

COVERAGE IN SIX NEW YORK
DAILY NEWSPAPERS OF MALCOLM X AND
HIS BLACK NATIONALIST MOVEMENT:
A STUDY

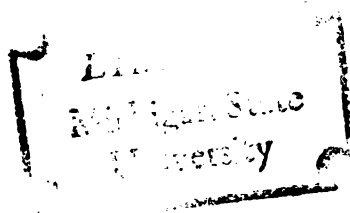
Thesis for the Degree of M. A.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
JON A. ROOSENRAAD
1968

585915

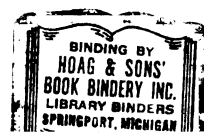


3 1293 10278 4794

L



100-107



PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE
DEC 05 1994 335	APR 25 2005	
DEC 03 1994	DEC 28 1994	
MAY 13 1998 138	ILL# 168281728	
DEC 4 1994	OCT 10 2016	
MAY 03 2001 04230		
MAY 18 2004		
MAR 04 2009		

ABSTRACT

COVERAGE IN SIX NEW YORK DAILY NEWSPAPERS OF MALCOLM X AND HIS BLACK NATIONALIST MOVEMENT: A STUDY

by Jon A. Roosenraad

This study is the result of the writer's interest in Malcolm X, a militant black man who gained fame as a minister for the separatist Black Muslim religious sect and who eventually broke away to form his own black nationalist group. Malcolm X's bitter denunciation of the white man in the United States, and his calls for a completely separate black society, made him one of the first militant black leaders. [Early in 1964, however, Malcolm X broke from the Black Muslims to form his own black organization; and during the following year his thinking was to undergo many changes concerning the value of the black separatist program that he had previously preached. This change, not realized in the press at the time and only slightly noted in writings about Malcolm X today, removed Malcolm from the radical fringe of the Muslims and placed him in a position that might have made him the leading militant black spokesman today if assassins' bullets had not struck him down in February, 1965.

The questions that motivated the study were: How did the nation's newspapers react to Malcolm X, who was regarded as one of the foremost "hate mongers" by most whites and many "moderate" blacks? How did newspapers react to Malcolm's break and change in views?

Because of the length of Malcolm X's career as an "angry" black spokesman (ten years) it has been necessary to select one important period on which to concentrate. The period selected is the fifteen-month span in which Malcolm X, silenced by the Black Muslims, broke away to form his own group, and changed many of his views on the race situation. This span was not the high point of Malcolm X's life--the two-or three-year period previous was, when, as the principal Black Muslim speaker, he toured the country speaking in various cities and on college campuses. But this span was the most important so far as Malcolm X's personal philosophy is concerned.

It has also been necessary to select a limited number of newspapers for the study. Since Malcolm X was the Black Muslim leader in New York City and because he based his own black group there, the newspapers selected are the six New York daily newspapers that published during that span--the Times, Daily News, Post, Herald Tribune, Journal-American, and World-Telegram & Sun. The latter three are now defunct. The papers are compared with each

other, not against a control paper, although the Times could be considered such a control because of its reputation for fairness and thoroughness.

The study itself has three major divisions: the introduction, the examination of the coverage, and the writer's conclusions. The introduction summarizes Malcolm's life from birth until he was assassinated on February 21, 1965. The coverage is studied in chronological order beginning in December, 1963. The coverage has been broken down into three sections: the break, December, 1963-March, 1964; the movement, April, 1964-February 20, 1965, and the assassination, February 21, 1965-March 1, 1965.

The study found that the press of New York City did not fairly report the apparent change in the thinking and views of Malcolm X after he broke from the Black Muslims. Although two of the newspapers noted this change, they continued to treat him as only a "hate monger" and not as a black spokesman who, because he was militant, had something of importance to say. They treated him as a rival to the Black Muslims, not as a spokesman for one sector of the civil rights movement. When Malcolm X did not make news by attacking the "blue-eyed devils," or by being in conflict with the Muslims, he was generally ignored by the newspapers. Only one of the newspapers, the Times, gave Malcolm X continuous coverage of his activities during the entire fifteen-month period. The lack of

coverage by the press of this first advocate of black militancy may have been one reason for the surprise and shock on the part of the white-owned press two years later when men like H. Rap Brown and Stokley Carmichael gained such apparent large support in the black ghettos of America. The study's final conclusion is that if the press had given more and fairer coverage to Malcolm X during the last year of his life, much of the confusion and mistrust of today's black militants might have been avoided.

.

COVERAGE IN SIX NEW YORK DAILY NEWSPAPERS
OF MALCOLM X AND HIS BLACK NATIONALIST
MOVEMENT: A STUDY

By

Jon A. Roosenraad

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

School of Journalism

1968

Accepted by the faculty of the School of Journalism,
College of Communication Arts, Michigan State University,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master
of Arts degree.

W. Cameron Meyers
Director of Thesis

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I should like to give special expression of thanks to the following persons for their help in the completion of this thesis:

To Dr. W. Cameron Meyers, associate professor of journalism, who has been a teacher, inspiration, adviser, and critic, and more than anything else, a friend; to Professor Frank B. Senger, chairman, School of Journalism, Michigan State University, whose interest and generosity made possible the completion of this thesis.

To my wife, Margaret, who helped me so much during our first year of marriage with her never ending supply of moral encouragement; and to my parents, who gave me the encouragement long ago to work for this degree.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
THE COVERAGE	26
The Break	26
The Movement	39
The Assassination	52
CONCLUSIONS	82
BIBLIOGRAPHY	89

INTRODUCTION

One day, in 1948, after I had been transferred to Concord Prison [Massachusetts], my brother Philbert, who was forever joining something, wrote me this time that he had discovered the "natural religion for the black man." He belonged now, he said, to something called "the Nation of Islam."¹

With this statement, Malcolm Little, later to assume the name Malcolm X, described in his Autobiography how he first learned of the organization known as the Black Muslims, an organization that would bring him both fame and death. Malcolm X was a remarkable man; he had a sharp mind and the ability to translate his thoughts into verbal expressions that would stir great emotions, either favorable or unfavorable, in those who heard him.

"He is truly intractable--Malcolm X--absolutely dedicated, self-assured, self-principled, with that great energy . . . the true revolutionary," wrote George Plimpton, editor for The Paris Review and Horizon, in reporting how Malcolm had converted the newly crowned heavyweight boxing champion, Cassius Clay, to the Black Muslim movement.²

¹Malcolm X [Little], Autobiography of Malcolm X, assist. by Alex Haley, intro. by M. S. Handler, epilogue by Alex Haley (New York: Grove Press, 1965), p. 153.

²George Plimpton, "Miami Notebook: Cassius Clay and Malcolm X," Harper's, CCXXVIII, 1369 (June, 1964), 57.

Reviewing Malcolm X's Autobiography in the Saturday Review, staff writer Emile Capouya wrote of him:

It has taken me a long time, but I begin to see why many Negro intellectuals, and radicals black and white, were so impressed by him, applauded his intransigence while he was alive, and felt personally diminished by his death.³

Malcolm X was born May 19, 1925, in Omaha, Nebraska. His father was the Reverend Earl Little, a Baptist minister and organizer for Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, a group advocating a zionistic movement of American black people to a state of their own in Africa and eventually the "liberation" of all of Africa. Malcolm's mother was born in the British West Indies, an illegitimate child that Malcolm claimed resulted from her mother having been raped by a white man.⁴

From Omaha, the Littles moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1926 and then to Lansing, Michigan, in 1928. A year later, the house the family lived in was destroyed by fire, and Malcolm recalls:

My father had shouted and shot at the two white men who had set fire and were running away. . . . The white police and firemen came and stood around watching as the house burned down to the ground. My father prevailed on some friends to clothe and house

³Emile Capouya, "A Brief Return From Mecca," Saturday Review, Nov. 20, 1965, p. 42.

⁴Malcolm X, Autobiography, p. 2.

us temporarily; then he moved us into another house on the outskirts of East Lansing. In those days Negroes weren't allowed after dark in East Lansing proper.⁵

The family moved from East Lansing to a house two miles outside of Lansing on its southwest side. Malcolm attended Pleasant Grove School, now part of the Lansing Public School District, but at that time separate.

It was two miles outside the city limits, and I guess there was no problem about our attending because we were the only Negroes in the area. In those days white people in the North usually would "adopt" just a few Negroes; they didn't see them as any threat.⁶

Malcolm's father died in Lansing in 1931. "Negroes in Lansing have always whispered that he was attacked, and then laid across some tracks for a streetcar to run over him," Malcolm wrote in Autobiography.⁷ His mother was committed to Kalamazoo State Hospital in 1937, and Malcolm and his brothers and sisters were made wards of the court.⁸ Malcolm was sent to a detention home in Mason, the county seat of Ingham County, in which Lansing is situated. He recalls that while attending Mason Junior High School his thoughts on the race situation were on how to act "white":

In the second semester of the seventh grade, I was elected class president. . . . And I was proud;

⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

⁶ Ibid., p. 8.

⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

⁸ Ibid., p. 21. The children were Wilfred, Hilda, Philbert, Reginald, Yvonne, Wesley, and Robert.

I'm not going to say I wasn't. In fact, by then, I didn't really have much feeling about being Negro, because I was trying so hard, in every way I could, to be white.⁹

In the summer of 1940, Malcolm visited his half-sister, Ella, who lived in Boston. "I continued to think about all that I had seen in Boston, and about the way I had felt there. I know now that it was the sense of being a real part of a mass of my own kind," Malcolm wrote.¹⁰ The next summer he left Mason and went to Boston. His school days were over, and he earned his living as a shoe-shine boy.

I didn't want to disappoint or upset Ella, but despite her advice, I began going down into the town ghetto section. That world of grocery stores, walk-up flats, cheap restaurants, poolrooms, bars, storefront churches, and pawnshops seemed to hold a natural lure for me. . . . I had never tasted a sip of liquor, never smoked a cigarette, and here I saw little black children, ten and twelve years old, shooting craps, playing cards, fighting, getting grown-ups to put a penny or a nickel on their number for them, things like that.¹¹

Malcolm bought a zoot suit, a flashy suit with knee-length coat, square shoulders, and trousers reaching to the armpits, had his hair "conked,"¹² and started

⁹ Ibid., p. 31.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 35.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 43.

¹² Ibid., p. 54. "Conked" means to have one's hair straightened by a process of heat and lye. Malcolm wrote in his Autobiography that "this was my first really big step toward self-degradation: when I endured all of that pain, literally burning my flesh, to have it look like a white man's hair."

"moving up," by working at dances where such big names as Count Basie and Duke Ellington played, and by becoming a go-between for prostitutes at the dances.¹³

Malcolm left Boston in early 1942 for New York City, which he found enchanting: "New York--Harlem--had just about narcotized me. . . . All of it was Lansing's West Side or Roxbury's South End magnified a thousand times."¹⁴ He worked on a railroad as a dining car-club car waiter. During the period 1943 to 1945 he had left the railroad and relied on "pimping, selling reefers, gambling, and robberies for a living"; and he also began using narcotics. He returned to Boston early in 1946, but he was soon arrested in February for robbing a jewelry store. He was sent to Charlestown State Prison in Massachusetts with a ten-year sentence.¹⁵

It was in prison that Malcolm was exposed to the teachings of Elijah Muhammad and the Black Muslims. The first contact was the letter from his brother, Philbert, in 1948, when he was in Concord Prison.

I began to receive at least two letters everyday from my brothers and sisters in Detroit. . . . They were all Muslims, followers of a man they described to me as "The Honorable Elijah Muhammad," a small,

¹³Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 76-77.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 108-109, 132.

gentle man, whom they sometimes referred to as "The Messenger of Allah." All of them urged me to "accept the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad."¹⁶

The Black Muslim movement had begun in 1930 in Detroit by W. D. Fard, also known as Farrad Muhammad, who taught the religion of Islam and the teachings of the Holy Quran.¹⁷

At first the "prophet," as he came to be known, confined his teachings to a recitation of his experience in foreign lands, admonitions against certain foods and suggestions for improving his listener's physical health. . . . Eventually the stranger's teachings took the form of increasingly bitter denouncements against the white race.¹⁸

Soon his converts formed the first Temple of Islam in Detroit. One of his earliest officers was Elijah Poole, later changed to Elijah Muhammad, an immigrant to Detroit from Georgia in the 1920's. Poole received the new name because each member was required to ask for his "original" (Islamic) name instead of the "slave name" given his ancestors. Elijah was named minister of Islam early in 1934, and in June of that year the "prophet" disappeared. The movement slowed down during the late 1930's and 1940's,

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 161.

¹⁷ The Holy Quran of classical Islam, used by the Muslims, should not be confused with the Holy Koran, which contains the teachings of the Prophet Mohammad, along with various other esoteric materials.

¹⁸ Charles Eric Lincoln, The Black Muslims in America (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), pp. 10-11.

but during the 1950's it began to revive. This was also the time Malcolm X began to take an active role in its leadership.¹⁹

The Black Muslims demand total separation of the races--economically, politically, and socially. They offer the lure of personal rebirth. Only after one attends a series of lectures on Islam can he ask to have his name changed. Most converts are given the last name "X." The Muslims reach the black masses in the metropolitan areas through recruitment speeches and rallies, black-owned newspapers, and their own newspaper, Muhammad Speaks.²⁰

Interested in the movement, Malcolm wrote Elijah Muhammad, and he began receiving letters and literature about it. At the same time, he had a growing interest in words--in reading them in books and in knowing how to use them on paper. Having been transferred to Norfolk County, Massachusetts, Prison Colony, he had access to an "out-standing library."²¹ Malcolm recalls in his Autobiography:

I became increasingly frustrated at not being able to express what I wanted to convey in letters that I wrote, especially those to Mr. Elijah Muhammad. . . . I spent two days just riffling uncertainly through a dictionary's pages. . . . Finally, just to start some kind of action, I began copying.²²

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 14-15.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 14.

²¹ Malcolm X, Autobiography, p. 157.

²² Ibid., p. 172.

