African community in England, along with the Asians in England began to organize and work in coordination with each other, in conjunction with each other. And this has posed England a very serious problem.

So I had to give you that background, in order for you to understand some of the current problems that are developing here on this earth. And in no time can you understand the problems between Black and white people here in Rochester or Black and white people in Mississippi or Black and white people in California, unless you understand the basic problem that exists between Black and white people — not confined to the local level, but confined to the international, global level on this earth today. When you look at it in that context, you'll understand. But if you only try to look at it in the local context, you'll never understand. You have to see the trend that is taking place on this earth. And my purpose for coming here tonight is to try and give you as up-to-date an understanding of it all as is possible.

As many of you know, I left the Black Muslim movement and during the summer months, I spent five of those months on the — in the Middle East and on the African continent. During this time I visited many countries, first of which was Egypt, and then Arabia, then Kuwait, Lebanon, Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Zanzibar, Tanganyika — which is now Tanzania — Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Algeria. And then the five months that I was away I had an opportunity to hold lengthy discussions with President Nasser in Egypt, President Julius Nyerere in Tanzania, Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya, Milton Obote in Uganda, Azikiwe in Nigeria, and Sékou Touré in Guinea.



And during conversations with these men, and other Africans on that continent, there was much information exchanged that definitely broadened my understanding, and I feel, broadened my scope. For since coming back from over there, I have had no desire whatsoever to get bogged down in any picayune arguments with any bird-brained or small-minded people who happen to belong to organizations, based upon facts that are very misleading and don't get you anywhere when you have problems as complex as ours that are trying to get solved.

So I'm not here tonight to talk about some of these movements that are clashing with each other. I'm here to talk about the problem that's in front of all of us. And to have — and to do it in a very informal way. I

never like to be tied down to a formal method or procedure when talking to an audience, because I find that usually the conversation that I'm involved in revolves around race, or things racial, which is not my fault. I didn't create the race problem. And you know, I didn't come to America on the *Mayflower* or at my own volition. Our people were brought here involuntarily, against our will. So if we pose the problem now, they shouldn't blame us for being here. They brought us here. [Applause]

One of the reasons I feel that it is best to remain very informal when discussing this type of topic, when people are discussing things based on race, they have a tendency to be very narrow-minded and to get emotional and all involved in — especially white people. I have found white people that usually are very intelligent, until you get them to talking about the race problem. Then they get blind as a bat and want you to see what they know is the exact opposite of the truth. [Applause]

So what I would rather we try and do is be very informal, where we can relax and keep an open mind, and try and form the pattern or the habit of seeing for ourselves, hearing for ourselves, thinking for ourselves, and then we can come to an intelligent judgment for ourselves.

To straighten out my own position, as I did earlier in the day at Colgate,<sup>1</sup> I'm a Muslim, which only means that my religion is Islam. I believe in God, the Supreme Being, the creator of the universe. This is a very simple form of religion, easy to understand. I believe in one God. It's just a whole lot better. But I believe in one God, and I believe that that God had one religion, has one religion, always will have one religion. And that that God taught all of the prophets the same religion, so there is no argument about who was greater or who was better: Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, or some of the others. All of them were prophets who came from one God. They had one doctrine, and that doctrine was designed to give clarification of humanity, so that all of humanity would see that it was one and have some kind of brotherhood that would be practiced here on this earth. I believe in that.

I believe in the brotherhood of man. But despite the fact that I believe in the brotherhood of man, I have to be a realist and realize that here in America we're in a society that doesn't practice brotherhood. It doesn't practice what it preaches. It preaches brotherhood, but it doesn't practice brotherhood. And because this society doesn't practice brotherhood, those of us who are Muslim — those of us who left the Black Muslim movement and regrouped as Muslims, in a movement based upon orthodox Islam — we believe in the brotherhood of Islam.

But we also realize that the problem facing Black people in this country is so complex and so involved and has been here so long, unsolved, that it is absolutely necessary for us to form another organization. Which we did, which is a nonreligious organization in which — is known as the Organization of Afro-American Unity, and it is so structured organizationally to allow for active participation of any Afro-American, any Black American, in a program that is designed to eliminate the negative political, economic, and social evils that our people are confronted by in this society. And we have that set up because we realize that we have to fight against the evils of a society that has failed to produce brotherhood for every member of that society. This in no way means that we're antiwhite, antiblue, antigreen, or antiyellow. We're antiwrong. We're antidiscrimination. We're antisegregation. We're against anybody who wants to practice some form of segregation or discrimination against us because we don't happen to be a color that's acceptable to you. . . .<sup>2</sup> [Applause]

We don't judge a man because of the color of his skin. We don't judge you because you're white; we don't judge you because you're black; we don't judge you because you're brown. We judge you because of what you do and what you practice. And as long as you practice evil, we're against you. And for us, the most — the worst form of evil is the evil that's based upon judging a man because of the color of his skin. And I don't think anybody here can deny that we're living in a society that just doesn't judge a man according to his talents, according to his know-how, according to his possibility — background, or lack of

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<sup>1</sup> Colgate Rochester University Divinity School.

