

Malcolm X

From page one

school before graduating from high school. Black men have a greater than 1-in-3 chance of being unemployed. Black men make up 38 percent of the nation's prison population.

Malcolm X told Alex Haley in an interview in the early 1960s for *Sagas* magazine that he credited himself with being able to speak to the needs of his race because "I can talk to the man lowest down because I've been just the man lowest down."

After his release from prison, Malcolm X refused his oratorical skills under the tutelage of Elijah Muhammad, the leader of the Nation of Islam.

William Haley, 46, remembers afternoon when he stood at the corner of 121st Street and Lenox Avenue in Harlem to "listen to Malcolm X and become inspired."

"People would come out in droves to hear him give us messages about our greatness," Haley said. "We would learn about our history, and about our great Africa-American ancestors. He really lifted you. He challenged you. He empowered you."

This excerpt from a speech, Malcolm X delivered at the Detroit Council for Human Rights in 1963 shows Malcolm X was having some of the "turn the other cheek" mentality advocated by Martin Luther King Jr.

"There is no such thing as non-violent revolution. The only kind of revolution that is non-violent is the Negro revolution. The only revolution in which the goal is loving your enemy is the Negro revolution. Revolution is bloody, revolution is hostile, revolution knows no compromise, revolution overthrows and destroys everything that gets in its way."

"And you sitting around here like a knot on the wall, saying, 'I'm going to love those folks to make them like me.' No, you need a revolution."

After Malcolm X broke his ties with the Nation of Islam and traveled to Mexico, Saudi Arabia, his position against white supremacy narrowed to an institutional hate from a personal one. He continued to urge blacks to own guns and continue to shun the idea of total integration between races.

Nearly three decades have passed since his speeches ignited people. Now, the younger Haley and others are pinning their hopes on Lee's film to capture the power of the slain leader's words and spark a chord of urgency in today's youth.

Forcing People to Think

Alice Windom, coordinator for the Bush Center for Law, Policy and Social Change at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, was among the activists who endorsed the letter of concern to Lee. She first met Malcolm X when she heard him speak at a Muslim mosque in Chicago in 1960.

The way he spoke forced her to think about the reality of her life at age 24 — about how white landlords slammed doors in her face when she went apartment hunting because they "didn't rent to coloreds," and about how she couldn't cry on bus in certain



Malcolm X
Assassinated in 1965

department stores because that was a privilege for white alone.

"I just sat there and thought how proud I was that Malcolm was standing there and telling the truth, not sucking up to white people at all," Windom said.

Two years later, Windom was so weary of life in America that she said she was "just waiting for some white person to step on my foot so I could knock their head off." She moved to Africa.

She crossed paths with Malcolm X again when he traveled to Ghana, in western Africa, to garner support in his effort to charge America with "violating the human rights" of blacks. Windom was working for the United Nations and helped him establish ties with officials in Ghana. The two became close friends.

"He was easy to talk to because he didn't put on airs at all," said Windom, now 56. "It showed in the way he carried himself — not at all majestic — but rather in a lanky, imper-

youngers."

Activist Derek Gregory said he was wary that Spike Lee will underestimate the negative aspects of Malcolm X's life. That would be so objectionable if Hollywood gave white heroes the same treatment, Gregory said.

"White people protect their heroes. Why can't we be allowed to do the same?" he asked.

Apparently, Spike Lee is not taking the controversy personally. The Post-Dispatch was unable to interview him for this story, but he recently told the New York Times:

"I know (Malcolm X) was constantly evolving. I like the total evolution, the many transformations he made. Because all of those together made Malcolm. There is a specific Malcolm we hold dear more than the other parts of Malcolm. ... People just pick and choose that Malcolm fits with our own personal agenda or own political beliefs."

Lost in the Myth?

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fact way. He was 6 feet 4 inches, you know, but he wasn't intimidating. He looked you in the eye and interested to what you said."