Malcolm also read, mostly history books, especially those with emphasis on the black man's history. "I never will forget how shocked I was when I began reading about slavery's total horror."²³

Malcolm was released on parole in the spring of 1952 and his sister Hilda had stressed that, although "I felt I understood Elijah Muhammad's teachings, I had much to learn and I ought to come to Detroit and become a member."²⁴ Malcolm first decided to become a Muslim minister during a conversation with Muhammad:

The address of Temple Number One was 1470 Frederick Street. The first temple to be formed, back in 1931, by Master W. D. Fard, was formed in Detroit. . . . I thought it outrageous that our small temple still had some empty seats. During a conversational lull, I asked Mr. Muhammad how many Muslims were supposed to be in Temple Number One.

He said, "There are supposed to be thousands."

"Yes sir," I said. "Sir, what is your opinion of the best way of getting thousands here?"

"Go after the young people," he said. "Once you get them, the older ones will follow through shame."

I made up my mind that we were going to follow that advice.²⁵

In the summer of 1953 Malcolm was named assistant minister of Detroit Temple Number One. "Everyday after work, I walked, 'fishing' for potential converts in the Detroit black ghetto."²⁶ During the last half of 1953

²³ Ibid., p. 175.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 191.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 197-198.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 201.

and the first half of 1954, Malcolm traveled around the eastern part of the United States, preaching and recruiting in Boston, Philadelphia, and especially in New York's Harlem. [Malcolm recalls that]

the next month [April, 1954], because of those Boston and Philadelphia successes, Mr. Muhammad appointed me to be the minister of Temple Seven--in vital New York City. I can't start to describe for you my welter of emotions. For Mr. Muhammad's teachings really to resurrect American black people, Islam obviously had to grow, to grow very big. And nowhere in America was such a single temple potential available as in New York's five boroughs. They contained over a million black people.²⁷

[Coverage by the mass media contributed more than any other means to expose Malcolm's teachings and personal attraction to the people of New York City and the United States.] He appeared on a television show with newsman Mike Wallace and writer Louis Lomax entitled "The Hate That Hate Produced" for "Newsbeat" on WNTA-TV in New York City on July 10, 1959. This was the first real exposure of the Muslims to a New York audience.²⁸ The television show was only the start for the Muslims as other press and magazine coverage further reported the story of the movement in 1959 and 1960. [Charles Eric Lincoln, formerly of Clark University in Atlanta, Georgia, submitted a

²⁷Ibid., p. 215.

²⁸Ibid., p. 226.

doctoral dissertation on the Black Muslims to Boston University, and it was later published in 1961.²⁹ Malcolm notes:

Dr. Lincoln's book was titled The Black Muslims in America. The press snatched at the name. "Black Muslims" was in all the book reviews, which quoted from the book only what was critical of us, and generally praised Dr. Lincoln's writing.³⁰

Malcolm X became a popular college and university speaker, explaining his views to thousands of young minds, mostly white. "I believe that what had generated such college popularity for me was Dr. Lincoln's book. It had been made required reading in numerous college courses."³¹ But Malcolm's popularity also had its bad consequences, as Malcolm recounts:

Mr. Muhammad evidenced the depth of his trust in me. . . . "Brother Malcolm, I want you to become well known," Mr. Muhammad told me one day. "Because if you are well known, it will make me better known," he went on. "But, Brother Malcolm, there is something you need to know. You will grow to be hated when you

²⁹Previously cited book by Charles Eric Lincoln.

³⁰Malcolm X, Autobiography, p. 247. The book did indeed attract generally favorable reviews, including one by psychologist Kenneth B. Clark, who wrote: "As an objective study of a social phenomenon this book is outstanding" and "it is a dispassionate and thorough study of the history, ideology, organizational structure, methods, and techniques of the Black Muslims." [Kenneth B. Clark, "Needed: Antidote to Hatred," Saturday Review, May 13, 1961, p. 23.]

³¹Ibid., p. 248.

become well known. Because usually people get jealous of public figures." Nothing that Mr. Muhammad ever said to me was more prophetic.³²

The following are excerpts from three such college speeches:

Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, November 11, 1960:

Mr. Muhammad is teaching that the religion of Islam is the only solution to the problems confronting our people here in America, but he also warns us that it is even more important for us to know the base or foundation of that which we must build upon tomorrow.

.
God has come to close out the entire Old World. . .
. . . the Old World in which for the past 6,000 years practically the entire earth has been divided, conquered, colonized, ruled, enslaved, oppressed, and exploited by the Caucasian Race [Emphasis Malcolm's].

.
Our people have been oppressed and exploited here in America for 400 years, and now with Mr. Muhammad we can leave this wicked land of bondage, but our former slave master whites is yet opposing his efforts and is unjustly persecuting his followers.³³

Queens College, New York City, May 24, 1961:

Mr. Elijah Muhammad is our Divine Leader and Teacher here in America. He believes in and obeys God 100 per cent and is teaching and working among us to fulfill God's Divine Purpose. What is this purpose? God's purpose today (just as it was in biblical days) is the complete separation of the so-called Negroes from their slave master. . . . as the bible says concerning today: "Let every man be under his own vine and fig tree." [Emphasis Malcolm's].³⁴

³²Malcolm X was assassinated on February 21, 1965, and two of the three men convicted of his murder once belonged to the Muslims, although no direct connection between the sect and the act was established.

³³Louis Lomax, When the Word Is Given; A Report on Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X, and the Black Muslim World (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1963), pp. 116-118.

³⁴Ibid., p. 149.

Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, April 15, 1962:

The Western World is sick. America is sick . . . but the Negro in America is the sickest of them all. The sickening condition of the Negro in America is infecting Uncle Sam's entire body and endangering the security and future of the whole Western World. Mr. Muhammad says that only after the American Negro's condition is "corrected" will Uncle Sam's health improve . . . for only then will Uncle Sam look "healthy" in the inquiring eyes of the fast-awakening dark world.³⁵

In Malcolm's Autobiography, he notes a jealousy on the part of other Muslim officials because of his success on speaking tours:

As far back as 1961, when Mr. Muhammad's illness took that turn for the worse, I had heard chance negative remarks concerning me. I had heard veiled implications. I had noticed other little evidences of the envy and the jealousy which Mr. Muhammad had prophesied. For example, it was being said that "Minister Malcolm is trying to take over the Nation," and it was being said that I was "taking credit" for Mr. Muhammad's teaching, it was being said that I was trying to "build an empire" for myself.³⁶

But it was not until early in 1963 that Malcolm's affection; esteem, and devotion for the Muslim leader, Elijah Muhammad, began to lessen. A story broke, first in Muslim circles and then in the nation's press, of Muhammad's relationships with his personal secretaries. In July, 1963, two of the former secretaries filed paternity

³⁵ Ibid., p. 160.

³⁶ Malcolm X, Autobiography, p. 290.

suits against Muhammad, charging he had fathered four of their children. Malcolm noted publicly that "any Muslim guilty of adultery was summarily ousted in disgrace."³⁷

The first public break between Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad came on December 4, 1963, apparently for remarks Malcolm had made concerning the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963. "Within hours after the assassination, . . . every Muslim minister was ordered to make no remarks at all concerning the assassination."³⁸ Malcolm delivered an already-scheduled speech on Sunday, November 24, entitled "God's Judgment of White America." Malcolm later recalled:

It was on the theme, familiar to me, of "as you sow, so shall you reap," or how hypocritical American white man was reaping what he had sowed.

The question-and-answer period opened, I suppose inevitably, with someone asking me, "What do you think about President Kennedy's assassination? What is your opinion?"

Without a second thought, I said what I honestly felt--that it was, as I saw it, a case of "the chickens coming home to roost." I said that the hate in white men had not stopped with the killing of defenseless black people, but that hate, allowed to spread unchecked, finally had struck down the country's Chief of State.³⁹

Malcolm was "silenced" for ninety days on December 4 by Elijah Muhammad. This silencing period led Malcolm to re-evaluate his role as a Muslim and in the Black Muslim organization. He notes:

³⁷ Ibid., p. 295.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 300.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 301.

I felt a challenge to plan, and build, an organization that could help to cure the black man in North America of the sickness which has kept him under the white man's heel.

Substantially, as I saw it, the organization I hoped to build would differ from the Nation of Islam in that it would embrace all faiths of black men, and it would carry in to practice what the Nation of Islam had only preached.⁴⁰

On Sunday, March 6, 1964, Malcolm X broke away from the Black Muslims and Elijah Muhammad. He said,

I am going to organize and head a new mosque in New York City known as the Muslim Mosque, Incorporated. This will give us a religious base, and the spiritual force necessary to rid our people of the vices that destroy the moral fiber of our community.

I am prepared to cooperate in local civil rights actions in the South and elsewhere and shall do so because every campaign for specific objectives can only heighten the political consciousness of the Negroes and intensify their identification against white society.⁴¹

On March 12, he held a formal press conference in New York City to explain his new position in greater detail. In an opening statement two basic changes in his position were made:

1. Previously, Malcolm and the Muslims had rejected any cooperation with the more "moderate" black organizations. He now said, "I'm not out to fight other

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 314-316.

⁴¹New York Times, March 9, 1964, p. 1.

Negro leaders or organizations. We must find a common approach, a common solution."⁴²

2. Previously, Malcolm had advocated the Muslim's position of complete separation of the races and a black state in Africa or America. As a Black Muslim, he had equated "black nationalism" and "separation." In the press statement, however, he differentiated the two concepts, defining black nationalism in such a way as to include non-separatists also. In the final months of his life his thinking would undergo further changes in his views on black nationalism.⁴³

Four nationally-circulated magazines recorded this split as follows:

U. S. News & World Report said Malcolm's statements about black nationalism only served to "intensify Negroes' identification against white society."⁴⁴

Newsweek saw a different picture, however, noting that while the Muslims had "stifled their own growth partly by not working hard enough for more urgent goals, he

⁴²George Breitman (ed.), Malcolm X Speaks; Selected Speeches and Statements (New York: Grove Press, 1965), pp. 18-19.

⁴³Ibid., p. 19.

⁴⁴"Brother Malcolm: His Theme Now Is Violence," U. S. News & World Report, March 23, 1964, p. 19.

[Malcolm] now pumps for better food, clothing, housing, education, and jobs right now"⁴⁵ [*Italics Newsweek's*].

Life said that "of far greater impact on Negro civil rights leadership than the Muslim split itself was Malcolm's surprise decision to join the civil rights fight this summer--and even try to lead it."⁴⁶

Ebony, with a circulation predominately among blacks, noted that "purged from the number two spot he [Malcolm] used to occupy in the Black Muslim hierarchy, he now is reaching for higher stakes--participation in the Negro revolt."⁴⁷

Ebony also commented after the break that "only one thing is clear: neither the Black Muslim movement without him, nor the rights movement with him will ever be the same." Indeed, this certainly was the case, for the Muslims, Malcolm's Harlem following, nor Malcolm himself were ever the same again.⁴⁸)

Malcolm's new organization failed to attain the strength of his Black Muslim following from Temple Number Seven. This was despite predictions at the time of his

⁴⁵"Malcolm's Brand X," Newsweek, March 23, 1964, p. 32.

⁴⁶"The Ominous Malcolm X Exits From the Muslims," Life, March 20, 1964, p. 40.

⁴⁷Hans J. Massaquoi, "Mystery of Malcolm X," Ebony, Sept. 1964, p. 39.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 46.

split from the Black Muslims that because of his powerful speaking ability and previous success in Harlem he would have a strong following and would be able to recruit members away from the Black Muslims.⁴⁹ Yet the New York Times estimated only 400 followers at the time of his break and only 200 "hangers on" and forty hard-core members at his assassination in February, 1965.⁵⁰

Malcolm never was the same either, especially in his views on the black struggle for a better standard of living, on the white race, and on the Black Muslims. [] Soon after he formed his new organization, he left on a trip to visit the Middle East and Northern Africa--Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Ghana, Morocco, and Algeria. He made the pilgrimage to Mecca, which entitled him to use the name "El Haji" as part of his name; and he became known in the Moslem world thereafter as "El-Haji Malik El Shabazz."⁵¹ Besides consolidating his relations with orthodox Moslem leaders, he met with students, journalists, members of parliaments, ambassadors, and government leaders. Malcolm recalls in his Autobiography that:

My pilgrimage broadened my scope. It blessed me with a new insight. In two weeks in the Holy Land,

⁴⁹ Life, March 20, 1964, p. 40.

⁵⁰ New York Times, Feb. 25, 1965, p. 1.

⁵¹ Breitman, p. 58. "Malik E. Shabazz" was his official Islamic name.

I saw what I never had seen in thirty-nine years here in America. I saw all races, all colors--blue-eyed blondes to black-skinned Africans--in true brotherhood.⁵²

After returning to the United States, Malcolm was questioned about his apparent change in attitudes concerning white people, especially as to their value in helping black people gain a better life. He said,

Travel broadens one's scope. Any time you do any traveling, your scope will be broadened. . . . We will work with anyone, with any group, no matter what their color is, as long as they are genuinely interested in taking the type of steps necessary to bring an end to the injustices that black people in this country are afflicted by.⁵³

Seeking to build a broader, non-religious movement to promote black unity and work for improved conditions, Malcolm changed the name of his old Muslim Mosque, Incorporated, to the Organization of Afro-American Unity on June 28, 1964. His new group, however, was still plagued by lack of support among the black people of New York City. At an address that June 28, there were approximately 600 in the audience, while there were an estimated 6,000 at a Black Muslim rally with Elijah Muhammad that same day.⁵⁴

The organization was also to help build stronger ties with African nations. Malcolm said, "You can't understand what is going on in Mississippi if you don't understand

⁵²Malcolm X, Autobiography, p. 363.

⁵³Breitman, p. 21.

⁵⁴New York Times, June 29, 1964, p. 1.

what is going on in the Congo."⁵⁵ It was through this broader approach that he attempted to persuade African nations to bring action in the United Nations against the United States for its treatment of its black citizens. His attempt failed.