<sup>2</sup> All ellipses in this text in Perry edition.

academic background. This society judges a man solely upon the color of his skin. If you're white, you can go forward, and if you're Black, you have to fight your way every step of the way, and you still don't get forward. [*Applause*]

We are living in a society that is by and large controlled by people who believe in segregation. We are living in a society that is by and large controlled by a people who believe in racism, and practice segregation and discrimination and racism. We believe in a — and I say that it is controlled, not by the well-meaning whites, but controlled by the segregationists, the racists. And you can see by the pattern that this society follows all over the world. Right now in Asia you have the American army dropping bombs on dark-skinned people. You can't say that — it's as though you can justify being that far from home, dropping bombs on somebody else. If you were next door, I could see it, but you can't go that far away from this country and drop bombs on somebody else and justify your presence over there, not with me. [*Applause*]

It's racism. Racism practiced by America. Racism which involves a war against the dark-skinned people in Asia, another form of racism involving a war against the darkskinned people in the Congo<sup>3</sup> . . . as it involves a war against the dark-skinned people in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Rochester, New York. [*Applause*]

So we're not against people because they're white. But we're against those who practice racism. We're against those who drop bombs on people because their color happens to be of a different shade than yours. And because we're against it, the press says we're violent. We're not for violence. We're for peace. But the people that we're up against are for violence. You can't be peaceful when you're dealing with them. [*Applause*]

They accuse us of what they themselves are guilty of. This is what the criminal always does. They'll bomb you, then accuse you of bombing yourself. They'll crush your skull, then accuse you of attacking him. This is what the racists have always done — the criminal, the one who has criminal processes developed to a science. Their practice is criminal action. And then use the press to make you victim — look like the victim is the criminal, and the criminal is the victim. This is how they do it. [*Applause*]

And you here in Rochester probably know more about this than anybody anywhere else. Here's an example of how they do. They take the press, and through the press, they beat the system. . . . Or through the white public. Because the white public is divided. Some mean good, and some don't mean good. Some are well meaning, and some are not well meaning. This is true. You got some that are not well meaning, and some are well meaning. And usually those that are not well meaning outnumber those that are well meaning. You need a microscope to find those that are well meaning. [*Applause*]

So they don't like to do anything without the support of the white public. The racists, that are usually very influential in the society, don't make their move without first going to get public opinion on their side. So they use the press to get public opinion on their side. When they want to suppress and oppress the Black community, what do they do? They take the statistics, and through the press, they feed them to the public. They make it appear that the role of crime in the Black community is higher than it is anywhere else.

What does this do? [*Applause*] This message — this is a very skillful message used by racists to make the whites who aren't racists think that the rate of crime in the Black community is so high. This keeps the Black community in the image of a criminal. It makes it appear that anyone in the Black community is a criminal. And as soon as this impression is given, then it makes it possible, or paves the way to set up a police-type state in the Black community, getting the full approval of the white public when the police

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<sup>3</sup> In mid-1964, a revolt broke out in the Congo (today Zaire) [NHC note: today Democratic Republic of the Congo] led by followers of murdered Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. They opposed Moïse Tshombe becoming prime minister. The U.S.-backed Tshombe had been instrumental in the overthrow of Lumumba's government in 1960. During November 1964, U.S. planes ferried Belgian troops and mercenaries to rebel-held territory in an effort to crush the uprising. These forces carried out a massacre of thousands of Congolese. [Perry, p. 92, referenced at footnote, p. 159]

come in, use all kind of brutal measures to suppress Black people, crush their skulls, sic dogs on them, and things of that type. And the whites go along with it. Because they think that everybody over there's a criminal anyway. This is what — the press does this. [Applause]

This is skill. This skill is called — this is a science that's called "image making." They hold you in check through this science of imagery. They even make you look down upon yourself, by giving you a bad image of yourself. Some of our own Black people who have eaten this image themselves and digested it — until they themselves don't want to live in the Black community. They don't want to be around Black people themselves. [Applause]

It's a science that they use, very skillfully, to make the criminal look like the victim, and to make the victim look like the criminal. Example: In the United States during the Harlem riots, I was in Africa, fortunately. [Laughter] During these riots, or because of these riots, or after the riots, again the press, very skillfully, depicted the rioters as hoodlums, criminals, thieves, because they were abducting some property.

Now mind you, it is true that property was destroyed. But look at it from another angle. In these Black communities, the economy of the community is not in the hands of the Black man. The Black man is not his own landlord. The buildings that he lives in are owned by someone else. The stores in the community are run by someone else. Everything in the community is out of his hands. He has no say-so in it whatsoever, other than to live there, and pay the highest rent for the lowest-type boarding place, [Applause] pays the highest prices for food, for the lowest grade of food. He is a victim of this, a victim of economic exploitation, political exploitation, and every other kind.

