

## **Malcolm X at Columbia University (November 20, 1963) ~ MALCOLM X**

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Dr. Mencher and students. First I want to thank Dr. Mencher for the invitation to speak here this afternoon. And I should start out by pointing out that in the *Columbia Law Review* I think it was, in December of I think last year, there was an extensive article carried in it about the Muslims and pointing out that there were a group of law students here at this particular campus studying some of the legal aspects of the Muslims and how it would be possible to find some way to stop the spread of their religion according to the Constitution. And whenever you have a University as famous as this in which there are students dedicated to no purpose other than to try and find some constitutional means to stop the spread of an unpopular religion, why that in itself is enough in my introductory remarks to point out why the Muslims in this country are greatly misunderstood.

The press has referred to us as "Black Muslims, which we aren't. We are black people who are Muslims because we believe in the religion of Islam. When you believe in the religion of Islam, color doesn't play any part. There's no such thing as a brown Muslim, a red Muslim, yellow Muslim, white Muslim, or black Muslims when you believe in the religion of Islam. But here in the West, the Christian world, where color is the criterion by which a person is measured, in most references that are used to designate people, usually color is one of the main ingredients mentioned. We are Muslims. Our religion is Islam. We believe in Allah. We believe in one God, one creator, one supreme being, who is called by us Allah. And this God is believed in by people in what you call the Moslem world, which covers pretty much all of Asia, Africa, and today, many parts of Latin America.

As Muslims believing in one God, we also believe that this one God has only one religion, and all of the prophets who came forth on this earth spread that one religion. The name of that religion is Islam.

Here in America the so-called Negroes have been cut off from our own forefathers, from our own people, and from our own kind, from our own culture, for nearly four-hundred years. And during the four hundred years we've been cut off from our people back home, we have been exposed to every type of religious philosophy except the religion of Islam, a great deal of time has been taken to keep the religion of Islam away from the ears and the mind of Negroes in this country.

The honorable Elijah Muhammad, we believe, was raised by God from our midst for the express purpose of teaching the religion of Islam to the American so-called Negroes. And those of us who have accepted this religion believe that this religion is the only real cure to what ails our people in this part of the world.

One of the reasons that this religion is the only cure is because we believe that it's just the plain naked truth, and one of the causes of our ailments in this part of the world is our lack of exposure to truth during the 400 years that we've been here. We believe that most of what Negroes have been taught in America is lies, deliberately concocted lies, scientifically told

lies. And these lies are designed to make Negroes feel inferior and at the same time make white people feel superior. And if anyone has any doubts as to the purposes of the American educational system is designed to do, then all they have to do is examine the general attitudes of white and the general attitudes of blacks, and I think the result will pretty well bear out this statement.

In the religion of Islam, as taught by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, the main characteristics that one undertakes after having been exposed to it is an awakening. It causes our people to wake up. By "wake up," I mean it develops within us racial pride, racial dignity and a strong sense of racial confidence. And this is the missing ingredient that most Negroes find absent whenever they are graduated from the educational system here in America, academic or religious; whereas Mr. Muhammad's teaching of Islam restores this racial pride and this racial dignity, this self-respect and confidence in our own kind by restoring our cultural roots, giving us a knowledge of our cultural roots, or I should say connecting us with our roots in the past; and by pointing out to us our historic roots, automatically we can lay hold of them. Just as a tree receives nutrition from its roots, we find that when the so-called Negro in this country is reconverted or turned back to the religion of Islam, it has a tendency to do to us the same thing that the roots of a tree do to those trees. Also it points out and lends emphasis to the contributions that our people have made to science, to culture, to civilization in the past; whereas the American educational system has completely destroyed all contributions made to science and civilization by dark-skinned people, and lends emphasis—ofttimes false emphasis—to contributions that were made primarily by whites.

And after this wake-up process has been accomplished, the next thing that Mr. Muhammad lends emphasis to in his religious teachings to us is clean-up. Since the general characteristics attributed by sociologists to the so-called Negro community are drunkenness, laziness, welfare problems and things of that sort, today when the Honorable Elijah Muhammad gives us the religion of Islam, immediately the Muslims who accept it turn away from tobacco, from narcotics, alcohol, lying, cheating, stealing, gambling, profanity, boisterousness, most of the things that the critics associate with Negroes.