But as Malcolm's extreme racist views against white people were changing, so were his views on the importance of black nationalism, or black unity, as the best way to improve the lot of the black man in the United States. A few of the nation's publications, upon looking back at the career of Malcolm X after his death, noted this change. In an article written by Dr. Charles Eric Lincoln for Christian Century, the author observed that

the return of Malcolm X from his Afro-Asian junket was eyed with genuine apprehension by popular Negro leadership and with jubilant expectation by the black nationalist fringe. . . . Some Negro leaders thought they saw signs of a "constructive change" in his attitude towards racial goals and the proper techniques of attaining them.⁵⁶

Nation, in assessing this period in its review of the Autobiography, commented "he was talking integration now, under the banner of True Islam. Whites took up his time with interminable discussions of religious and ethical

⁵⁵Breitman, p. 125.

⁵⁶Charles Eric Lincoln, "The Meaning of Malcolm X," Christian Century, LXXXII, 14 (April 7, 1965), 431.

abstractions."⁵⁷ And Ebony recalled that Malcolm had "said it was possible for whites and Negroes to get along" and he had "dropped the Black Muslim cry of complete segregation and 'some land of our own.'"⁵⁸

But if Malcolm's views had changed on his approach to the racial problem in the United States, so had his views on the Black Muslims and his safety in New York City. He said,

Every morning when I wake up, now, I regard it as having another borrowed day. In any city, wherever I go, making speeches, holding meetings of my organization, or attending to other business, black men are watching every move I make, awaiting their chance to kill me. . . . Anyone who chooses not to believe what I am saying does not know the Muslims in the Nation.⁵⁹

Alex Haley, in his epilogue to the Malcolm X Autobiography that he had assisted with, wrote that

the general feeling among Harlemites, non-Muslims with whom I talked, was that Malcolm X had been powerful and influential enough a minister that eventually he would split the mosque membership into two hostile camps, and that in New York City, at least, Elijah Muhammad's unquestioned rule would be ended.⁶⁰

This was not quite the case as Malcolm did not end Muhammad's rule in New York City. But he did split the Muslim-militant black population into two hostile camps.

⁵⁷"Malcolm X," Nation, CC, 10 (May 8, 1965), 338.

⁵⁸"Violence Versus Non-Violence," Ebony, April, 1965, p. 168.

⁵⁹Malcolm X, Autobiography, p. 381.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 410.

"Malcolm X for some reason suddenly began to deliver a spat of attacks against Elijah Muhammad, making bitter accusations of 'religious fakery' and 'immorality.'" And the Muslims threatened him, and returned the accusations⁶¹

Malcolm's house in the Queens section of New York City was firebombed on Sunday, February 14, 1965. The building had been in a prolonged dispute over its ownership--the Black Muslims claimed they still owned it and had tried to force Malcolm out through court action; Malcolm said it was a gift to him from his followers when he had been a Muslim minister. A gasoline fire bomb was thrown through the front window early that morning, forcing Malcolm and his family to flee the premises. No one was injured. During the ensuing week Malcolm and the Black Muslims accused each other of starting the blaze, the Muslims charging that Malcolm had started the fire so that he could fix the blame on them.⁶²

Malcolm had planned one of his frequent Sunday speeches on February 21, at the Audubon Ballroom on 116th Street, between Broadway and Saint Nicholas Avenues. Just as Malcolm began to speak shortly after three o'clock,

⁶¹Ibid., p. 421. On Nov. 7, 1964, two New York Black Muslim leaders issued a statement saying, "if he doesn't [stop making charges against Muhammad], we will fight him as hard as he fights us." [New York Times, Nov. 8, 1964, p. 48.]

⁶²New York Times, Nov. 15-17, 1965.

"shots rang out. Men, women, and children ran for cover. They stretched out on the floor and ducked under tables."⁶³ Malcolm had been hit by a volley of bullets. News reporter Hugh Simpson, a black broadcaster of radio station WMCA, described the incident:

Then I heard this mumbled sound, I saw Malcolm hit with his hands still raised, then he fell back over the chairs behind him. Everybody was shouting. I saw one man firing a gun from under his coat behind me as I hit it [the floor], too. He was firing like he was in some Western, running backward toward the door and firing at the same time.⁶⁴

Malcolm was taken to Vanderbilt Clinic of Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, a block from the ballroom. He was pronounced dead by a physician at 3:15 P.M. Seven bullets had entered his body.⁶⁵

The first explanations of the slaying were that it was the work of Black Muslim assassins. Police said it "apparently had been the result of the Muslim-Malcolm feud."⁶⁶ Although no immediate link with the Muslims was established, early Tuesday morning, February 23, Muslim Mosque Number Seven, at 116th Street and Lenox Avenue, was firebombed and destroyed by the accompanying blaze.

⁶³Ibid., Feb. 22, 1965, p. 1.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 435.

⁶⁵New York Times, Feb. 22, 1965, p. 1.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 1.

The body of Malcolm X was viewed from February 23 until Friday, February 26, at the Unity Funeral Home, on Eighth Avenue at 116th Street, by more than 22,000 people.⁶⁷ The funeral service was held Saturday at Faith Temple Church of God in Christ on Amsterdam Avenue at 147th Street. Although Moslem law requires that a body must be buried within twenty-four hours after death, and that the coffin be closed during the service, neither law was observed at the request of Malcolm's widow. Despite the changes in the formal Moslem rites, however, Malcolm was given a Moslem funeral and was buried as "El-Haji Malik El-Shabazz--May 19, 1925-February 21, 1965."⁶⁸

Police later charged three black men with the murder of Malcolm X. Two of them were former Black Muslims who apparently had defected to Malcolm's group. Trial began January 20, 1966, and continued until March 10, 1966, when after twenty hours of deliberation, the three--Talmadge Hayer, twenty-three, Norman ThreeX Butler, twenty-seven, and Thomas FifteenX Johnson, thirty-one--were convicted of murder in the first degree and were sentenced to life terms in prison.⁶⁹

⁶⁷Ibid., Feb. 27, 1965, p. 10.

⁶⁸Ibid., Feb. 28, 1965, p. 1.

⁶⁹Ibid., March 11, 1966, p. 1.

Malcolm X, who had been raised in a world of violence, had been leader in a group that advocated violence, and he had died violently--despite apparent changes in his attitude toward the value of violence. His popularity had fostered renewed interest in the Black Muslims during the late 1950's and early 1960's. "The movement did not begin to gain any national attention until Malcolm X, then twenty-nine, was sent by Elijah Muhammad in 1954 to become leader of Harlem's Mosque Number Seven."⁷⁰ Although Malcolm had made the Muslims popular in New York City, his own black group never attained any sizable strength. "Malcolm himself was too busy talking and traveling to lead, he never attracted more than a few hundred hard-core followers to his group."⁷¹

Two quotations, both published in November, 1965, best summarize the life of Malcolm X. The first, in Nation, asserted that "Malcolm had known the white man's violence from infancy. . . . When Malcolm died, he was accused by the white press of having 'initiated violence.'"⁷² The second is by the editors of the New York Times:

⁷⁰ Ibid., Feb. 28, 1965, IV, p. 1.

⁷¹ "Death of a Desperado," Newsweek, March 8, 1965, p. 25.

⁷² Truman Nelson, "Delinquent's Progress," Nation, CCI, 15 (Nov. 8, 1965), 336.

It is probably fair to say that the majority of the public regards Malcolm X, . . . as a violence-preaching "Black Muslim" racial agitator who reaped his own bloody death. . . . There is, however, another view of Malcolm X--one that is increasingly prevalent among civil rights advocates--that with his death American Negroes lost their most able, articulate, and compelling spokesman.⁷³

⁷³New York Times, Nov. 5, 1965, p. 35.

THE COVERAGE

The Break: November, 1963, Through March, 1964.

There were seven daily newspapers in New York City in 1963, six of which published through March, 1965, the entire period of Malcolm X's black nationalist movement. The newspapers were the Daily News, a morning tabloid-size paper with a weekday circulation of 2,170,373 and a Sunday circulation of 3,102,285; the New York Times, a morning paper with a weekday circulation of 652,135 and a Sunday circulation of 1,355,614; the Journal-American, an afternoon newspaper with a weekday circulation of 538,057 and a Sunday circulation of 800,306; the World-Telegram & Sun, an afternoon paper with a weekday circulation of 403,348 and no Sunday edition; the New York Post, a tabloid-size afternoon paper with a weekday circulation of 329,523 and a weekend edition circulation of 251,119; and the Herald Tribune, a morning paper with a weekday circulation of 307,674 and a Sunday circulation of 385,268.¹ The other

¹1965 Editor and Publisher International Year Book, 45th edition (New York: Editor and Publisher, Co., Inc., 1965), pp. 195-196. These figures are from the Audit Bureau of Circulation for Sept. 30, 1964.

daily newspaper publishing in 1963 was the Daily Mirror, a tabloid-size morning paper that ceased publication on October 16, 1963.

The first public event that marked the split in the relationship between Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad was Malcolm's suspension for the remark he made about the assassination of President Kennedy. His later-famed "chickens coming home to roost" statement did not receive much coverage in the newspapers, as neither did his suspension as a Muslim minister three days later. Only the Times published this remark. On page twenty-one of the Times for December 2, a one-column headline read, "Malcolm X Scores United States and Kennedy; Likens Slaying to 'Chickens Coming Home to Roost.'" A one-column picture of Malcolm accompanied the story, a short account of Malcolm's speech and statement made the day before, and noted that the remark was in answer to a question and presented it in context of his complete statement about the white man's violence finally striking down the nation's Chief of State. The Times did not quote only the one controversial sentence.

News of Malcolm's suspension broke December 4 and only three of the newspapers, the Times, the Daily News, and the Post, published a report of it. On page twenty-two of the Times, a three-column headline read, "Malcolm X Silenced for Remarks on Assassination of Kennedy--Head of Muslims Suspends Second Most Powerful Figure in Movement."

The Times said the cause of the suspension was Malcolm's remark, but did note in the story that "many of his [Malcolm's] disciples have been saying recently, in fact, that Malcolm is exerting more influence than Mr. Muhammad himself." The Daily News ran a small, two-inch story under a one-column headline, "Suspend Malcolm for Slur on JFK."

The story, by the United Press International, a newsgathering agency, reported Malcolm's suspension as a Muslim minister for his remarks about Mr. Kennedy. It carried a Chicago dateline. No mention was made about the power struggle within the Black Muslims. The Post allotted almost an entire page to the suspension with a story beneath a large headline, "Muslims Face Split Over Ban on Malcolm X."

The story said the

suspension of Malcolm X, chief spokesman for the Black Muslims, for a post-assassination slur on President Kennedy, was seen today as the start of a struggle for control of the sect.

.
An internal fight for succession to the leadership of Elijah Muhammad, now sixty-six and ailing, could well tear the sect apart.

The story included the remark made by Malcolm X about the assassination, not covered earlier by the Post, and played up the possible split more than either the Times or Daily News.

The Times continued to point out other reasons for Malcolm's suspension in a follow-up story the next day, December 6. The story noted that "sources indicated that

the general feeling was that Malcolm had become 'so powerful' that he had emerged as a 'personality' rather than as a spokesman for the movement." This was under a one-column headline, "Malcolm Expected to be Replaced" on page twenty-seven.

The next coverage of Malcolm X occurred in late February, 1964, concerning the annual Black Muslim convention being held in Chicago. The main news that came out of the convention was the first rumor that Cassius Clay, who was to become the heavyweight boxing champion on February 27, was a Black Muslim. Each of the newspapers in the study, except the World-Telegram, carried this news. Only the Times and the Herald Tribune, however, published the convention's other "big story"--the power struggle. The Times, in a story on page thirty-nine under a one-column headline, "Malcolm X's Role Dividing Muslims," said:

A struggle for power is believed being waged by Malcolm, whose personality has been nationally identified with the Negro separationist movement, and second-echelon leaders of the Chicago headquarters who surround Elijah Muhammad, the absolute ruler of the movement.

.
Rumors have persisted that Mr. Muhammad's followers in Chicago used the remark to "cut Malcolm down to size." There is also a sharp division of opinion about the role the Muslims should play in the election year. Malcolm thinks the Muslims should take the offensive away from civil rights organizations.
.

It is known that he [Malcolm] feels that unless he is restored to his former activities, he may return to the national scene in a manner that would make his previous efforts pale by comparison.

The Herald Tribune noted in a page-two story on February 27 under a four-column headline, "Clay Is a Muslim: Muhammad," that Elijah Muhammad had made no statement or remark about Malcolm X at the convention and that Malcolm X did not attend. Although failing to report Malcolm's remark and suspension in December, the Herald Tribune reported that "Malcolm X, number two man nationally in the movement, was suspended in December following a slurring remark on President Kennedy's assassination. There was no hint when he would be reinstated."

The Times also noted on February 27 that Malcolm did not attend the convention; the story appeared on page twenty-three under a one-column headline, "Malcolm Absent as Muslims Meet--Power Struggle Is Believed Mounting in Movement." The Times reported February 28 that Clay was a Muslim, as did the Post. The Journal-American was the first New York newspaper to note Clay's ties with the Muslims, reporting this news in its February 26 issue as a "rumor" and confirming it the next day in a second story. The Daily News and World-Telegram stories concerned only Clay's announcement that he was a Muslim, and did not mention the power struggle.

The next news story concerning Malcolm X occurred March 1 when Clay came to New York to visit and Malcolm acted as his guide.² The Times reported the event in a brief story on page thirty-six of its March 2 edition under a two-column headline, "Clay Talks With Malcolm X Here"; and the story was accompanied by a two-column picture of the two men. The Journal-American ran a two-column picture of the two men on page twenty-two of its March 2 edition, but made no mention of Malcolm in the adjacent news story. The Herald Tribune published a four-column picture of the men on page twenty-four of its March 2 edition and said in its story that "shortly afterward [Clay's arrival] the Black Muslims leader, Malcolm X, whose own crown as New York leader of the movement was badly tarnished last December, showed up and was greeted by the champ."