Now, he's so frustrated, so pent-up, so much explosive energy within him, that he would like to get at the one who's exploiting him. But the one who's exploiting him doesn't live in his neighborhood. He only owns the house. He only owns the store. He only owns the neighborhood. So that when the Black man explodes, the one that he wants to get at isn't there. So he destroys the property. He's not a thief. He's not trying to steal your cheap furniture or your cheap food. He wants to get at you, but you're not there. [Applause]

And instead of the sociologists analyzing it as it actually is, trying to understand it as it actually is, again they cover up the real issue, and they use the press to make it appear that these people are thieves, hoodlums. No! They are the victims of organized thievery, organized landlords who are nothing but thieves, merchants who are nothing but thieves, politicians who sit in the city hall and who are nothing but thieves in cahoots with the landlords and the merchants. [Applause]

But again, the press is used to make the victim look like the criminal and make the criminal look like the victim. . . . This is imagery. And just as this imagery is practiced at the local level, you can understand it better by an international example. The best recent example at the international level to bear witness to what I'm saying is what happened in the Congo. Look at what happened. We had a situation where a plane was dropping bombs on African villages. An African village has no defense against the bombs. And an African village is not sufficient threat that it has to be bombed! But planes were dropping bombs on African villages. When these bombs strike, they don't distinguish between enemy and friend. They don't distinguish between male and female. When these bombs are dropped on African villages in the Congo, they are dropped on Black women, Black children, Black babies. These human beings were blown to bits. I heard no outcry, no voice of compassion for these thousands of Black people who were slaughtered by planes. [Applause]

Why was there no outcry? Why was there no concern? Because, again, the press very skillfully made the victims look like they were the criminals, and the criminals look like they were the victims. [Applause]

They refer to the villages as "rebel held," you know. As if to say, because they are rebel-held villages, you can destroy the population, and it's okay. They also refer to the merchants of death as "American-

trained, anti-Castro Cuban pilots.” This made it okay. Because these pilots, these mercenaries — you know what a mercenary is, he’s not a patriot. A mercenary is not someone who goes to war out of patriotism for his country. A mercenary is a hired killer. A person who kills, who draws blood for money, anybody’s blood. You kill a human being as easily as you kill a cat or a dog or a chicken.

So these mercenaries, dropping bombs on African villages, caring nothing as to whether or not there are innocent, defenseless women and children and babies being destroyed by their bombs. But because they’re called “mercenaries,” given a glorified name, it doesn’t excite you. Because they are referred to as “American-trained” pilots, because they are American-trained, that makes them okay. “Anti-Castro Cubans,” that makes them okay. Castro’s a monster, so anybody who’s against Castro is all right with us, and anything they can do from there, that’s all right with us. . . . They put your mind right in a bag and take it wherever they want, as well. [*Applause*]

But it’s something that you have to look at and answer for. Because they are American planes, American bombs, escorted by American paratroopers, armed with machine guns. But, you know, they say they’re not soldiers, they’re just there as escorts, like they started out with some advisers in South Vietnam. Twenty thousand of them — just advisers. These are just “escorts.” They’re able to do all of this mass murder and get away with it by labeling it “humanitarian,” an act of humanitarianism. Or “in the name of freedom,” “in the name of liberty.” All kinds of high-sounding slogans, but it’s cold-blooded murder, mass murder. And it’s done so skillfully, so you and I, who call ourselves sophisticated in this twentieth century, are able to watch it, and put the stamp of approval upon it. Simply because it’s being done to people with black skin, by people with white skin.

They take a man who is a cold-blooded murderer, named [Moise] Tshombe. You’ve heard of him, Uncle Tom Tshombe. [*Laughter and applause*] He murdered the prime minister, the rightful prime minister, [Patrice] Lumumba. He murdered him. [*Applause*] Now here’s a man who’s an international murderer, selected by the State Department and placed over the Congo and propped into position by your tax dollars. He’s a killer. He’s hired by our government. He’s a hired killer. And to show the type of hired killer he is, as soon as he’s in office, he hires more killers in South Africa to shoot down his own people. And you wonder why your American image abroad is so bankrupt.

Notice I said, “Your American image abroad is so bankrupt.”

They make this man acceptable by saying in the press that he’s the only one that can unite the Congo. Ha. A murderer. They won’t let China in the United Nations because they say she declared war on UN troops in Korea. Tshombe declared war on UN troops in Katanga. You give him money and prop him up. You don’t use the same yardstick. You use the yardstick over here, change it over here.

This is true — everybody can see you today. You make yourself look sick in the sight of the world trying to fool people that you were at least once wise with your trickery. But today



Patrice Lumumba (second from left), premier of the Republic of the Congo, arriving in New York City with an aide, Capt. Mawoso, to request United Nations protection, 24 July 1960. Lumumba was assassinated in the Congo in January 1961, for which the Belgian government officially acknowledged responsibility in 2002.

your bag of tricks have absolutely run out. The whole world can see what you're doing.

The press whips up hysteria in the white public. Then it shifts gears and starts working trying to get the sympathy of the white public. And then it shifts gears and gets the white public to support whatever criminal action they're getting ready to involve the United States in.

Remember how they referred to the hostages as "white hostages." Not "hostages." They said these "cannibals" in the Congo had "white hostages." Oh, and this got you all shook up. White nuns, white priests, white missionaries. What's the difference between a white hostage and a Black hostage? What's the difference between a white life and a Black life? You must think there's a difference, because your press specifies whiteness. "Nineteen white hostages" cause you to grieve in your heart. [*Laughter and applause*]

During the months when bombs were being dropped on Black people by the hundreds and the thousands, you said nothing. And you did nothing. But as soon as a few — a handful of white people who didn't have any business getting caught up in that thing in the first place — [*Laughter and applause*] — as soon as their lives became involved, you got concerned.