It develops within us the strong desire to respect our women, protect our women and elevate our women, and also to provide for our women. These are Muslim characteristics. And it gives us a strong respect also for law-enforcement officers and for the law. We are obedient to the law as long as the law is obedient to itself, and we respect the law as long as the law respects itself. And also his teachings have had a strong tendency to rehabilitate men who have gone to prison. In the case of Muslims, seldom does a Muslim ever go to prison for having broken the law. Most Negroes who are in prison who are Muslims became Muslims after going to prison. They went to prison as Christians, and when they get into prison and find that their Christian philosophy or beliefs weren't sufficient to turn them away from crime and keep them from behind prison bars, they become very disillusioned. When they hear the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, usually they accept it. Overnight they change; they're rehabilitated; they're reformed and become better persons.

The last step in that process, after wake-up, and clean-up, is stand-up. This religion also gives black people who accept it the desire to start doing something for ourselves instead of sitting around and waiting for the white man to solve our problems and tell us that we are free or do some kind of justice or equality. The Muslims don't feel that it is up to the white men to tell us when our people are really free or when our people are ready for anything. Once we awaken, it is up to us to get what is our right by whatever means necessary to enforce those

rights. I might say in this short opening statement that the basic difference between black people in America who are Christians and black people in America who are Muslims is that the black man in America who is a Christian usually identifies himself with America, with all of America's troubles and problems and he doesn't see himself on the world stage at all. Usually his scope is very limited. He has never been taught in the American educational system to think of himself beyond the confines of America or see what part he plays in the dark world. His role is limited to America and to the American stage in his own eyes. And therefore on the American stage, which is a white stage, he sees himself as a minority, as the underdog, one against whom the odds are stacked. Usually the black man who is a Christian, when he approaches the problem, he approaches it as an underdog; and he approaches it as a beggar, and he approaches it in a manner where he thinks the white power structure is doing him a favor when they drop crumbs from their table. So he leaves his entire future in the hands of the white man whereas a black man who is a Muslim and who is a follower of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad—his scope isn't limited to the confines of America, but rather he looks at the entire problem in its world context. And as such, he sees that the majority of people of this earth are dark-skinned people or non-white people. And since the majority of people on this earth are non-whites and he himself is non-white, he sees himself in that context; not as a minority on the American stage, but a part of the vast majority of dark-skinned people who outnumber whites on this earth.

But to the Muslim, the white man is just another microscopic minority. And the blacks who accept Islam don't see where whites are doing us any favors when they speak in terms of freedom, justice and equality; nor do we think that it is left up to the white man or should be left up to the white man to make up his mind that Negroes are human beings too, and therefore one of these days pass some kind of legislation that will guarantee to the the Negro rights as human beings.

I hope that's sufficient, and if it's not, we'll try and clarify it later. Thank you.

**Question:** I'm struck by similarities between ideas preached by the Muslim movement and the ideas of the proponents of negritude, and I wonder if you could say anything about the relationship between the Muslim movement and this movement in Africa with the newly independent African states. You've sometimes talked about your people going back to where they came from. To what extent is this something that's practical? Is there any dialogue between Africa and the Muslims?

**Malcolm X:** Mr. Muhammad teaches us that the only solution to this problem that confronts our people in this particular society here, where we are absolutely unwanted, is a departure, an immediate departure, from this unwanted area back to our own homeland where we can live among our own kind in peace and security. And the basic cause of the race problem in this country actually stems from the fact that Negroes are not wanted in this country as anything but chattel or commodity or property which can be exploited politically, economically and otherwise. And as black people in this country wake up and begin to think with their own brain and see the reality of their position in this society, you'll find them becoming increasingly disenchanted; and they'll have a tendency to disassociate themselves completely from America's present as well as from America's future, which means the only future for a black man who has been exposed to the brutalities and hypocrisies of the American system is a departure back home among our own kind where we can live among our own kind. And if this man that you've named refers to it as negritude, a word which I don't go for too much myself, then it's good; because we believe that a white man should be white and a black man should be black. We believe that white people by nature think in terms

of what is good for white people first and foremost. We believe that whatever whites do, since they are intellectually mature—whether they are morally mature is another question—but whenever they become intellectually mature, they think in terms of what is good for white people. And everything that they do stems from that particular premise—what is good for whites. And we believe that black people...and the white man is not wrong for thinking like this. He is applying the first law of nature, which is self-preservation. But by the same token, when the black man becomes truly independent, not only politically and economically but intellectually, we believe that the black man also will then begin to think in terms of what's good for himself collectively as a people first and foremost, which is only natural, and then that leads to something else.