The Daily News provided the most coverage of Clay and Malcolm, starting in its March 2 edition with a story under a headline, "Cassius In, Meets With Muslims," on page four. The story said "Cassius Marcellus Clay . . . paid a surprise visit to Harlem yesterday. After attracting a crowd of autograph-seeking kids, he went into a secret meeting with Black Muslim Malcolm X." A story March 6 about Cassius Clay called him a "follower of Malcolm X

²Malcolm X is generally credited with bringing Cassius Clay into the Muslim fold and converting him to the religion.

and a member of the Black Muslims." Apparently not thinking much of Clay's decision to follow Malcolm X, to join the Black Muslims, and to drop his last name and use the name "X," the Daily News criticized these actions in an editorial, "Don't Be an Assius, Cassius," printed March 7.

The Post had brief coverage of Clay's visit on its main sports page with the news angle that Clay had made statements that he might be moving to New York permanently, leaving his native Louisville, Kentucky. The story quoted Clay as saying, "Malcolm X got more requests for his autograph than I did, . . . He's the greatest." The World-Telegram had no coverage of Clay's New York visit, despite great coverage of his fight with Sonny Liston for the boxing title only one week earlier.

In a related story the next day, the Post carried another story on Clay's visit, playing up his possible role in a Muslim power struggle. The headline said, "Clay in Malcolm X's Corner in Black Muslim Power Fight." The Post said Malcolm could count on Clay's support if an internal struggle developed. It was the only newspaper in the study to report this news.

Malcolm X severed his association with the Muslims on Sunday, March 8. This news was covered in five of the newspapers the next day and in the sixth one March 10. The Journal-American ran a five-column headline on page four of its March 8 issue, "Malcolm X Bolts Muslims, Plans

Rival." The story blamed his break on the silencing following his Kennedy remark and on his failure to be praised at the convention recently held. The real reason--the internal power struggle--was hinted in a sentence reporting that "his bitterness against Muhammad was evident when he charged that the Black Muslim leader had prevented him from participating in civil rights battles in the South"; and in a side-bar story under the headline, "Malcolm X: A Study in Hatred," which was a brief report on his life that mentioned the power struggle going on among the black nationalists, and that many people thought Malcolm had been taking over the group.

The Post devoted its entire March 7 front page to a headline, "Malcolm X Bolts Muslims--Clay Stays," and two photographs of Malcolm X and Cassius Clay. The news story, on page three, played up that Clay said he would stick with the Muslims instead of Malcolm, as the Post had predicted earlier. The story said

Clay has been outspoken in his contempt of integrationist goals. But in branching out on his own, Malcolm X declared he was ready to "cooperate in local civil rights actions."

Although still avowing black nationalism, Malcolm X has promised to "join in the fight wherever Negroes ask for my help."

The Post also carried a column by Max Lerner on page thirty-nine. Entitled "White Devils?"; the column was Lerner's reaction to the Muslim success in recruiting new members. He said:

I can understand why many Negroes, in the depth of their bitterness about white injustice and white hypocrisy, should feel some sympathy. . . . But the new step to thrust the strength of the movement into national politics ought to make them take a second look.

Some day we shall all look back at this episode as one of the most grotesque of our confusing time. But meanwhile, unless we see what it means, it can work great destruction.

The Daily News provided only brief coverage of the break with a three-column headline on page six that read, "Malcolm X Quits the Muslims." [Malcolm was going to organize a "militant, Black Nationalist Party," the Daily News reported. He said the break was caused by jealousy in the movement of his success and the fact that the Muslims were "too narrowly sectarian and inhibited."

The Times ran its story under a one-column headline on page one of its March 9 edition that read, "Malcolm X Splits With Muhammad--Suspended Muslim Leader Plans Black Nationalist Political Movement." [The newspaper quoted Malcolm as saying he "remains a Muslim," but the main emphasis of the new movement will be black nationalism as a political concept and form of social action against oppressors." The story said Malcolm "asserted last night that the movement [Black Muslims] had 'gone as far as it can' because it was too narrowly sectarian and too inhibited," and quoted Malcolm as saying his movement "is going to be different now. I'm going to join in the fight wherever Negroes ask for my help, and I suspect my activities will

be on a greater and more intensive scale." The story said Malcolm had blamed the split on Muhammad's jealousy, on his being snubbed at the Muslim convention, and on the failure of Muhammad to answer letters Malcolm had written him about his suspension. He did not blame it on only his remark about Kennedy and his suspension, the Times said.

The Herald Tribune also played the story on page one of its March 9 edition under a two-column headline, "Malcolm X Breaks With Muhammad." The newspaper said

Malcolm X, Black Muslim leader who became the sect's leading spokesman, said last night he is forming his own Muslim group as a result of a break with the parent organization. . . . [The movement] would have black nationalism as a part of its philosophy.

The Herald Tribune was the only paper in the study to comment editorially on Malcolm's split. In an editorial March 10 entitled, "Elijah Muhammad's Mao," the Herald Tribune noted that it

is possible that Malcolm X finds it too vague and too remote, that he is seeking a shorter cut to power. He was suspended by Elijah Muhammad, allegedly for gloating over President Kennedy's assassination. There is evidence, however, that a subterranean contest for the succession is under way among the Black Muslims and that Malcolm X's departure is a part of it.

The World-Telegram used its "Radio and Television" column March 10 to report Malcolm's departure. Malcolm had appeared the day before on a television show, "Malcolm X and a Gospel of Violence," which was an interview with Malcolm X about his new movement. The World-Telegram commentary noted that "Malcolm X, who bolted the Black Muslim

movement to form his own 'black nationalist' party, said on television last night that 1964 will be more explosive racially than 1963." This was the paper's only story on Malcolm's break. Three days later, in its March 13 edition, the newspaper ran a story of Malcolm's March 12 speech in which he urged blacks to arm themselves and if they were attacked, to fight back. This was especially in reference to protest marches being staged in the South at the time and with the non-violent method of Dr. Martin Luther King, a black clergyman who deplored violence. The World-Telegram headline read, "Rights Leaders Criticize Malcolm X," and the news story reported that

civil rights leaders today denounce the call to arms issued by Malcolm X, the Black Muslim maverick who bolted the Negro's segregationist sect to form his own black nationalist party.

.
 Ex-convict Malcolm X yesterday urged Negroes to arm themselves with rifles and shot-guns in order to "fight back in self-defense."

In the same edition, on the next page, was a story on Elijah Muhammad's life released by United Features, a nationally syndicated news service. The story mentioned Clay's name change--the first time the paper had printed anything about it--but the story made no mention at all of Malcolm X.

The Times also reported Malcolm's "arms speech" on March 13 with a story on page twenty under a one-column headline, "Malcolm X Sees Rise in Violence--Says Negroes

Are Ready to Act in Self-Defense." The Times reported that "Malcolm urged Negroes to abandon the doctrine of non-violence in the civil rights struggle" and that he called for arming and gun clubs for blacks, but only for "self-defense." "The time has come for the American Negro to fight back in self-defense," the newspaper quoted him as saying. This was one of the few speeches in which Malcolm X used the word "Negro." The Times criticized the call for arms in an editorial the next day, March 14, stating "when he mocked the assassination of President Kennedy, he exposed himself to Negroes and whites as the irresponsible demagogue he is." In a story on page forty-six of the Times for March 15, the reaction of black leaders to Malcolm's new movement was given, and this statement was included: "Others think his popularity will exist only in relation to the amount of space and time the white man's newspapers and television networks spend on him."

In its Sunday edition, March 22, the Times ran a background story on the Black Muslim organization and the split between Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X. The Times said Malcolm's goals were personal independence in his actions, the establishment of self-defense units for blacks, and a broader nationalist appeal to his program. The story concluded that the conditions in the United States, not solely the personality and attraction of Malcolm X, would be the key to the success of the black nationalist movement.

On March 13 the Times had published a brief account of Malcolm's speech the preceeding day in which he repeated his call for arms, under a one-column headline, "Thousands in Harlem Cheer Malcolm X--'Ballots or Bullets' Program Urged by Black Muslim."

The Herald Tribune also reported both of Malcolm's "arms speeches," the first in its March 13 edition. On page nineteen, under a four-column headline, "Malcolm X-- A Cry of War and Peace," the paper said Malcolm's main points were self-defense clubs for blacks, the removal of "Uncle Tom" black politicians, and that his new organization was broader in scope than the Black Muslims and was aimed more at youth. The Herald Tribune, like the Times, published a special news feature on Malcolm X in its March 22 Sunday edition. Under a headline, "The Paradox That Is Malcolm X: All Charm and All Contradiction," the newspaper said Malcolm was "above all else, utterly charming. It is almost impossible, upon meeting him, to dislike him." The Herald Tribune pointed out the contradiction in his "arms call" and his "I am not advocating violence" stand, and said

it is impossible to take Malcolm X's word seriously-- unless you are willing to accept, at various times, both sides of every question. Sooner or later, he works both sides. . . . It is dangerous to dismiss Malcolm lightly. He is too eloquent, too effective at stating a situation--even though he offers no practical way out of the situation--to be ignored.

The Herald Tribune reported his other "arms speech" in its March 23 edition, as did the Times. The Post published nothing on either of these speeches.

The Movement: April, 1964, Through January, 1965.

The next ten months of Malcolm X's life were devoted to building or attempting to build, his black nationalist movement. The period was marked by two visits to Africa and the Middle East, various speeches to his New York following, and an unusual change in Malcolm X's view and thinking on race relations. The change occurred in May, 1964, during Malcolm's first trip abroad and his first trip to the Holy City of Mecca. The change involved a softening of Malcolm's attitude about the white men in general and their value to the black man's cause. Unfortunately, only one New York newspaper, the Times, reported this change. The Times reported in April that Malcolm still held on to the "white devil" view preached by the Black Muslims. In a story April 3, on page twenty-three, the Times quoted Malcolm as saying, "I do not say there are no sincere white people, but rather that I haven't met any." Apparently Malcolm met some on his visit to Mecca, for in the May 8 issue of the Times, on page one, a story under the headline, "Malcolm X Pleased by Whites' Attitude on Trip to Mecca," reported that Malcolm had written a letter to the Times saying he would return to

the United States with "new, positive insights on race relations." The story noted that "he said that for the first time in his life he felt no racial antagonism toward whites nor had he sensed any antagonism on their part against him." Malcolm also said in his letter he would be active in that summer's civil rights drive, a dramatic change from a statement, made only six days earlier in Lebanon, in which he attacked moderate civil rights leaders and which the Times ran in its May 2 edition under the headline, "Negro Moderation Decried by Malcolm X in Lebanon."

During the remainder of May, the Times published additional reports on Malcolm's racial view change, on his willingness to work with civil rights leaders, and on his attempts to establish stronger ties between African nations and black organizations in the United States. It was this last item only that two of the other five newspapers in the study carried a story about, the other three ignoring Malcolm X's travels abroad and the change in his racial attitudes.

The Times reported on May 13, under a one-column headline, "Malcolm X Feels 'At Home' in Africa," on page seventeen, that Malcolm's visits to African nations was solely to boost ties between the Africans and the American blacks. The story identified him as a black nationalist leader, not as a Black Muslim leader. On May 19, under a one-column headline, "Malcolm X Woos Two Rights Leaders--

Asks 'Forgiveness' for Past Remarks and Seeks Unity," the Times said Malcolm would end attacks on other civil rights groups and that he wanted "mutual cooperation." On May 22, the Times reported Malcolm's plan to have the African members of the United Nations bring charges against the United States for its treatment of its black citizens. The one-column headline read, "Malcolm Says He Is Backed Abroad-- Asserts United Nations Will Get Case on United States Negro This Year." On May 24, the Times again reported Malcolm's new view on the white man under the headline, "Malcolm Rejects Race Separation--Tells of 'Spiritual Rebirth' During Trip to Mideast."

The Daily News, in a story published May 13, played up Malcolm's United Nations plan, instead of reporting that he sought stronger ties with Africa, as the Times had. The headline read, "X Plugs for Help in United Nations," and the news account was carried on page two. The Herald Tribune reported Malcolm's United Nations plan on May 22, the same day as the Times did. Under a two-column headline, "Malcolm X Objective--African Aid for Negroes," the newspaper reported that Malcolm was seeking to join "numerous Negro civil rights groups of the nation in a united front in an effort to win support in the United Nations from the African nations." He was going to "bring 'the plight of Afro-Americans before the United Nations'."

The Post found a more interesting story concerning Malcolm X to report than his change of racial views on his African trip. In two stories, on May 8 and May 10, the newspaper attempted to associate a teenage "hate group" in Harlem with Malcolm X. The first story said "controversy raged today over the persistent reports of a teenage Harlem group of 'Blood Brothers' dedicated to physical violence against white people in the Negro community" and hinted that these young blacks were connected with Malcolm's new group. On May 10 the Post "exposed" the hate group, saying:

The real story of an anti-white Harlem group trained by dissident Muslims was obtained by the New York Post Saturday.

The gang consists of twenty to thirty teenagers seeking to win recognition from Malcolm X and other rebel leaders and the right to use the letter "X" instead of their surnames.

The story quoted an aide of Malcolm X, who denied any connection between the group and Malcolm's movement.

There were three events during June, 1964, that merited coverage by the newspapers in the study: a confrontation between six of Malcolm's men and some Black Muslims; a speech Malcolm made calling for black unity in New York; and a rally held by Black Muslim leader Elijah Muhammad. All of the newspapers covered the rally, five covered the confrontation, and only the Times reported the speech.

The confrontation occurred June 17 when six gun-carrying followers of Malcolm X were arrested outside a Black Muslim restaurant near Temple Number Seven in Harlem for illegal possession of the weapons. The Post ran the story in its editions for June 17 and four of the newspapers covered it June 18. The Post account, on page three under the headline, "Police Foil Muslim Clash; Seize Two Rifles," was a brief narrative of the confrontation, and labeled Malcolm X's men as "members of Malcolm X's Black Nationalist Movement."

The Times ran the story on page twenty-five under the headline, "Police on Alert Over Muslim Rift," and said Malcolm's men were at the restaurant to "counter-threaten" the Muslims, who Malcolm's men said had threatened Malcolm. The Daily News published the story on page thirty-two under the headline, "Malcolm X Gunnies Face Crowd," and also offered the "returned threat" explanation for the confrontation.