I was in Africa during the summer when they — when the mercenaries and the pilots were shooting down Black people in the Congo like flies. It wouldn't even get mentioned in the Western press. It wasn't mentioned. If it was mentioned, it was mentioned in the classified section of the newspaper. Someplace where you'd need a microscope to find it.

And at that time the African brothers, at first they weren't taking hostages. They only began to take hostages when they found that these pilots were bombing their villages. And then they took hostages, moved them into the village, and warned the pilots that if you drop bombs on the village, you'll hit your own people. It was a war maneuver. They were at war. They only held a hostage in a village to keep the mercenaries from murdering on a mass scale the people of those villages. They weren't keeping them as hostages because they were cannibals. Or because they thought their flesh was tasty. Some of those missionaries had been over there for forty years and didn't get eaten up. [*Laughter and applause*] If they were going to eat them they would have eaten them when they were young and tender. [*Laughter and applause*] Why you can't even digest that old white meat on an old chicken. [*Laughter*]

It's imagery. They use their ability to create images, and then they use these images that they've created to mislead the people. To confuse the people and make the people accept wrong as right and reject right as wrong. Make the people actually think that the criminal is the victim and the victim is the criminal.

Even as I point this out, you may say, "What does this all have to do with the Black man in America? And what does it have to do with the Black and white relations here in Rochester?"

You have to understand it. Until 1959 the image of the African continent was created by the enemies of Africa. Africa was a land dominated by outside powers. A land dominated by Europeans. And as these Europeans dominated the continent of Africa, it was they who created the image of Africa that was projected abroad. And they projected Africa and the people of Africa in a negative image, a hateful image. They made us think that Africa was a land of jungles, a land of animals, a land of cannibals and savages. It was a hateful image.

And because they were so successful in projecting this negative image of Africa, those of us here in the West of African ancestry, the Afro-American, we looked upon Africa as a hateful place. We looked upon the African as a hateful person. And if you referred to us as an African it was like putting us as a servant, or playing house, or talking about us in the way we didn't want to be talked.



Why? Because those who oppress know that you can't make a person hate the root without making them hate the tree. You can't hate your own and not end up hating yourself. And since we all originated in Africa, you can't make us hate Africa without making us hate ourselves. And they did this very skillfully.

And what was the result? They ended up with 22 million Black people here in America who hated everything about us that was African. We hated the African characteristics, the African characteristics. We hated our hair. We hated our nose, the shape of our nose, and the shape of our lips, the color of our skin. Yes we did. And it was you who taught us to hate ourselves simply by shrewdly maneuvering us into hating the land of our forefathers and the people on that continent.

As long as we hated those people, we hated ourselves. As long as we hated what we thought they looked like, we hated what we actually looked like. And you call me a hate teacher. Why, you taught us to hate ourselves. You taught the world to hate a whole race of people and have the audacity now to blame us for hating you simply because we don't like the rope that you put around our necks. [Applause]

When you teach a man to hate his lips, the lips that God gave him, the shape of the nose that God gave him, the texture of the hair that God gave him, the color of the skin that God gave him, you've committed the worst crime that a race of people can commit. And this is the crime that you've committed.

Our color became a chain, a psychological chain. Our blood — African blood — became a psychological chain, a prison, because we were ashamed of it. We believe — they would tell it to your face, and say they weren't; they were! We felt trapped because our skin was black. We felt trapped because we had African blood in our veins.

This is how you imprisoned us. Not just bringing us over here and making us slaves. But the image that you created of our motherland and the image that you created of our people on that continent was a trap, was a prison, was a chain, was the worst form of slavery that has ever been invented by a so-called civilized race and a civilized nation since the beginning of the world.

You still see the result of it among our people in this country today. Because we hated our African blood, we felt inadequate, we felt inferior, we felt helpless. And in our state of helplessness, we wouldn't work for ourselves. We turned to you for help, and then you wouldn't help us. We didn't feel adequate. We turned to you for advice and you gave us the wrong advice. Turned to you for direction and you kept us going in circles.

But a change has come about. In us. And what from? Back in '55 in Indonesia, at Bandung, they had a conference of dark-skinned people. The people of Africa and Asia came together for the first time in centuries. They had no nuclear weapons, they had no air fleets, no navy. But they discussed their plight and they found that there was one thing that all of us had in common — oppression, exploitation, suffering. And we had a common oppressor, a common exploiter.

If a brother came from Kenya and called his oppressor an Englishman; and another came from the Congo, he called his oppressor a Belgian; another came from Guinea, he called his oppressor French. But when you brought the oppressors together there's one thing they all had in common, they were all from Europe. And this European was oppressing the people of Africa and Asia.

And since we could see that we had oppression in common and exploitation in common, sorrow and sadness and grief in common, our people began to get together and determined at the Bandung Conference that it was time for us to forget our differences. We had differences. Some were Buddhists, some were Hindus, some were Christians, some were Muslim, some didn't have any religion at all. Some were socialists, some were capitalists, some were communists, and some didn't have any economy at all. But with all of the differences that existed, they agreed on one thing, the spirit of Bandung was, from there on in, to de-emphasize the areas of difference and emphasize the areas that we had in common.