At night, Malcolm X often would gather kindom and other U.S. employees to talk about the condition of blacks in the United States. The civil rights leader had been separated from the Nation of Islam and was working to establish his own activist organization, the Muslim Mosques Inc. and the Organization of Afro-American Unity.

His reputation in the United States was mixed in controversy. Windom said he told her his life was in danger. Moments after Malcolm X stepped onto the stage of the Audubon Ballroom in New York on Feb. 21, 1965, to give a speech, he was killed by a hail of bullets. He was 39. Three Muslims were charged with his murder.

After his death, the controversy he created continued to stir in St. Louis.

To mark the fourth anniversary of Malcolm X's death in 1969, Adam Carter and a group of black students at Forest Park Community College tried to fly the "cancer" flag on half-staff. A campus security guard pulled his revolver and blocked them.

"It was so insulting that we were forbidden to honor our hero," said Carter, now 38. "That day was pure frustration, anger and depression."

Pick A Side of Malcolm X

In his letter to Spike Lee, Alice Windom and the Black Consciousness Movement said they worried about "Malcolm X" because Lee's previous movies had presented a "caricature of black people's lives" and had dismissed their struggle.

In "Malcolm X," the civil rights leader is shown drinking cocaine and being intimate with a white woman. "Movie images are so powerful," said Lee. "The people who don't know Malcolm will see Malcolm and Detroit as interchangeable, especially youngers."

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Marvin Worth, producer of Spike Lee's controversial new film, "Malcolm X," shown here in his Hollywood office. He bought the rights to "The Autobiography of Malcolm X" from the leader's widow, Betty Shabazz, in 1967.

Paul Lee, 32, has spent more than half his life studying Malcolm X, and he professes not to have mastered the evolution of the slain leader's life. One controversial aspect of Malcolm X's life that Spike Lee dealt with was his relationship with the Nation of Islam.

Donald Muhammad, minister of the Nation of Islam's mosque in East St. Louis, is concerned the movie will blame the Nation of Islam for Malcolm X's assassination.

"We loved Malcolm X," he said. "The Nation of Islam did not orchestrate his murder."

Many believe the opposite is true. Still others adhere to the theory that the CIA and the Nation of Islam were

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British Seize Van Filled With Explosives

LONDON (AP) — Police making a routine check early Saturday stopped a furniture van filled with explosives that had been intended as a bomb, authorities said. An officer was wounded by one of the van's occupants.

A Scotland Yard spokeswoman said about 30 people were evacuated from their homes.

Police said they arrested one man and were searching for at least one more. They refused to speculate on the origin of the explosives.

Press Association, the national domestic news agency, said the explosive were of a type used by the outlawed Irish Republican Army.

The IRA is waging a terrorist campaign aimed at forcing the government to end British rule in Northern Ireland. The IRA's latest series of bombings, which began in the capital on Oct. 7, has killed one man and injured several others.

The Scotland Yard spokeswoman said investigators believed the car-

trists had planned to park the van somewhere and blow it up.

The spokeswoman would not confirm reports that the truck held more than a ton of explosives.

Scotland Yard's deputy assistant commissioner, Michael Taylor, said "If it had been exploded, the carnage that would have ensued would have been tremendous."

Officer Ray Hall, 38, who was shot in the back and face, was hospitalized in satisfactory condition, Taylor said. A gas was found at the scene.

Northern Ireland Attack

A pro-British gunman opened fire Saturday in a bookmaker's shop in northern Belfast. At least two people were killed and 13 wounded, police in Northern Ireland said.

After raising the crowded shop with bullets, the attacker threw a grenade

Plan To Abolish Army Is On Ballot In Panama

U.S. Troop Presence May Be Factor In Vote

Compiled From News Services

PANAMA CITY, Panama — Panamanians, whose recent past was dominated by military strongmen, are deciding Sunday in a special vote whether to outlaw