The Herald Tribune placed the story on page eight under the headline, "The Near-Battle of Black Muslims," and said the "tangled threats of the clash in the Black Muslim movement were woven into a pattern of violence yesterday." The clash was in retaliation because the Muslims had threatened Malcolm's life, the newspaper said, and that "Harlem sources said some of the tension might be

the beginning of a build up toward the appearance of Elijah Muhammad June 28." The newspaper still labeled Malcolm's movement as a part of the Black Muslims.

The World-Telegram ran a "second day" account of the incident on June 19 as part of a larger story about the threats on Malcolm's life. The headline, "Malcolm X: A Man Marked for Death," ran above the story that read:

The World-Telegram has learned of special police surveillance to protect him against assassination. Malcolm has said he has been targeted for assassination by June 29.

.
The clash between his followers and rival Black Muslims in Harlem two nights ago was just another incident in the bitter war that has developed between the groups. . . . Malcolm is quite sure the threats against his life are coming from the anti-white Black Muslims cult.

The story explained about Malcolm's remark and suspension, events the newspaper had not originally reported. The story was called an "exclusive" and apparently it was, for no other paper in the study carried a similar story. The accuracy of the story can be doubted, however, since it labeled Mrs. Ella Collins of Boston as Malcolm's sister instead of his half-sister, a minor mistake but one that shows this part of his life had not been checked accurately.

As a prelude to Elijah Muhammad's appearance in New York on June 28, the Times carried a story on Malcolm's June 26 speech calling for peace among the Muslim

organizations. The story called the groups "feuding Negro extremists," at least making a distinction between the Black Muslim movement and that of Malcolm's.

The Times account of the Muslim rally was carried on page one of its June 29 edition. A two-column headline read, "Elijah Muhammad Rallies His Followers in Harlem," and the story was accompanied by a two-column picture of Muhammad speaking. The Times said the meeting was aimed at offsetting the growing popularity of Malcolm's movement in Harlem, which was holding a similar meeting at the same time in another location. The Times estimated the crowd at the Muslim rally at 6,500, and at Malcolm's at 600.

The World-Telegram account was more generous with its estimates, reporting seven to ten thousand at the Muslim rally and 1,500 at Malcolm's. The story was carried on page five under a three-column headline, "Malcolm X Lauds Whites in Mississippi Rights Fight," and a three-column picture of the Muslim rally was printed with it. The story said:

Denouncing Black Muslim chief Elijah Muhammad as a "pie in the sky" leader, Malcolm X said today "those white students in Mississippi are doing more right now for the Negro's cause than Muhammad and all his followers combined."

The newspaper had no coverage of the Muslim rally other than the picture. The World-Telegram was the only newspaper in the study to place its main coverage on Malcolm's rally instead of that of the Muslims.

The Herald Tribune coverage was almost the opposite, placing all of its emphasis on Muhammad and nothing on Malcolm X. A six-column headline on page nineteen, "Black Muslim's Muhammad Returns to Harlem; Only 8,000 Greet Him," topped the story that read: "Elijah Muhammad, the leader of the Black Muslims, brought his message of racial segregation to Harlem yesterday and was greeted enthusiastically by about 8,000 Negroes."

Like the Herald Tribune, the Post also placed all of its emphasis on Elijah Muhammad, not even mentioning Malcolm's speech. The story played up Muhammad's call for unity among black nationalists, but noted that two followers of Malcolm had been beaten and kicked out of the Muslim rally. The story said "inside the armory, Elijah Muhammad proffered the olive branch to former follower Malcolm X-- but the Fruit of Islam Muslim security guards outside apparently didn't get the message."

The Daily News found space for only a small story on the two rallies and played up the beating incident that had received only passing mention in most of the other newspapers. The story appeared on page five and the four-column headline said, "Muslim Troopers Beat Two at Rally Scene."

More than any of the other newspapers, the Journal-American played up the "competition" that resulted from Malcolm and Muhammad holding rallies on the same day.

Almost as if Muhammad was the lesser of two evils, the newspaper proclaimed, "Black Muslim leader Elijah Muhammad emerged today as undisputed victor in his great power struggle with rebel Black Nationalist Malcolm X." The story, under a two-column headline, "Muhammad Here--Malcolm Where?", ran on page five of the June 29 edition and said Muhammad's visit had killed Malcolm's movement. The story said Malcolm appeared before a "sparse, almost disinterested audience" and quoted a person who had attended Malcolm's rally as saying "Malcolm is scared of Muhammad. . . . I think Malcolm is finished as a leader of the Negro people." The newspaper pointed out that only 600 people had attended Malcolm's meeting while 10,000 had attended Muhammad's. The Journal-American failed, as the other newspapers had, to point out that the Audubon Ballroom, where Malcolm held his meeting, accommodated only 600 people, while Muhammad's meeting was held in a much larger armory building in Harlem.³

The stories about the rallies were the last event concerning Malcolm X that was covered by all of the newspapers until his house was firebombed in February, 1965, seven months later. The Journal-American and the Post carried no stories about Malcolm until the bombing, the World-Telegram published three, the Daily News and Herald Tribune carried only one, and the Times had eight. Whether

³New York Times, March 3, 1964, p. 1.

Malcolm X was "finished as a leader of the Negro people," as the Journal-American had reported in its June 29 story did not matter; he was to five of the six New York newspapers.

The World-Telegram ran a lengthy story July 3 on the change in Malcolm X's racial view. This newspaper had no original coverage when he announced the change the previous May, but by its play of the United Press International news service story its readers certainly were aware of the change after July 3. The story ran on page three under a six-column headline, "Malcolm X, 'Angriest Muslim,' Changes Mind." The story said:

What has gone generally unnoticed is that this forceful and eloquent man has done a complete about face on the question of separation of the races. . . . [His message] is still a militant and even violent one. But the hate-all-whites doctrine that once marked his every word is no longer there. Malcolm X still hates. But his hate has shifted from the entire white race to the "white extremists." When Malcolm X left the Black Muslims, many followed him into what he called the Black Nationalist movement.

The Times carried three stories about Malcolm X during July, 1964, one also covered by two of the other newspapers. On July 10, on page twenty-six, the Times reported that Malcolm again had left the United States for a trip to Africa. The one-column headline read, "Malcolm X to Meet Leaders of Africa," and the newspaper said the purpose of the trip was to push again his call for United Nations action against the United States for its

treatment of its black people. On July 14, an Associated Press news service story with a Cairo, Egypt, dateline reported Malcolm's appeal to African nations for support of his proposed United Nations action. On July 21, the Times published an Associated Press story concerning Malcolm's reaction to the racial riots that had broken out in Harlem two days earlier. The Times headline said, "Malcolm X Lays Harlem Riot to 'Scare Tactics' of Police," and the story noted that Malcolm had blamed New York police and its commissioner, Michael J. Murphy, for harsh and unfair tactics against blacks.

The World-Telegram also carried this Associated Press story under the headline, "Malcolm X Blames 'Scare Tactics' of Cops for Outbreak," while the Daily News ran it under the headline, "Warning by Malcolm X."

The Times reported the activities of Malcolm X during the next few months, starting with an August 13 story on Malcolm's drive for United Nations action on the racial problem in the United States. The occasion was one of Malcolm's Sunday speeches at the Audubon Ballroom and the story stressed the United Nations angle. In a Times survey, published September 21, of the attitudes of whites in the United States, 82 per cent of those responding had heard of Malcolm X, but only 2 per cent approved of his work while 60 per cent did not. Only the late Dr. Martin Luther King and then-United State Representative Adam Clayton Powell were more widely known to whites than Malcolm X.

The Times published on September 22 a letter by Malcolm sent from Saudi Arabia. The Times said the content of the letter was published in full, and there was little additional comment by the Times. Under the headline, "Malcolm Rejects Racist Doctrine--Also Denounces Elijah as a Religious 'Faker,'" the letter said "we must forget politics and propaganda and approach this as a human problem which all of us as human beings are obligated to correct."

On November 8, the Times carried a story on Muslim reaction to recent attacks on their organization by Malcolm X. Under the headline, "Malcolm's Plans Irk Muslims Here," the story quoted Henry and Joseph X, two New York Black Muslim leaders, as saying "we only want Malcolm to stop attacking Elijah Muhammad, as he did from Mecca when he called him a religious faker. If he doesn't, we will fight him as hard as he fights us."

Both the Times and the Herald Tribune published stories December 13 on a speech Malcolm made in Harlem, urging black people in the United States to seek closer ties with Africa. The Times ran its account under the headline, "Malcolm X Exhorts Negroes to Look to African Culture," and the newspaper said he urged "spiritual and cultural bonds with the new African nations." He asked black people to stay in the United States and "migrate to Africa culturally, philosophically, and spiritually."

Malcolm also made some statements about violence, saying he did not preach violence "despite what the press may tell you," and that he was "against any form of racism." He said, however, that he supported black people being able to defend themselves from white attacks.

The Herald Tribune played up the "tough" line in Malcolm's speech and reported nothing on the "ties with Africa" portion. The story said:

Malcolm X, the Black Nationalist leader, reverted to his hard-line approach yesterday, asserting that Negroes should be prepared to "use any means necessary" to secure civil rights.

.
Two months ago, while Malcolm was on tour of Africa and the Middle East, he was quoted in a letter as embracing the doctrine of the brotherhood of man.

This last paragraph was an apparent slap at the Times for running Malcolm's letters and for news stories on Malcolm's change of racial views. The Herald Tribune had not reported these apparent changes, and used this story to back up its position that Malcolm still held the same view he had held as a Black Muslim. Apparently to the Herald Tribune, Malcolm's saying blacks should be able to defend themselves from attacks by whites was the same as "using any means necessary to secure civil rights."

Malcolm's confusing statements over violence and militancy continued when, on December 21, the Times quoted him as saying:

I'm against anybody who tells black people to be nonviolent while nobody is telling white people to be nonviolent. . . . If the language is a shotgun, get a shotgun. But don't waste time talking the wrong language.

The newspaper said Malcolm "had renounced black racism and had embraced the brotherhood of man, but his words yesterday bristled with militancy." Despite the racist and violent tone of this particular speech, only the Times reported it.

The World-Telegram was the only New York newspaper to report Malcolm's speech in Selma, Alabama, on February 4, 1965. Under an eight-column headline, "Two Roads for Selma Negroes: Love or Violence," the newspaper reported how Malcolm had given the "violent road" to follow. The World-Telegram said:

Malcolm X gave the route of the Black Muslims--a route of violence. . . . Malcolm X--tall with a light brown beard, horn-rimmed glasses, wearing a dark, well-tailored suit--preached his violence in scholarly tones.

The Assassination: February, 1965.

Malcolm X was assassinated on Sunday, February 21, 1965, while delivering a speech in the Audubon Ballroom. During the week previous to his death, however, Malcolm's name had filled the newspapers. Early Sunday morning, February 14, Malcolm's house in the borough of Queens was firebombed with gasoline "Molotov cocktails." The house had been a center of dispute between the Black Muslims

and Malcolm X. The Muslims claimed they owned the property, and Malcolm had the right to live there only when he was one of their ministers; Malcolm claimed it was a personal gift to him from his followers when he had been a Muslim minister.

The Times gave the bombing story page-one play in its February 15 edition, as did four of the other newspapers in the study. The headline above the story read, "Malcolm X Flees Firebomb Attack--Wife and Four Daughters Also Escape as Flames Sweep Brick House in Queens." The story was accompanied by a three-column picture of Malcolm standing in front of the ruined house. The Times referred to him as a "controversial Black Nationalist leader" and included in its story the information about the court battle over the ownership of the house. Malcolm had accused the Black Muslims of starting the fire and the Muslims countered that Malcolm had set it himself. This exchange of charges was carried in a February 17 story in the Times.

The Journal-American played up Malcolm's side of the story in its only story on the firebombing, a page one account on February 15. Under the headline, "X: Blame's on Prophet," the newspaper quoted Malcolm as saying, "I believe that it was done on orders of Elijah Muhammad," and said

Black Nationalist leader Malcolm X hurled this charge at the head of the Black Muslim Movement today as he headed back to New York "to tell everyone what is going on and who is responsible for the firebombing" of his Queens home early yesterday.

The Herald Tribune also gave the story page-one play in its February 15 edition under a three-column headline, "Malcolm X Firebombed," and also printed the same Associated Press picture of Malcolm and the ruins that the Times had used. The newspaper also referred to Malcolm as a "Black Nationalist leader."

The tabloid Daily News completely filled the front page of its February 15 edition with a large picture of Malcolm standing outside the ruined house and with the headline, "Malcolm X, Kin Escape Bombs--Muslim Foe's Home Is Burned." The story on page three began:

Malcolm X, the black nationalist leader who charges that Elijah Muhammad's Black Muslims have been plotting against his life since he defected from their movement a year ago, was bombed out of his home in East Elmhurst, Queens, early yesterday.

The Daily News quoted Malcolm as saying, "I intend to point out to the people of New York who I think is behind this." The newspaper reported that "not long ago he [Malcolm] told a News reporter of several recent attempts on his life." This conversation or the "earlier reports" had not been reported previously by the Daily News. The newspaper ran a story February 16 reporting the charges and counter-charges of Malcolm and Muslim officials on the bombing.

The Post account was on page three, under the headline, "Malcolm X House Bombed." It was a straight account of the incident and only briefly mentioned the possible "war" between Malcolm's followers and the Black Muslims that had filled the Daily News. Like the other newspapers, the Post called Malcolm X a "black nationalist."

The World-Telegram, an afternoon paper, played up the fact that a court had ordered Malcolm not to return to the bombed house, ruling it belonged to the Muslims. The story ran on page fourteen of the February 15 edition under the headline, "Court Orders Malcolm X to Vacate Fire-bombed House."