And it was the spirit of Bandung that fed the flames of nationalism and freedom not only in Asia, but especially on the African continent. From '55 to '60 the flames of nationalism, independence on the African continent, became so bright and so furious, they were able to burn and sting anything that got in its path. And that same spirit didn't stay on the African continent. It somehow or other — it slipped into the Western Hemisphere and got into the heart and the mind and the soul of the Black man in the Western Hemisphere who supposedly had been separate from the African continent for almost 400 years.

But the same desire for freedom that moved the Black man on the African continent began to burn in the heart and the mind and the soul of the Black man here, in South America, Central America, and North America, showing us we were not separated. Though there was an ocean between us, we were still moved by the same heartbeat.

The spirit of nationalism on the African continent — It began to collapse; the powers, the colonial powers, they couldn't stay there. The British got in trouble in Kenya, Nigeria, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, and other areas of the continent. The French got in trouble in the entire French Equatorial North Africa, including

Algeria. Became a trouble spot for France. The Congo wouldn't any longer permit the Belgians to stay there. The entire African continent became explosive from '54-'55 on up to 1959. By 1959 they couldn't stay there any longer.

It wasn't that they wanted to go. It wasn't that all of a sudden they had become benevolent. It wasn't that all of a sudden they had ceased wanting to exploit the Black man of his natural resources. But it was the spirit of independence that was burning in the heart and mind of the Black man. He no longer would allow himself to be colonized, oppressed, and exploited. He was willing to lay down his life and take the lives of those who tried to take his, which was a new spirit.

The colonial powers didn't leave. But what did they do? Whenever a person is playing basketball, if — you watch him — the players on the opposing team trap him and he doesn't want to get rid of, to throw the ball away, he has to pass it to someone who's in the clear, who's on the same team as he. And since Belgium and France and Britain and these other colonial powers were trapped — they were exposed as colonial powers — they had to find someone who was still in the clear, and the only one in the clear so far as the Africans were concerned was the United States. So they passed the ball to the United States. And this administration picked it up and ran like mad ever since. [*Laughter and applause*]

As soon as they grabbed the ball, they realized that they were confronted with a new problem. The problem was that the Africans had awakened. And in their awakening they were no longer afraid. And because the Africans were not afraid, it was impossible for the European powers to stay on that continent by force. So our State Department, grabbing the ball and in their new analysis, they realized that they had to use a new strategy if they were going to replace the colonial powers of Europe.



What was their strategy? The friendly approach. Instead of coming over there with their teeth gritted, they started smiling at the Africans. “We’re your friends.” But in order to convince the African that he was their friend he had to start off pretending like they were our friend.

You didn’t get the man to smile at you because you were bad, no. He was trying to impress your brother on the other side of the water. He smiled at you to make his smile consistent. He started using a friendly approach over there. A benevolent approach. A philanthropic approach. Call it benevolent colonialism. Philanthropic imperialism. Humanitarianism backed up by dollarism. Tokenism. This is the approach that they used. They didn’t go over there well meaning. How could you leave here and go on the African continent with the Peace Corps and Cross Roads and these other outfits when you’re hanging Black people in Mississippi? How could you do it? *[Applause]*

How could you train missionaries, supposedly over there to teach them about Christ, when you won’t let a Black man in your Christ’s church right here in Rochester, much less in the South. *[Applause]* You know that’s something to think about. It gets me hot when I think about it. *[Laughter]*

From 1954 to 1964 can easily be looked upon as the era of the emerging African state. And as the African state emerged from ’54 to ’64, what impact, what effect did it have on the Afro-American, the Black American? As the Black man in Africa got independent, it put him in a position to be master of making his own image. Up until 1959 when you and I thought of an African, we thought of someone naked, coming with the tom-toms, with bones in his nose. Oh yeah!

This was the only image you had in your mind of an African. And from ’59 on when they begin to come into the UN and you’d see them on the television you’d get shocked. Here was an African who could speak better English than you. He made more sense than you. He had more freedom than you. Why places where you couldn’t go — *[Applause]* — places where you couldn’t go, all he had to do was throw on his robes and walk right past you. *[Laughter and applause]*

It had to shake you up. And it was only when you’d become shook up that you began to really wake up. *[Laughter]*

So as the African nations gained their independence and the image of the African continent began to change, the things agreed as the image of Africa switched from negative to positive. Subconsciously. The Black man throughout the Western Hemisphere, in his subconscious mind, began to identify with that emerging positive African image.

And when he saw the Black man on the African continent taking a stand, it made him become filled with the desire also to take a stand. The same image, the same — just as the African image was negative — and you hear about old hat in the hand, compromising, fearful looks — we were the same way. But when we began to read about Jomo Kenyatta and the Mau Mau and others, then you find Black people in this country began to think along the same line. And more closely along the same line than some of them really want to admit.

When they saw — just as they had to change their approach with the people on the African continent, they also then began to change their approach with our people on this continent. As they used tokenism and a whole lot of other friendly, benevolent, philanthropic approaches on the African continent, which were only token efforts, they began to do the same thing with us here in the States.