**Question:** You said that Mr. Elijah Muhammad was raised by God in America. I believe that most Muslims in the East believe that the holy prophet Mohammed was the very first prophet

**Malcolm X:** Well, if you'll recall, I didn't say that Mr. Muhammad was a prophet. Sir, we don't refer to Mr. Muhammad as a prophet. A prophet in my understanding of the word is one who predicts the future, one who says what's coming some day. We're not interested in some day. We're interested in right now. We refer to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad as a messenger who has a message of truth for the black people here in America. Now, when our brothers in the East were taught the religion of Islam and then we, their own people, were kidnapped from the East and brought to this country and held here in bondage for 400 years, our Muslim brothers over there never took the time to come over here and spread the religion of Islam among us or teach us about the religion of Islam, much less teach us anything about our lot. They failed to do this. Those who did come spent most of their time trying to teach Islam to the white man of America who had made us slaves. So they're not in a position to question the authenticity of anyone who tries to spread the religion of Islam in America among the black people of America. And the bulk of them who come to this country—and I think they number around 2- or 300,000—all of them combined have never been successful in converting yet 100 Americans to the religion of Islam. The religion of Islam is a religion of propagation. It's a religion in which, when one accepts it in truth and in sincerity, he's not satisfied unless he is spreading it. This is the nature of Islam; this is the history of Islam. But our brothers over there haven't spread Islam in a long time. In fact, they aren't even living up to it themselves. So whenever the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, a little black man from Georgia, is able to stand up in his country and get not a hundred or two hundred, but hundreds of thousands of ex-slaves, so-called Negroes, to turn towards Mecca five times a day giving praise to Allah and practicing the principles of the religion of Islam even on a more strict basis than it is practiced in most of the world today, they should give him credit—not question his religious authenticity.

**Question:** Mr. X, in 1959 when Elijah Muhammad traveled to the Near East he was welcomed by international leaders. At the same time, however, national American leaders of the American Moslem movement, repudiated your group. Can you tell me, since that time has there been any change in that policy? Has there been any interweaving between the two groups?

**Malcolm X:** Number one, you will not find true Muslims, who are religiously sincere, washing their dirty clothes in public. This is one of the natural characteristics again of Islam. Islam creates brotherhood. It makes Muslims one happy family and whenever members of the same family have a disagreement, they go behind closed doors and iron it out; and then they come out in public with a united front. The Muslims in the Muslim world who welcomed the Honorable Elijah Muhammad upon his trip into the Muslim world in 1959 did so because they

realized that he was doing work for the religion of Islam in the West that they themselves combined, with all the resources, were incapable of doing; whereas, on the other hand, you had Muslim groups in this country who are not religiously sincere and who live off the crumbs gain that fall from the table of this so-called power structure in which they live and whatever they say is usually designed to cater to the people who run that power structure or to appease them. So their pronouncements three or four years ago used to be filled with criticism and condemnation of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. But if you'll notice in your press, this has decreased recently.

Usually when a Muslim comes here from abroad, reporters will give him a leading question or a loaded question. A reporter will meet that Muslim with the statement that the black Muslims teach hate, they're against all white people,"What do you think of the black Muslims?" Why good night, the man can't give but one answer. So this is what this particular segment of the earth has done, and some of our brothers from abroad have come here and fallen victim to it. Rather than coming to us and finding out what it is we stand for and what we are teaching and why, they listen to the enemy of Islam and let the enemy put words in their mouth. So we don't have any sympathy or patience with them either, although actually they don't understand.