All six New York daily newspapers gave page one "banner" treatment to Malcolm's assassination in their February 22 editions. The Times story, under a four-column headline, "Malcolm X Shot to Death at Rally Here" began, "Malcolm X, the thirty-nine-year-old leader of a militant black nationalist movement, was shot to death yesterday afternoon at a rally of his followers." The Times quoted a police source as saying the slaying "apparently had been the result of the Muslim-Malcolm feud." The Times said seven bullets hit Malcolm's body from two different caliber pistols along with shotgun pellets. A side story on page one reported that Malcolm "knew he was a marked man." Times staff writer Theodore Jones had interviewed Malcolm the previous Thursday, February 18. Malcolm had said he

feared for his life from "they--those folks down at 116th Street [Muslim headquarters in New York City] and that man in Chicago [Elijah Muhammad]." Malcolm said also that he regretted that some of the New York newspapers had failed to report his change in views concerning the white man, but he had admitted his change was "confusing."

• Besides the stories on page one that day, pages ten and eleven of the Times were entirely devoted to the assassination. (On page ten was a story of Malcolm's life under the headline, "Malcolm X Lived in Two Worlds, White and Black, Both Bitter" and which reported the changes in Malcolm's view toward the white man. Other stories on page ten included an account of a fire in Cassius Clay's apartment in Chicago; police rescuing a suspect from the angry crowd at the Audubon Ballroom; how the Organization for Afro-American unity was now leaderless; and how other Muslims were fearful for their lives, seeing the slaying as part of a "pattern of violence."

On page eleven there were stories about Malcolm's power struggle in the Black Muslims; the atmosphere in Harlem after the news spread of Malcolm's death; and reaction of other black leaders in the nation to the slaying. An editorial on page twenty, under the caption, "Malcolm X," said:

Malcolm X had the ingredients for leadership, but his ruthless and fanatical belief in violence not only set him apart from the responsible leaders of the civil rights movement . . . it also marked him for notoriety, and for a violent death.

.
Malcolm's life was strangely and pitifully wasted. . . .

—The Journal-American, an afternoon newspaper, played up the "why" angle of the assassination with a story under a headline, "Why Malcolm X Was Slain--What He Told Confidante," across the top of page one with the story's immediate headline reading, "Malcolm X Slain to Silence Him--The Reason Why." The story was attributed to Malcolm's attorney, Percy Sutton, and the information came from an "exclusive" interview he had given the newspaper. The story said:

Black Nationalist leader Malcolm X died in a hail of bullets on the stage of the Audubon Ballroom in Upper Manhattan because he was about to name publicly the men assigned to kill him.

.
As the Negro leader lay dying, his wife, Betty, reached into a pocket of his suit jacket and extracted a piece of paper. Reportedly, the names of the men who were to assassinate him are written on that paper.

The Journal-American reported that five men, all connected with the Black Muslims, were responsible, and said only two of them fired, compared to the Times account of three assassins.

Other stories that day in the Journal-American that concerned the slaying were a page-one account of Elijah Muhammad's denial that the Muslims had anything to do with the killing; a page-one story on the reaction

of Malcolm's widow, Betty, and how she had to identify the body; a story of Malcolm's life, on page four under the headline, "Malcolm X Murder: Expected Death, Not By His Own [race]," said "from an 'ignorant hipster' he transformed himself into an articulate leader," but it made no mention of his change in view concerning white people¹; a story on police precautions in case trouble broke out in Harlem; and the reaction of other black leaders to the slaying. On page thirteen the newspaper published six pictures related to Malcolm X, filling the entire page.

Two headlines and one large picture filled the entire front page of the Daily News for February 22. The headlines read, "Malcolm X Murdered" and "Gunned Down at Rally," and the picture showed Malcolm's dead body, face uncovered, being carried on a stretcher. The story began on page three and said

a week after being bombed out of his Queens home, Black Nationalist leader Malcolm X was shot to death shortly after 3 P.M. yesterday at a Washington Heights rally of 400 of his devoted followers.

.....
 Malcolm's followers were quick to accuse the Black Muslims, who he had blamed for the bombing of his home.

Although an "exclusive" to the Journal-American, the Daily News also had statements from Malcolm's attorney, Percy

¹This story also reported that Malcolm had attended Mason High School in Lansing, Mich., inaccurate in that Mason High School is not in Lansing and that Malcolm never attended any senior high school at all.

Sutton, that "his client had planned to disclose at yesterday's rally 'the names of those who were trying to kill him.'"

The Daily News ran a United Press International wire story by Stanley Scott, a black reporter who had been at the rally, on page one. On page four there were stories about how the Muslims had increased their guard for Elijah Muhammad in Chicago; on the reaction of other black leaders; and on Malcolm's life under the headline, "The Life and Hates of Malcolm X," noting "President Kennedy's assassination was a case of 'chickens coming home to roost,' Malcolm X said at the time. Yesterday chickens came home to him." On page five, the Daily News ran five pictures related to Malcolm X and one story, the reaction of New York City black leaders, that quoted Acting Manhattan Borough President Earl Brown as saying, "I disagree completely with Malcolm X, but I recognize he was fighting for his vision of a better social order for the oppressed Negro."

The Herald Tribune's story was under the headline, "Malcolm X Slain by Gunmen as 400 in Ballroom Watch," and was written by staff writer Jimmy Breslin, who noted that

up in the front of the ballroom, on the stage, somebody was saying, "Malcolm is a man who would give his life for you." . . . Then the two lead-off men made their move. He stood there, alone on the stage, with one hand up in the air and he was a perfect target and a man ran down the aisle with a shotgun and when the shotgun was right in front of Malcolm X, both barrels raked him.

The story also speculated about the murders:

It [his movement] is a small organization, but its goal is to fight against and try to lure members away from the Black Muslims. But the Black Muslims, sworn to kill Malcolm X, had been trying to infiltrate his movement for some time. Yesterday, after months of waiting, they had him set up.

The story played up the violent aspects of Malcolm's teachings and especially emphasized the fact that white medical men had worked on him in the hospital in an attempt to save his life. "So the violence Malcolm X preached so much about came about with his own death, and if there is more violence, it was his death that set it off," Breslin wrote.

Another story by a Herald Tribune staff writer described Malcolm as a man who would talk of hatred of whites:

But always, on his face, there was the slight smile, the ironic smile that mocked him and his words even when he was making the most outrageous statements. It was his pitch, his hatred for the white man, but it never seemed to be his conviction.

He did care. He was genuinely infuriated by the problems of the Negro in America. But he did not offer solutions. He offered slogans and shouts of violence and calls to the street and, mostly, he offered words. He was always an extremist--on either side of the same question.

Staff writer Dick Schapp wrote of Malcolm's life in another story in the February 22 edition, reporting that "he fluctuated between conciliation and outright racism, contradicting himself over and over. He never did seem able to decide whom he hated most." Another story, under the headline, "The Feud That Lead to Death," told of Malcolm's power struggle while he was in the Black

Muslims and later between them and his own movement, reporting there "was no possibility that the two movements could exist in peace together." Other stories included reaction of black leaders to the slaying; a statement from Malcolm's half-sister, Ella, in Boston; and a list of thirteen quotations by Malcolm X printed under the headline, "Malcolm X's Changing Ideas." No comment accompanied the quotations.

Page one of the tabloid-size Post was filled with the headline, "Guard Muslim Chief--Avengers on Way to Chicago: FBI." The story began on page two and told of the arrest of one suspect, possible links between the assassination and the Black Muslims, and possible retaliation against the Muslims by Malcolm's followers. The main story of the assassination began under the headline, "I Saw Malcolm Die," on page one. The story was reported by Thomas Skinner and it was a straight news report of the act, similar to that in the other newspapers. The Post also carried an account of a press conference by Malcolm's widow, Betty Shabazz, on page two. Page fifteen of the February 22 edition of the Post was the first of a two-part "daily magazine" feature on Malcolm X. Written by staff writer Ted Poston, the story told of Malcolm's life by combining previous articles written by Dr. Charles Eric Lincoln, taken from the Saturday Evening Post, and from previous newspaper

accounts. Nothing was mentioned about Malcolm's apparent change in racial attitudes. Commenting editorially on page eighteen, the Post said that

even his sharpest critics recognize his brilliance--often wild, unpredictable, and eccentric, but nevertheless possessing promise that now must remain unrealized.

.
The rest of us not followers of Malcolm must ask ourselves how a man of such talent and imagination was so deeply alienated by our society.

The World-Telegram gave a "second day" lead to its February 22 story with emphasis on police movement into Harlem in event of trouble. The headline read, "Cops Blanket Harlem--Fear War Over Murder of Malcolm X." The story, by staff writers Tom Collins and Paul Meskil, began:

Hundreds of extra police blanket Harlem today to prevent a war between Black Muslims and followers of Malcolm X, a fiery Black Nationalist leader who was shot dead in front of 400 persons.

.
On several occasions Malcolm accused Elijah Muhammad of marking him for death.

.
Bullets poured into Malcolm's head, chin, and upper body. Both barrels of the shotgun roared. Ripped by at least sixteen shotgun and pistol wounds, he toppled over backward on the speaker's platform.

Page two carried a story on the reaction of some people who lived in Harlem with statements taken in a "random survey" on the street; a wire service story with statements from other black leaders and used by the other newspapers; and a reprint from the World-Telegram's June 19, 1964, edition with a story on the threats on Malcolm's life under the headline, "Malcolm X: A Man Marked for Death."

A story of Malcolm's life, written by staff writer Robert Laird, was printed on page three. The writer noted that:

By the early 1960's he had overshadowed Muhammad in the public's mind as the personification of Black Muslim extremism. Whenever the dignified, bespectacled Malcolm mounted the speaker's rostrum before an audience of his followers, a troubled press and nation listened.

Also on the page were a personality story by George Carmack, who had covered Malcolm X's recent trip to Selma, Alabama; a story of the Black Muslim organization; and an Associated Press story of an interview by Jules Loh with Malcolm X on March 16, 1964, which the wire service had never released before. The story told of Malcolm's power struggle within the Muslims and why Malcolm thought he was expelled. Only the World-Telegram ran this story.

The main news story on February 23 was the fire-bombing of the Muslim's Temple Number Seven in Harlem early that morning. In most of the newspapers in the study this story and a follow-up to the assassination were handled in a composite story. The Times page-one headline read, "Muslims Mosque Burns in Harlem; Black Reported Slayers Are Sought--Fifty Detectives Assigned to Search for Malcolm's Killer." The Times reported that its original contention that two different caliber pistol bullets and also shotgun pellets were involved in the murder was supported by the autopsy performed on Malcolm's

body. The Times published three other related stories that day, the first being a wire service story quoting Elijah Muhammad as denying any connection with the slaying; the second, a statement from Malcolm's half-sister, Mrs. Ella Mae Collins, on the future of Malcolm's movement; and the third, on how Malcolm had led Cassius Clay into the Black Muslim fold.

The Journal-American blamed the Muslim burning on Malcolm's followers and played up the revenge angle. Its banner headline for February 23 read, "Harlem Flare-Up-- Muslim Mosque Burned, Malcolm X 'Avenged'!". It said the burning was a "stroke of quick and violent revenge for the assassination of Black Nationalist leader Malcolm X." The edition also carried three other related stories, one on police guarding Malcolm's body; the second, the wire story on Muhammad's denial; and the third, an editorial, "The Low Road," which said "the stuff which has made America great, and which keeps it great, is undermined by the doctrines of hatred and violence that Malcolm X preached."

The Daily News published only one story, combining all of the day's events. It played up the violence and revenge angle of the bombing, but had no details not already mentioned as being in the other newspapers. The Herald Tribune also combined all angles into one story and had brief coverage compared to its numerous stories the day before.

The Post, on the other hand, expanded from its first day coverage. Page one was again filled with one large headline--"Blast Wrecks Muslim Headquarters in Harlem"--with the story on page three. In an "exclusive" story on page three, staff writer Ted Poston interviewed Malcolm's widow and, for the first time, mentioned Malcolm's change in views about white people. He quoted Mrs. Shabazz as saying, "but hadn't his ideas changed a lot in recent months? His attitude and ideas changed immensely on a lot of things after he left the Black Muslims." The second of the "daily magazine" articles started the day before was written by staff writer Timothy Lee and was concerned with the earlier power struggle, the break by Malcolm from the Muslims, and in his forming his own black group. The article mentioned Malcolm's change in views but the author cast doubts on Malcolm's sincerity. He said:

Malcolm had no intention of joining forces with those civil rights leaders who teach non-violence. He said, instead, that his OAAU [Organization for Afro-American Unity] would recruit and train Negroes to protect other Negroes during their voter registration drives in the South.²

A Post columnist, James A. Wechsler, placed more importance on Malcolm's change in his editorial page piece that day:

²None of the other newspapers reported this reason behind Malcolm's change in attitudes toward the civil rights movement.

But the true tragedy of the sudden death may well be that he was a complicated, introspective man engaged in profound personal transition when he was struck down. It is conceivable that he was on the threshold of a larger, if altered, role in the annals of our time. Now we will never know.

Surely there is enough in the record of his last months on earth to suggest that he hoped to leave a legacy more meaningful than wild cries for revenge.

The World-Telegram gave its readers brief coverage and combined all angles into one story. It published an editorial on the assassination that day, entitled "The Futility of Violence." The editors noted that "significance of Malcolm X's brutal assassination is yet to be measured. . . . How much more senseless violence need there be before the futility becomes totally and overwhelmingly apparent to all." Accompanying it was an editorial "cartoon" showing a vulture resting on a headstone with Malcolm's X's name on it with the caption "Home to Roost," in reference to Malcolm's remark about the chickens "coming home to roost" after President Kennedy's death.

There were two news stories on February 24 related to the assassination--the continued fear of "war" between militant black groups in New York, and continued probes into the "why" of the slaying. Both of these stories were covered by the Times. On page one, under the headlines, "Mosque Fires Stir Fear of Vendetta in Malcolm Case" and "Mortuary Threatened--Funeral Home Searched as Body is Put on View," the newspaper reported more detail on the burning of Muslim mosques in New York and San Francisco and the

precautions and preparations made for the funeral. On page thirty of the Times for February 24 there was a story concerning James Farmer's call for a federal inquiry into the slaying. Farmer was the head of the Congress of Racial Equality, a civil rights group. He charged the act was more than just "nationalist rivalries" and that it had occurred when Malcolm's views were changing toward "the mainstream of the civil rights movement."