Tokenism. They came up with all kinds of programs that weren’t really designed to solve anybody’s problems. Every move they made was a token move. They never made a real down-to-earth move at one time to really solve the problem. They came up with a Supreme Court desegregation decision that they haven’t put into practice yet. Not even in Rochester, much less in Mississippi. *[Applause]*



African American student James Meredith escorted by U.S. marshals as he arrives at the University of Mississippi, 1 October 1961, twenty days after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld his right to admission

They fooled the people in Mississippi by trying to make it appear that they were going to integrate the University of Mississippi. They took one Negro to the university backed up with about 6,000-15,000 troops, I think it was. And I think it cost them \$6 million. [Laughter]

And three or four people got killed in the act. And it was only an act. Now, mind you, after one of them got in, they said there's integration in Mississippi. [Laughter]

They stuck two of them in the school in Georgia and said there's integration in Georgia. Why you should be ashamed. Really, if I was white, I'd be so ashamed I'd crawl

under a rug. [Laughter and applause] And I'd feel so low while I was under that rug I wouldn't even leave a hump. [Laughter]

This tokenism, this tokenism was a program that was designed to protect the benefits of only a handful of handpicked Negroes. And these handpicked Negroes were given big positions, and then they were used to open up their mouths to tell the world, "Look at how much progress we're making." He should say, look at how much progress he is making. For while these handpicked Negroes were eating high on the hog, rubbing elbows with white folk, sitting in Washington, D.C., the masses of Black people in this country continued to live in the slum and in the ghetto. The masses, [Applause] the masses of Black people in this country remain unemployed, and the masses of Black people in this country continue to go to the worst schools and get the worst education.

Along during the same time appeared a movement known as the Black Muslim movement. The Black Muslim movement did this: Up until the time the Black Muslim movement came on the scene, the NAACP was regarded as radical. [Laughter] They wanted to investigate it. They wanted to investigate it. CORE and all the rest of them were under suspect, under suspicion. King wasn't heard of. When the Black Muslim movement came along talking that kind of talk that they talked, the white man said, "Thank God for the NAACP." [Laughter and applause]

The Black Muslim movement has made the NAACP acceptable to white folks. It made its leaders acceptable. They then began to refer to them as responsible Negro leaders. [Laughter] Which meant they were responsible to white folk. [Applause] Now I am not attacking the NAACP. I'm just telling you about it. [Laughter] And what makes it so bad, you can't deny it. [Laughter]

So this is the contribution that that movement made. It frightened a lot of people. A lot of people who wouldn't act right out of love begin to act right out of fear. Because Roy [Wilkins] and [James] Farmer and some of the others used to tell white folk, look if you don't act right by us you're going to have to listen to them. They used us to better their own position, their own bargaining position. No matter what you think of the philosophy of the Black Muslim movement, when you analyze the part that it played in the struggle of Black people during the past twelve years you have to put it in its proper context and see it in its proper perspective.

The movement itself attracted the most militant, the most dissatisfied, the most uncompromising elements of the Black community. And also the youngest elements of the Black community. And as this movement grew, it attracted such a militant, uncompromising, dissatisfied element.

The movement itself was supposedly based upon the religion of Islam and therefore supposedly a religious movement. But because the world of Islam or the orthodox Muslim world would never accept the Black Muslim movement as a bona fide part of it, it put those of us who were in it in a sort of religious vacuum. It put us in a position of identifying ourselves by a religion, while the world in which that religion was practiced rejected us as not being bona fide practitioners, practitioners of that religion.

Also the government tried to maneuver us and label us as political rather than religious so that they could charge us with sedition and subversion. This is the only reason. But although we were labeled political, because we were never permitted to take part in politics we were in a vacuum politically. We were in a religious vacuum. We were in a political vacuum. We were actually alienated, cut off from all type of activity with even the world that we were fighting against.

We became a sort of a religious-political hybrid, all to ourselves. Not involved in anything but just standing on the sidelines condemning everything. But in no position to correct anything because we couldn't take action.

Yet at the same time, the nature of the movement was such that it attracted the activists. Those who wanted action. Those who wanted to do something about the evils that confronted all Black people. We weren't particularly concerned with the religion of the Black man. Because whether he was a Methodist or a Baptist or an atheist or an agnostic, he caught the same hell.

So we could see that we had to have some action, and those of us who were activists became dissatisfied, disillusioned. And finally dissension set in and eventually a split. Those who split away were the real activists of the movement who were intelligent enough to want some kind of program that would enable us to fight for the rights of all Black people here in the Western Hemisphere.

But at the same time we wanted our religion. So when we left, the first thing we did we regrouped into a new organization known as the Muslim Mosque, headquartered in New York. And in that organization we adopted the real, orthodox religion of Islam, which is a religion of brotherhood. So that while accepting this religion and setting up an organization which could practice that religion — and immediately this particular Muslim Mosque was recognized and endorsed by the religious officials of the Muslim world.

We realized at the same time we had a problem in this society that went beyond religion. And it was for that reason we set up the Organization of Afro-American Unity in which anybody in the community could participate in an action program designed to bring about complete recognition and respect of Black people as human beings.

And the motto of the Organization of Afro-American Unity is By Any Means Necessary. We don't believe in fighting a battle that's going to — in which the ground rules are to be laid down by those who suppress us. We don't believe that we can win in a battle where the ground rules are laid down by those who exploit us. We don't believe that we can carry on a struggle trying to win the affection of those who for so long have oppressed and exploited us.