**Question:** How do you feel about the interest that the American Nazi party has shown in your movement?

**Malcolm X:** I know nothing about the American Nazi party. I think probably all of them can fit in one garden; that is, the practicing Nazis. However, I think that more white people in this country are in sympathy with Naziism than they are with practicing democracy. There are more whites who use little pockets of Nazis as whipping boys actually practice more Naziism and put up with more Naziism than Hitler did in Germany. And I don't think any white is in a moral position to ask me what I think about Nazis in light of the fact you're living in a country which in 1963 permits the bombing of Negro churches and the murder of little innocent and defenseless black children—why, you're not in a position to ask me anything about Naziism. Naziism is practiced by this government. Excuse me for giving it to you so bluntly, but I run into this question every now and then; and it doesn't make me look bad, it makes you look bad. The same thing that Hitler was practicing in Germany is practiced in this country against Negroes and it's also practiced against Muslims—Negroes in general and Muslims in particular. They hide behind the fact that Rockwell is supposed to be a Nazi, but Rockwell couldn't do what he's doing and get as much support as he's getting if there weren't a large segment of whites in this country who think exactly like Rockwell does only they camouflage their real feelings behind a lot of haughty, pious-sounding phrases like "integration," "civil rights," and other things.

**Question:** If you think that our government practices Naziism, what about the efforts of, let's say, the justice department to obtain legislation...about accusing the justice department of not trying to do anything for the Negroes. What about the Kennedy legislative policy?

**Malcolm X:** What about it?

**Question:** What about it? What about it?

**Malcolm X:** The Kennedy's don't see any legislation. Kennedy never mentioned any legislation until those Negroes started erupting in Birmingham. As long the dogs were biting black people in Birmingham and King was trying to get the President to send him some troops to protect the victims of police brutality in Birmingham, the President said nothing, the department of justice did nothing. As long as the Negroes were nonviolent, the department of justice did nothing. It was only when the Negroes erupted on Saturday morning and began to

retaliate against their brutal attackers that the President came on the television and then started talking about some kind of civil rights legislation that he was going to ask for. He had his back to the wall; he was in a corner; this was the only time he mentioned it. It became a moral issue then. I'm not so much influenced by whites who become very moral when someone puts a gun to their head, whether it's the President in the white House or just another Rockwell or Wallace. To show you the hypocrisy of the justice department, including the man in the White House, as soon as they felt that the Negro, what they called "revolt" had died down, they began to water down their efforts to bring out some kind of civil rights legislation. And every day they come out more so and they admit that there's less chance of any civil rights legislation being passed this year. So I don't think that the justice department or anybody else is being true to the situation as it is faced by Negroes—again, especially in light of the fact that, although the justice department couldn't send anybody to Birmingham, Kennedy was ready to send troops into Saigon to protect 2- or 3,000 Americans that didn't even have any business to go over there. And he was ready to send troops into Cuba and other places on this earth. But when it comes to sending troops or police to defend the lives and the property of black people in this country, it's just a whole lot of talk. Nothing ever materializes. And I think white people should realize that Negroes are more aware of this hypocrisy than many whites are willing to admit to themselves.

**Question:** Sir, on the question of nonviolence, Mr. Williams, the North Carolina Negro now in Cuba, has suggested that American Negroes arm themselves in self- defense. I was wondering if you'd like to comment on Mr. Williams' views, especially the question of arms.

**Malcolm X:** Well, I wouldn't comment on Mr. Williams' views because I don't know what they are, but I can give you Mr. Muhammad's view. That's what I'm here for. I don't represent Robert Williams. Robert Williams is in Cuba. He's in exile. Evidently he didn't know what he was doing. He should have gone ahead and used what he said he believed in. Muslims who follow the Honorable Elijah Muhammad believe that our people should be intelligent, should obey laws, should carry themselves with respect, but any time anybody puts their hands on us, we should send them straight to the cemetery—no matter what the odds against us are. We should always obey the law; we should respect everyone; we should carry ourselves in an intelligent and respectful and friendly way. But any time anyone comes to put their hands on us, that person should get what he has coming to him. And I don't think there's anything wrong with that because America has always practiced this herself. I've never read anything in the history of America where Uncle Sam has practiced turning the other cheek. When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, America didn't say, "Bomb us again." He didn't turn the other cheek. No! She retaliated. She wanted to retaliate against Russia just because Russian missiles were in Cuba.

Anybody who's intelligent is going to defend himself when he's being attacked. And the black people in this country who accept the religion of Islam and become followers of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, no matter what be odds are against us—we don't carry any weapons; we don't arm ourselves—but we do believe when someone attacks us, we are going to lay down our life right there on the spot, or we are going to lay somebody else's life down beside ours. I hope this clarifies that point

**Question:** In Mr. Byrd's article based on interviews with Elijah Muhammad, he mentions the possibility of political activity force. Could you comment on that?