The Journal-American on February 24 played up a reprint from the Saturday Evening Post story by Aubrey Barnette.³ The author was once a member of the Black Muslims and his article dealt with the "fakery" and "false claims" of the movement. It did not deal with Malcolm X. The newspaper played the story on page one under the headline, "I Was a Black Muslim: Fakery and Abuse." In its main story on Malcolm X, the Journal-American emphasized the "cops have lead in Malcolm killing" angle, but did mention Farmer's call for a federal inquiry and his statement about the change in Malcolm's views. This was the Journal-American's first mention of any change in the racial views of Malcolm X. The newspaper also ran an editorial labeled, "Hate and Innocents," which simply called

³Aubrey Barnette, "The Black Muslims Are A Fraud," Saturday Evening Post, Feb. 27, 1965, pp. 43-48.

for an end to violence between black groups in New York. The editorial said nothing about Malcolm X or his views; only a call for "peace."

The Daily News added a new angle to Farmer's call for a federal investigation with a page three story under the headline, "Negro Violence Linked to Third Group." The story said:

The assassination of Malcolm X, dissident Black Muslim leader [the only newspaper to still label him as connected with the Muslims], and the firebombing of an orthodox Muslim temple in Harlem less than thirty-six hours later, probably were the work of a third, even more fanatic Negro hate group, top police and federal investigators told The News last night.

The News said this group was "RAM"--the Revolutionary Action Movement based in Harlem. The newspaper added Farmer's "political killing" statement to this story, saying RAM was behind the killing to cause war between Malcolm's followers and the Muslims in New York.

The Herald Tribune ran a five-column picture of people waiting in line to view Malcolm X's body under the headline, "Waiting for Malcolm X's Legacy," at the top of its February 24 edition. The story, by staff writer Maurice Carroll, and which accompanied the art, combined the police probe, threats to the funeral home, funeral preparations, and Farmer's call for a federal probe. In a "special" on page twenty-three, the Herald Tribune reported from its "foreign news bureau" that the "Africans call Malcolm X the 'American Lumumba,'" after slain Congolese

leader Patrice Lumumba. The story said "dead, Malcolm X has stirred more macabre interest and sparked more controversy than he could have created when alive."

The Post published three stories about the assassination on February 24; the first, on police action in trying to find the killers, on the proposed rent strike, and the funeral preparations; the second, on reactions of some of the mourners at the funeral home; and the third, a column by Alvin Davis in which he also commented on Malcolm's change in views. Of the change, he wrote:

I'm skeptical about that; they're measuring Malcolm for martyrdom a little too soon. But he had talked more softly to the dozens of white reporters who interviewed him, and there is now some evidence that he talked more softly to his followers too.

Two stories about Malcolm X appeared in the World-Telegram on February 24, both on page three. The first, under the headline, "Cops on 'Right Track' in Malcolm X Killing," described police action at the funeral home to protect Malcolm's body. The story also noted the conspicuous lack of any of Malcolm's bodyguards at the funeral home and the absence of any of his organization's leaders. The second story provided additional meaning to Farmer's description of Malcolm's changed racial views. In an "exclusive," the newspaper reprinted some of the postcards Malcolm had sent in early 1964 from Mecca to James Farmer--a time when Malcolm's attitudes towards the white man were shifting. The story said:

The messages, revealed for the first time today, showed that Malcolm X was apparently undergoing a painstaking reappraisal of his own opinions concerning Negroes and whites.

...
Farmer said his "impression was that he [Malcolm] was moving away from the Black Muslims into the mainstream. He told me that he was prepared to accept people on the basis of their deeds, and not on their genes."

The Times published four stories on Malcolm X in its editions for February 25. The first reported police efforts to find the assassin; the second described the thousands of viewers of Malcolm's coffin and the funeral plans set for February 27; and the third was an "exclusive" on Malcolm's Organization for Afro-American Unity. A survey by the Times, the third story said, indicated the group had "remained small and had apparently been fading even more than the segregationist parent group, the Muslims." There were currently only 200 "hangers on" compared to 400 in March, 1964, when the group was founded, and only 7,000 Black Muslims in New York compared to 15,000 in 1961. The Times said the principal reason Malcolm had changed his racial view was to gain more support and financial aid from orthodox Moslems. The story suggested he would have resorted to again preaching total separatism of the races if his moderate views had failed. The fourth story reported the efforts of Jesse Gray, a militant black leader in Harlem, to force the closing of the stores on 125th Street the day of Malcolm's funeral as a measure of respect.

The Journal-American put its main news play on the movement to force the Harlem stores to close to honor the slain leader. The story appeared on page four under the headline, "Harlem Squeeze: Boycott Threat Made to Stores," and told of Gray's attempts to close the stores, reprinted the contents of a leaflet circulated to the store owners threatening a boycott if they did not close, and included comments of some of the store owners who had been reached by telephone by reporters. A Journal-American editorial on page twenty supported police efforts to find the killers and to keep peace in the community.

The Daily News for February 25 published an account of its continuing probe into RAM's connections with the assassination. The story said

Malcolm X was the victim of treachery by a fanatic "third group" that has infiltrated both his organization and the parent Black Muslim sect, a long-time associate of the murdered leader told The News last night.

The plot by RAM had begun "when Malcolm came back and preached a little differently, and the other group got restless. He was no longer the tool they'd had. All the whites weren't devils." This had been the reaction of James Farmer, although he had not mentioned RAM as the third group. The story was run under the headlines, "Charles X Reveals: 'We Know Who Slew Malcolm,'" on page one, and "Malcolm Double-X'd From Within" on page three.

The Herald Tribune published two stories on page three of its February 25 edition concerning Malcolm, one on the police action to find the killers, and the other on the reaction of Muslims at the Brooklyn and Jamaica, New York, mosques on the possibility of further burnings, such as the two earlier in the week in Harlem and San Francisco.

The Post also published two stories February 25 about the assassination, the first combining the news about the boycott, funeral, and police hunt; and the second about police precautions in Chicago to guard Elijah Muhammad at the approaching Muslim convention.

The most complete account of the "third group" idea was included in a story on page one of the World-Telegram in its February 25 edition. The headline, "Probe Red Dope Tie to Malcolm Murder," topped the story that said

investigators are checking reports that Malcolm X was murdered not by Black Muslims but by persons who thought he knew too much about a Harlem dope racket with supply lines stretching to Cuba and Red China.

Malcolm's group had been "infiltrated by pro-Peking fanatics who were peddling dope to Harlem addicts" and this had made Malcolm "furious because he had been a former addict himself," the World-Telegram told its readers. The story cited Farmer's call for a federal probe and his contention that a third group was involved, and pointed out that RAM

was considered to be such a fanatic, pro-Peking movement, although the newspaper did not specifically blame the assassination on it. The story suggested that Communists had been using Malcolm X

as a propaganda weapon against America. But Malcolm's fanatic hatred of whites [had] modified considerably in the last six months.

.
Convinced that his usefulness was over, the Harlem anarchists decided to take over his loosely-knit organization.

The newspaper said the list of names that Malcolm was to have read the day he was killed was a list of the communist infiltrators. The story also reported the attempts to close the Harlem stores on February 27.

The main "Malcolm story" in the Times for February 26 was on page one, and reported the efforts of the slain leader's followers to close down Harlem stores the next day, Saturday. The headline read, "Stores Prodded to Hail Malcolm--But Business Group Rejects Demand to Close--Police Question Two in Slaying."

As an afternoon newspaper, the Journal-American was able to report the arrest of Norman ThreeX Butler for the murder of Malcolm X. In a page-one story, the newspaper said, "Norman ThreeX Butler, a Black Muslim 'enforcer,' was booked on a murder charge early today by police as one of the assassins of Black Nationalist leader Malcolm X." A page-one side-story under the headline, "I Knew Him," was an interview with a police correction

officer who knew the suspect and told of his contact with him. A story on page eight told of the Harlem merchants' rejecting the request to close the next day for the funeral.

In a page-three news story about the police investigation, the Daily News on February 26 charged that

after his break with the Black Muslim movement, Malcolm [had] conferred secretly several times with Elijah Muhammad, the Black Muslim's leader, but he could not work out terms for his return to the movement.

Only one other newspaper mentioned the "peace talks."

The Herald Tribune finally jumped on the "third party bandwagon" with its story published February 26.

The story reported police efforts to find the assassins, but it did mention that

although it was at first accepted that Malcolm X had been the victim of a plot by members of the Black Muslims, . . . there have been numerous suggestions that a third group may have been involved in the shooting.

The Herald Tribune did not mention RAM as the "third group."

The February 26 story in the Post about Malcolm X reported this theory:

It was learned Malcolm conferred secretly with the sixty-seven-year-old Muslim leader [Elijah Muhammad] several times in Chicago. Muhammad reportedly offered to take Malcolm back into the Muslim fold in a subordinate position if he would disband his own movement. But the thirty-nine-year-old Negro leader would not accept.

The World-Telegram carried two page-one stories on Malcolm X in its February 26 edition, one about Harlem

stores and businesses refusing to close the next day, and the other about the police charging Norman ThreeX Butler for the murder. The newspaper called Butler "a Negro gunman described by police as a Black Muslim 'enforcer.'"

The arrest of Butler was announced February 27 in a page-one story in the Times. Butler was identified as a "Black Muslim guard." The story also reported the final preparations for Malcolm's funeral that morning, and that 22,000 people had viewed the opened coffin during the four days it was at the funeral home. A page-one story on the Black Muslim annual convention opening in Chicago, reported that Malcolm's brothers, Philbert X of Lansing, Michigan, and Wilfred X of Detroit, had denounced Malcolm at the meeting and that only about 3,000 members were in attendance compared to the usual crowd of 6,000.

The Journal-American provided limited coverage of the funeral service in its late editions for February 27. The story was placed on page one under the headline, "Malcolm X Funeral--Cops Swarm Over Harlem; The 'Rebel' Goes to His Grave as a Muslim." The story stressed who attended the funeral, and did not report the details of the service. The account noted that some 22,000 people had viewed Malcolm's body during the four days it had been at the funeral home. A story on the Muslim convention in Chicago was not included in the news menu, but the Journal-American published an editorial concerning the slaying. This time the

newspaper commended the police for speed in arresting a second suspect and urged fast "due process" in the trials. This was the newspaper's third editorial commending police efforts.

The tabloid Daily News page-one banner read, "Close In on Third of Mal Gunmen," and the story said

a third suspect in the Black Muslim assassination team that cut down Malcolm X in view of 400 of his followers in the Audubon Ballroom Sunday probably will be in custody today, high police sources told The News last night.

The newspaper said "responsible Harlem leaders pleaded for community calm" during the police investigation. The story quoted the Amsterdam News, the weekly "black" newspaper of New York, as saying "calm will not only show due-respect to Malcolm X, but it will also serve to confound his critics, who would like nothing better than to see black people rioting over his remains." On an inside page, the Daily News ran a United Press International story with a Chicago dateline on the Muslim convention. Elijah Muhammad said Malcolm had "criticizes, criticized, criticized . . . and got what he preached," according to the press association story.

The Herald Tribune page-one story reported the arrest of Butler, police precautions for the funeral, and the denial by RAM officials of any involvement in the assassination. It was the only newspaper to print such a denial.

The Post did not publish separate Saturday and Sunday editions in February, 1965, printing one weekend edition instead. Published on Saturday, the newspaper ran a combined "advance" and actual account of the funeral, describing the crowd, church, and police protection based on observable fact, and of the service as it was planned. The Post printed two stories about the Black Muslims--the first on the convention in which Muhammad warned that the Muslims would defend themselves against any attacks from Malcolm's men, and the second on the history of the organization and the role that Malcolm had played in it. Written by staff writer Helen Dudar, the second story pointed out that Malcolm had made the Muslims popular--"one thought of the Black Muslims in terms of Malcolm X, not Elijah Muhammad," she wrote--and how the influence of the Muslims had declined after Malcolm left.

The World-Telegram in its final edition reported a complete account of Malcolm's funeral, including the names of black leaders who attended, and a description of the service. The story was placed on page one under the headline, "2,000 at Malcolm Rites."

On February 28, a Sunday, one week after the assassination, the Times reported in a page-one story that "Harlem was quiet as crowds watched the rites of Malcolm X" and listened to a eulogy that characterized the murdered leader of a black nationalist cult as a "believer in

brotherhood of man." The story noted that Malcolm had abandoned the Black Muslim teachings of hate for the white man and total separation of the races. Although Harlem stores had remained open the day before--disregarding a request to close--the volume of business was far below the usual Saturday average, the Times reported. A story on the Black Muslims, the history of the movement and practices of its members, and a summary of the week's events were published in the newspaper's "News of the Week in Review" section.

The Journal-American ran the details of Malcolm's funeral on page one of its Sunday edition, noting that "for Malcolm, who had rarely drawn more than 500 persons to his rallies, death brought the largest audience of all to the church." A story by Dr. Charles Eric Lincoln on the life of Malcolm in the Black Muslims and after his break with the movement, appeared on page fifteen under the headline, "Malcolm X: Authority on Muslims Fears Frightening Legacy." A story of Malcolm's final activities the week before he was killed and of the possible disclosures he was planning on the Black Muslims, carried the headline, "The Last Desperate Days of Malcolm X, Pursued by Death." The newspaper also began the first of the serialization of the Alex Haley-edited Autobiography of Malcolm X, which ran for the next five days. A week later, the newspaper ran a five-part serialization of Lincoln's book, The Black Muslims in America.

The Daily News story of the funeral, also on page one under the headline, "Malcolm X Is Buried Quietly," began:

In sharp contrast to his violent life as a Harlem conkey and later as a hater against the whites, Malcolm X was buried yesterday calmly, quietly, with the subdued dignity of ancient Islamic ritual.