We believe that our fight is just. We believe that our grievances are just. We believe that the evil practices against Black people in this society are criminal and that those who engage in such criminal practices are to be looked upon themselves as nothing but criminals. And we believe that we are within our rights to fight those criminals by any means necessary.

This doesn't mean that we're for violence. But we do — we have seen that the federal government has shown its inability, its absolute unwillingness, to protect the lives and the property of Black people. We have seen where organized white racists, Klansmen, Citizens' Councilmen, and others can come into the Black community and take a Black man and make him disappear and nothing be done about it. We have seen that they can come in — *[Applause]*

We reanalyzed our condition. When we go back to 1939, Black people in America were shining shoes. Some of the most educated were shining in Michigan, where I came from, in Lansing, the capital. The best jobs you could get in the city were carrying trays out at the country club to feed white people. And usually the waiter at the country club was looked upon as the town big shot 'cause he had a good job around "good" white folks, you know. *[Laughter]*

He had the best education, but he'd be shining shoes right at the State House, the capitol. Shining the governor's shoes, and the attorney general's shoes, and this made him in the know, you know, 'cause he could shine white folks' shoes who were in big places. Whenever the people downtown wanted to know what was going on in the Black community, he was their boy. He was what's known as the "town Negro," the Negro leader. And those who weren't shining shoes, the preachers, also had a big voice in the community. That's all they'd let us do is shine shoes, wait on tables, and preach. *[Laughter]*

In 1939, before Hitler went on the rampage, or rather at the time — yeah, before Hitler went on the rampage, a Black man couldn't even work in the factory. We were digging ditches on WPA. Some of you all have forgotten too quick. We were ditchdigging on the WPA. Our food came from the welfare, they were stamped "not to be sold." I got so many things from the store called "not to be sold," I thought that was a store some place. *[Laughter]*

This is the condition the Black man was in, and that's till 1939. . . . Until the war started, we were confined to these menial tasks. When the war started, they wouldn't even take us in the army. A Black man wasn't drafted. Was he or was he not? No! You couldn't join the navy. Remember that? Wouldn't draft one. This was as late as 1939 in the United States of America!

They taught you to sing "sweet land of liberty" and the rest of that stuff. No! You couldn't join the army. You couldn't join the navy. They wouldn't even draft you. They only took white folks. They didn't start drafting us until the Negro leader opened up his big mouth, *[Laughter]* talking about, "If white folks must die, we must die too." *[Laughter and applause]*

The Negro leader got a whole lot of Negroes killed in World War II who never had to die. So when America got into the war, immediately she was faced with a manpower shortage. Up until the time of the war, you couldn't get inside of a plant. I lived in Lansing, where Oldsmobile's factory was and Reo's. There was about three in the whole plant and each one of them had a broom. They had education. They had gone to school. I think one had gone to college. But he was a "broomologist." *[Laughter]*

When times got tough and there was a manpower shortage, then they let us in the factory. Not through any effort of our own. Not through any sudden moral awakening on their part. They needed us. They needed manpower. Any kind of manpower. And when they got desperate and in need, they opened up the factory door and let us in.

So we began to learn to run machines. Then we began to learn how to run machines, when they needed us. Put our women in as well as our men. As we learned to operate the machines, we began to make more money. As we began to make more money, we were able to live in a little better neighborhood. When we moved to a little better neighborhood, we went to a little better school. And when we went to that better school, we got a little better education and got in a little better position to get a little better job.

It was no change of heart on their part. It was no sudden awakening of their moral consciousness. It was Hitler. It was Tojo. It was Stalin. Yes, it was pressure from the outside, at the world level, that enabled you and me to make a few steps forward.

Why wouldn't they draft us and put us in the army in the first place? They had treated us so bad, they were afraid that if they put us in the army and give us a gun and showed us how to shoot it — *[Laughter]* they feared that they wouldn't have to tell us what to shoot at. *[Laughter and applause]*

And probably they wouldn't have had. It was their conscience. So I point this out to show that it was not change of heart on Uncle Sam's part that permitted some of us to go a few steps forward. It was world pressure. It was threat from outside. Danger from outside that made it — that occupied his mind and forced him to permit you and me to stand up a little taller. Not because he wanted us to stand up. Not because he wanted us to go forward. He was forced to.

And once you properly analyze the ingredients that opened the doors even to the degree that they were forced open, when you see what it was, you'll better understand your position today. And you'll better understand the strategy that you need today. Any kind of movement for freedom of Black people based solely within the confines of America is absolutely doomed to fail. *[Applause]*

As long as your problem is fought within the American context, all you can get as allies is fellow Americans. As long as you call it civil rights, it's a domestic problem within the jurisdiction of the United States government. And the United States government consists of segregationists, racists. Why the most powerful men in the government are racists. This government is controlled by thirty-six committees. Twenty congressional committees and sixteen senatorial committees. Thirteen of the twenty congressmen that make up the congressional committees are from the South. Ten of the sixteen senators that control the senatorial committees are from the South. Which means, that of the thirty-six committees that govern the foreign and domestic directions and temperament of the country in which we live, of the thirty-six, twenty-three of them are in the hands of racists. Outright, stone-cold, dead segregationists. This is what you and I are up against. We are in a society where the power is in the hands of those who are the worst breed of humanity.

Now how are we going to get around them? How are we going to get justice in a Congress that they control? Or a Senate that they control? Or a White House that they control? Or from a Supreme Court that they control?

