

In memoriam Malcolm X

Fifth Estate Collective

February 21st marked the fourth anniversary of the assassination of Black America's hero, El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (known to many as Malcolm X).

Born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska on May 19, 1925, Malcolm quickly learned the bitter taste of white racism. His mother was born as the result of her mother's rape by a white planter (thus giving Malcolm his light complexion and red hair).

At the age of 4 his home was burned down by a mob of Ku Klux Klansmen in Lansing.

At the age of six his father's mangled body was found under the rails of a street car (Klan work?).

Traveling to Detroit, Boston and New York he acquired a reputation for drugs, burglary, armed robbery, and prostitution. Being arrested in Boston for armed robbery he was sentenced to ten years at Charlesworth prison. It was at Charlesworth that Malcolm ravenously studied the dictionary and adopted the philosophy of the Muslims.

After his release from prison and startling rise to leadership in the Muslim movement Malcolm broke with the Muslims when he discovered that its leader and his mentor, Elijah Mohammed, had a brothel of girls and considered himself a modern Jesus Christ.

For the next two years "Big Red" spiraled into the news via TV, radio, newspapers and magazines.

Traveling extensively throughout Africa and the Arab world (the honorary title of "El-Hajj" is received by religious pilgrimage to Mecca) Malcolm X was wined and dined by many governments. At one point 32 African governments assured him that they would present and support the case of the Afro-Americans at the United Nations.

Many feel that this was his downfall. Hounded by the FBI and CIA, refused admission to France (ostensibly because France didn't want the CIA to off him in their country), his home firebombed, and finally at 3 p.m. on a cold Sunday, February 21, 1965 Malcolm X walked upon the stage of the Audobon Ballroom at 166th Street and Broadway in New York City.

The tense silence awaiting Malcolm's words was broken by a man's voice in the middle of the Ballroom, "Nigger, get your hands out of my pocket." An incendiary device went off with a soft crump and smoke spiraled into the air.

A man stood up in the fourth row with a sawed-off shotgun. There was a muffled roar as he fired point blank into Malcolm's chest.

As Malcolm still stood erect two men with pistols poured a hail of bullets into his body. He seemed to melt into the stage and the gunmen in the first row emptied their revolvers into his prone body.

But as one door closed on Malcolm's life, another, for which he died searching out the key, may have silently opened. On its threshold today stand 22 million black people. The assassins struck too late: Once a book has been read, burning it will never destroy its message.

The Fifth Estate joins black people in mourning their loss of a great man and leader. His life is a shining example to us as well as to his people, whom he lived and died for.

fifth Estate

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Fifth Estate #73, February 20-March 5, 1969

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