The Herald Tribune ran three stories on Malcolm and the Black Muslims, the first on page one described the funeral. "The strange magnetism of Malcolm X, who lived thirty-nine turbulent years, some as a criminal, the last few as a fervid Black Nationalist, was still strong at his funeral," the newspaper said. Staff writer Jimmy Breslin, covering the Muslim convention in Chicago, reported:

There were not many of them. As a movement, the Black Muslims are vastly overrated. Yesterday exposed them. All you had to do was look at them in Chicago yesterday. At first, there was nothing. But then, through the shabbiness, there were the people who had Malcolm X killed.

An editorial, "The Many Heirs to Malcolm's Mantle," said:

Most Negroes believe their future and the future of white Americans are inextricably bound together. Even Malcolm X began to re-evaluate his position near the end. But black nationalists are difficult to dissuade.

The World-Telegram did not publish a Sunday edition.

In a numerical comparison of the coverage during the week after the assassination, the Journal-American was easily number one in the total column-inches of written material, art, and headlines published about Malcolm X and the Black Muslims. The newspaper allotted 1,742 column-

inches to the subject that week. The Post carried 1,108 column-inches; the World-Telegram 1,067; the Herald Tribune 1,021; the Daily News 1,019; and the Times 1,015.

Although the Times was last in total coverage, it was the leader in column-inches allocated to written material with 682. Next was the Herald Tribune with 669, the Post with 615, the Journal-American with 522, the World-Telegram with 484, and the Daily News with 328. The Daily News and the Post are tabloid-size newspapers, however, with about only two-thirds the space available in the other four standard-size newspapers. They allotted two and four full, front pages, respectively, to the assassination during the week.

The Journal-American led in the number of column-inches of pictures and drawings, with 825 column-inches published; far behind in second place was the Daily News with 499 column-inches.

Breaking down the coverage in each newspaper by type:

Journal-American--1,742 total column-inches of which 48 per cent was pictorial, 30 per cent written, and 22 per cent headlines.

Post--1,108 total column-inches; 56 per cent written, 25 per cent headline, and 19 per cent pictorial.

World Telegram & Sun--1,067 total column-inches; 45 per cent written, 38 per cent pictorial, and 17 per cent headlines.

Herald Tribune--1,021 total column-inches; 66 per cent written, 23 per cent pictorial, and 11 per cent headlines.

Daily News--1,019 total column-inches; 49 per cent pictorial, 32 per cent written, and 19 per cent headlines.

Times--1,015 total column-inches; 67 per cent written, 25 per cent pictorial, and 8 per cent headlines.

CONCLUSIONS

Malcolm X was a confusing man and the roles he played in life were varied, ranging from a prostitute's go-between and a dope user to a minister preaching a highly restrictive code of ethics. (He could praise the white man at one time and urge blacks to arm themselves for defense against whites at another. } Even after his separation from the Black Muslims and his statements on his new attitude toward the white man, he was confusing, often speaking on both sides of an issue and from both sides of his mouth. This confusion of views made Malcolm X an extremely difficult man to report fairly and accurately.

It is difficult to select only certain incidents and statements to report during the fifteen-month period that he led his own black nationalist movement and still present an accurate picture. To report the true Malcolm X, a complete coverage was necessary; all of his statements, all of his speeches, all of the incidents had to be reported to present the correct view of Malcolm X, a militant black man unsure of the direction he should take.

A fair commentator not only has the obligation to show where, how and why Malcolm's ideas changed--he also has to take into account the fact that Malcolm did not always have the time or opportunity to state or restate his ideas precisely; that is, he must not be content with this or that passing formulation but must seek to throw light on Malcolm's intention.¹

Only the Times presented this complete story and only one other of the New York daily newspapers, the World-Telegram bothered to pay much attention to apparent change in view before he was killed.

The Times covered almost every possible event concerning Malcolm X and the newspaper's accounts were fair. He was not treated as a hate monger or as a crazed black militant. He was treated as an important black spokesman who had something newsworthy to say. His remark about President Kennedy, his suspension, his break with the Black Muslims, his change in view, and finally his assassination were all reported fairly and in depth. The power struggle with the Muslims was noted, and his change in attitude was reported several times when it occurred.

The Daily News treated Malcolm X quite differently. To that newspaper he was a fanatical hate preacher who dealt with violence. While his suspension and break received only surface treatment and his change in attitude was ignored, the Daily News played up a confrontation with

¹George Breitman, The Last Year of Malcolm X (New York: Merit Publishers, 1967), pp. 91-92.

Black Muslims in New York City, a beating of one of Malcolm's supporters at a Black Muslim rally, Malcolm's statement on the New York riot in Harlem in 1964, and the possibility of a third black militant group being involved in the slaying.

The World-Telegram did not report the story of his suspension by the Black Muslims, his break, or his change in attitude at the time he announced it. The newspaper did, however, clearly report Malcolm's change in racial attitudes about a month after he made the statements. The newspaper also had broad and fair coverage during the week following the assassination, including an "exclusive" Associated Press story and complete funeral details the same day of the service.

The Herald Tribune did not report the news of his suspension or later change in attitudes. It did, however, report his break from the Black Muslims on page one. Only in an editorial the day after Malcolm X was buried did the newspaper state that Malcolm had made many statements about white people different from the "blue-eyed devil" approach he made as a Muslim minister.

The Journal-American played Malcolm X as a "show-man." When something spectacular occurred--the break, the Muslim confrontation, the two black rallies on the same day, the firebombing, the slaying--the newspaper gave him broad coverage. When he was suspended from the Muslims

or he made statements about a new view toward white people, he was ignored. In fact, the newspaper ignored him, his activities, and any statements for more than seven months before the slaying. After the assassination, however, the Journal-American jumped on the bandwagon with full pages allocated to photographs; large, black headlines; two condensed serial versions of books dealing with Malcolm X and the Black Muslims; three editorials praising the New York City police for fast action in apprehending Malcolm's killers; and more total coverage during the week of his slaying and burial than any of the other newspapers in the study.

The Post coverage was somewhat confusing, broad in some respects and lacking in others. The Post blatantly played up the suspension of Malcolm, the break with the Muslims, and Malcolm's connection with Cassius Clay in 1963 and early 1964, but the paper failed to report his trips to Africa, change in attitude, and other activities during the summer and fall of 1964. But the Post came back with thorough coverage of the assassination, including three lengthy articles on Malcolm X and the Black Muslims, and offered the opinions of three different editorial columnists on the meaning of Malcolm X and whether his change in attitude was real or meaningless.

The type of news coverage given to Malcolm X during the week after he was assassinated is a fair indication of how each of the newspapers treated him. The Times, although last in total column-inches, gave 67 per cent of its total space allotted to Malcolm to written material, and only 8 per cent for headlines. The Journal-American, on the other hand, used 48 per cent of its total space given Malcolm X for art, 30 per cent for stories, and the highest amount of any of the newspapers--22 per cent--for headlines. The Herald Tribune and the Post published about as much written material as the Times, both in column-inches and as a percentage of its total coverage of Malcolm X. Like the Journal-American, the Daily News gave almost half of its space on Malcolm X to photographs and drawings.

Except during the week after the assassination, the New York daily newspapers, with the exception of the Times, did not cover Malcolm X with any regularity, any depth, any degree of fairness throughout the fifteen months studied. The deputy managing editor of the Washington Post, Ben W. Gilbert, commented on the coverage in newspapers of such black news in the Bulletin of the American Society of Newspapers Editors for January, 1968. He said:

Most American newspapers are not reporting the story of the American city--either because they don't want to, or because they don't know how.

.

Do editors discriminate in quoting leaders of the Negro community as they do in the white community, or do they merely quote whoever is loudest, or most sensational, or first?

.
It still shocks me to read or hear references to the "white" press. Is it really true that we are just a branch of the power structure--the white one--and that we carry news about Negroes only when they get into trouble with the law, or the welfare department?²

Malcolm X was treated by most of the newspapers as a fanatical, hate-preaching, violence-prone black man, not as a powerful black spokesman who told his fellow blacks to react in a manner not in accord with the non-violent philosophy of the civil rights leaders of that time. His black militant thoughts and ideas were not looked upon as a possible course for America's black citizens to follow. Malcolm X was not looked upon as a leader of America's blacks, despite the Times survey of September 21, 1964, that showed only two other black men were more recognizable to Americans than Malcolm X.

Less than two years after Malcolm X's assassination, the ideas and doctrines of black militancy and black power have gained much popularity among the black people. Men like H. Rap Brown and Stokely Carmichael "suddenly" appeared preaching the militant way to solve the black man's problem in the United States. But the man who first

² Ben W. Gilbert, "Race Coverage," The Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, No. 515 (Jan., 1968), 1, 2, 13.

spoke of black militancy, of black "self-defense," of black independence--Malcolm X--was dead and buried with few newspaper editors realizing what he had started. But the militant black people today realize what Malcolm X started and he is a martyr to their cause. In 1968, February 21--Malcolm X Day--was marked by militant blacks, a Malcolm X Society met and demanded that five of the United States be established as a black nation, and small black boys in the urban ghettos went into streets wearing sweat-shirts with a drawing of Malcolm X on them. But the press of New York City, his base, and of the nation generally misinterpreted his significance when he lived.

It is not important if what Malcolm X said was good or bad, moral or immoral, violent or non-violent. What does matter is that the ideas expressed by Malcolm X were accepted and followed by many Americans who happen to be black. The white-owned newspapers often did not report these ideas because the ideas were opposed to the moderate, non-violent civil rights view that was, and still often is, just "tolerable" to many whites. It was a mistake the press cannot afford to make again with another Malcolm X--another angry "radical."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Breitman, George. The Last Year of Malcolm X. New York: Merit Publishers, 1967.

_____. Malcolm X Speaks; Selected Speeches and Statements, edited with prefatory notes by George Breitman. New York: Merit Publishers, 1965.

Broderick, Francis L. and Meier, August (eds.). Negro Protest Thought in the Twentieth Century. New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966.

Clark, Kenneth B. The Negro Protest: James Baldwin, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Talk With Kenneth B. Clark. Boston: Beacon Press, 1963.

Editor and Publisher International Year Book, 1965. 45th Edition. New York: Editor and Publisher Co., Inc., 1965.

Karpas, Melvin Ronald. Black Muslims as the Negro Segregationists. Chicago: Chicago Juvenile Delinquency Research Projects, 1964.

Lincoln, Charles Eric. The Black Muslims in America. Boston: Beacon Press, 1961.

_____. My Face Is Black. Boston: Beacon Press, 1964.

[Little] X, Malcolm. The Autobiography of Malcolm X, assisted by Alex Haley, introduction by M. S. Handler, epilogue by Alex Haley. New York: Grove Press, 1965.

Lomax, Louis E. The Negro Revolt. New York: Harper and Row, 1962.

_____. When the Word Is Given; A Report on Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X and the Black Muslim World. Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1963.

Muhammad, Elijah (Poole). Message to the Blackman in America. Chicago: Muhammad Mosque of Islam Number Two, 1965.

Warren, Robert Penn. Who Speaks for the Negro? New York: Random House, 1965.

Pamphlets

Breitman, George. Malcolm X: The Man and His Ideas. New York: Pioneer Publishers, March, 1965.

[Little], Malcolm X. Two Speeches by Malcolm X. New York: Pioneer Publishers, March, 1965.

Mitchell, Sara. Brother Malcolm. New York: Malcolm X Memorial Committee, May, 1965.

Articles and Periodicals

Adams, Alvin. "Malcolm X 'Seemed Sincere' About Helping Cause: Mrs. King," Jet, March 11, 1965, pp. 11-14.

Barnette, Aubrey. "The Black Muslims Are a Fraud," Saturday Evening Post, February 27, 1965, pp. 43-48.

Black, Pearl. "Malcolm X Returns," Liberator, January, 1965, pp. 16-17.

"Brother Malcolm: His Theme Now Is Violence," U. S. News & World Report, March 23, 1964, p. 19.

Capouya, Emile. "A Brief Return From Mecca," Saturday Review, November 20, 1965, pp. 42-44.

Clark, Kenneth B. "Needed: Antidote to Hatred," Saturday Review, May 13, 1961, pp. 23-24.

"Death of a Desperado," Newsweek, March 8, 1965, p. 25.

Freidman, Murray. "The White Liberal's Retreat," Atlantic Monthly, CCXVI, 1 (January, 1963), 38-40.

Gardner, Jigs. "The Murder of Malcolm X," Monthly Review, April, 1965, p. 9.

- Gilbert, Ben W. "Race Coverage," The Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, No. 515 (January, 1968), pp. 1, 2, 13.
- Holt, Len. "Malcolm X, The Mirror," Liberator, February, 1966, pp. 17-20.
- Lincoln, Charles Eric. "The Meaning of Malcolm X," Christian Century, LXXXII, 14 (April 7, 1965), pp. 431-433.
- "Malcolm's Brand X," Newsweek, March 23, 1964, p. 32.
- "Malcolm X," Nation, CC, 10 (March 8, 1965), 238-239.
- Massaquoi, Hans. "Mystery of Malcolm X," Ebony, September, 1964, pp. 39-40.
- McKnight, Fleix R. "Downplay Their Stupidity!," The Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, No. 515 (January, 1968), pp. 3-4.
- Morrison, Allan. "Who Killed Malcolm X?," Ebony, October, 1965, pp. 136-138.
- Nelson, Truman. "Delinquent's Progress," Nation, CCI, 15 (November 8, 1965), 336-338.
- "The Ominous Malcolm X Exits From the Muslims," Life, March 20, 1964, p. 40.
- Plimpton, George. "Miami Notebook: Cassius Clay and Malcolm X," Harper's, CCXXVIII, 1369 (June, 1964), 57-58.
- Russell, Carlos E. "Exclusive Interview With Brother Malcolm X," Liberator, May, 1964, pp. 21-24.
- "Violence Versus Non-Violence," Ebony, April, 1965, pp. 168-170.

Newspapers

- [New York] Daily News. November, 1963-February, 1965.
- New York Herald Tribune. November, 1963-February, 1965.
- New York Journal-American. November, 1963-February, 1965.

New York Post. November 1963-February, 1965.

New York Times. April, 1963; November 1963-March, 1965;
March, 1966.

New York World-Telegram & Sun. November, 1963-February,
1965.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. LIBRARIES



31293102784794