Look at the pitiful decision that the Supreme Court handed down. Brother, look at it! Don't you know these men on the Supreme Court are masters of legal — not only of law, but legal phraseology. They are such masters of the legal language that they could very easily have handed down a desegregation decision on education so worded that no one could have gotten around. But they come up with that thing worded in such a way that here ten years have passed, and there's all kind of loopholes in it. They knew what they were doing. They pretend to give you something while knowing all the time you can't utilize it.

They come up last year with a civil rights bill that they publicized all around the world as if it would lead us into the promised land of integration. Oh yeah! Just last week, the Right Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King come out of the jail house and went to Washington, D.C., saying he's going to ask every day for new legislation to protect voting rights for Black people in Alabama. Why? You just had legislation. You just had a civil rights bill. You mean to tell me that that highly publicized civil rights bill doesn't even give the federal government enough power to protect Black people in Alabama who don't want to do anything but register? Why it's another foul trick, 'cause they . . . tricked us year in and year out. Another foul trick. *[Applause]*

So, since we see — I don't want you to think I'm teaching hate. I love everybody who loves me. *[Laughter]* But I sure don't love those who don't love me. *[Laughter]*

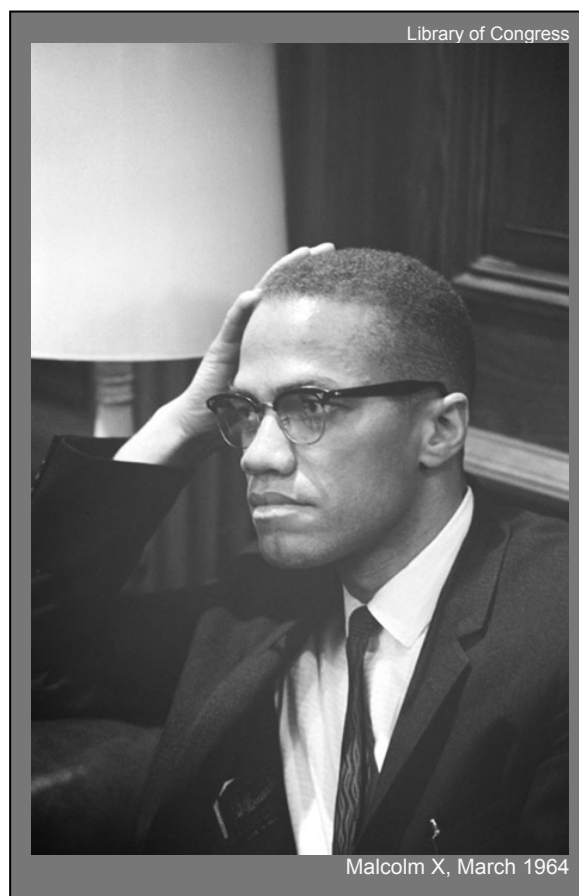
Since we see all of this subterfuge, this trickery, this maneuvering — it's not only at the federal level, the national level, the local level, all levels. The young generation of Blacks that's coming up now can see that as long as we wait for the Congress and the Senate and the Supreme Court and the president to solve our problems, you'll have us waiting on tables for another thousand years. And there aren't no days like those.

Since the civil rights bill — I used to see African diplomats at the UN crying out against the injustice that was being done to Black people in Mozambique, in Angola, the Congo, in South Africa, and I wondered why and how they could go back to their hotels and turn on the TV and see dogs biting Black people right down the block and policemen wrecking the stores of Black people with their clubs right down the block, and putting water hoses on Black people with pressure so high it tear our clothes off, right down the block. And I wondered how they could talk all that talk about what was happening in Angola and Mozambique and all the rest of it and see it happen right down the block and get up on the podium in the UN and not say anything about it.

But I went and discussed it with some of them. And they said that as long as the Black man in America calls his struggle a struggle of civil rights — that in the civil rights context, it's domestic and it remains within the jurisdiction of the United States. And if any of them open up their mouths to say anything about it, it's considered a violation of the laws and rules of protocol. And the difference with the other people was that they didn't call their grievances "civil rights" grievances, they called them "human rights" grievances. "Civil rights" are within the jurisdiction of the government where they are involved. But "human rights" is part of the charter of the United Nations.

All the nations that signed the charter of the UN came up with the Declaration of Human Rights and anyone who classifies his grievances under the label of "human rights" violations, those grievances can then be brought into the United Nations and be discussed by people all over the world. For as long as you call it "civil rights" your only allies can be the people in the next community, many of whom are responsible for your grievance. But when you call it "human rights" it becomes international. And then you can take your troubles to the World Court. You can take them before the world. And anybody anywhere on this earth can become your ally.

So one of the first steps that we became involved in, those of us who got into the Organization of Afro-American Unity, was to come up with a program that would make our grievances international and make the world see that our problem was no longer a Negro problem or an American problem but a human problem. A problem for humanity. And a problem which should be attacked by all elements of humanity. A problem that was so complex that it was impossible for Uncle Sam to solve it himself and therefore we want to get into a body or conference with people who are in such positions that they can help us get some kind of adjustment for this situation before it gets so explosive that no one can handle it.



Thank you. [*Applause*]

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