**Malcolm X:** Yes. What Mr. Muhammad has in mind is not clear to me. I don't know what his political intentions are. He has not spelled them out. But I might lend emphasis to the fact that the same *Herald-Tribune* that carried his series, in 1961, in February I think it was, they

mentioned that in this country you have approximately 3,000,000 Negroes who vote and 8,000,000 who don't vote. You have 11,000,000 who could vote. They said 2,700,000 do, which in round figures is approximately 3,000,000 who do and 8,000,000 don't. So the question is: who are the type of Negroes who vote? And I think if you study, you'll find usually they're the middle class bourgeois professional type Negro or semi-professional type Negro who take an active part in politics. The masses of black people in this country don't participate in politics. This doesn't mean that they're politically immature or politically lethargic, but they don't take part in politics because they don't trust the politicians, neither the Negro politician nor the white politician, because most of the Negro politicians are only puppets in the white political machine. They have no voice whatsoever. And when a Negro politician does become independent of the white political machine, usually the press labels him as a racist, an extremist, a demagogue and things like that. You know how they do with probably Adam Clayton Powell. And Powell is one of the only Negroes in this country who has ever shown his ability to be independent of a white political machine. So they label you when you show real independence. Whites don't go along with any black man who is independent of them. As long as a black man will listen to white advice and put himself under white control, then that white man goes along with that black man and calls him a "responsible Negro leader," and by that he means that Negro is responsible to him and will listen to him. So these 3,000,000 are in the minority, the upper class Negro; whereas the 8,000,000, the masses who don't participate, they're the most dangerous element, because if 3,000,000 carry such strategic weight that your Presidential candidates and others will go far out of their way to make love to the 3,000,000, you can imagine what they could have to do if the 8,000,000 who are inactive become active. Why, they would upset the entire political picture in this country.

Those are the facts. Never before this generation has there been a real leader who appealed to the masses other than Marcus Garvey. Marcus Garvey had mass appeal, and he frightened the government and the power structure to death, to the point where they had to get a lot of these Uncle Tom Negroes to join his outfit and get him framed up and sent him to Atlanta penitentiary so they could deport him. The first man to be a leader since Garvey is the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. And those students of political science who are aware of the structure of the Negro community are well aware of the fact that if Mr. Muhammad ever became politically active, you'd have a changed picture on the entire political scene of this country. So what his aims are, I don't know.

**Question:** Sir, I understand that one of the philosophies of the movement is for geographic separation of the races, and I understand also that South Africa recently has established their new policy, which calls for the actual separation into black conclaves. Is there any application of this policy in the United States?

**Malcolm X:** You can't compare what Mr. Muhammad is asking for with anything that's going on in South Africa. South Africa is South Africa. The apartheid policy is a policy being carried out by the white power structure, which is the minority, against the blacks, who are in the majority. And if the white minority thought that the separation of those blacks and whites was going to give the blacks an equal footing, they would be just as much against it as they are now for it. But they figure that they are going to put the black into some kind of segregated society which will still be under their jurisdiction and which they can control. We're not asking anything like that. Mr. Muhammad wants complete separation and independence from this particular political system, economic system that you call America, a system which will enable the black man then to utilize his own dormant talent and know-how and resources to

lift himself by his own bootstraps instead of sitting around here as a beggar in this system, dependent upon this system.

**Question:** Could you forecast how this could happen in the United states? ?

**Malcolm X:** Number one, Mr. Muhammad isn't saying, "Give us part of this country." His solution is, as I think I've said, is the complete exodus of our people from this country back to our own homeland where we can live among our own people, and that this government should supply us with all of the machinery and tools necessary for us to till the soil back home and develop our own agricultural system, feed, clothe and shelter ourselves, and thereby make our own people an independent people standing on our own feet

And if this government does not want that, then the alternative would be, since we can't get along together in peace on this continent mixed up with each other, to separate this continent geographically and give us an area where there's plenty of rainfall and mineral resources and the machinery and the tools necessary for us to begin the existence of our own independent civilization, society and government there. Then there will be some kind of peace. But other than that, as long as black and white try to stay under the same roof in the same room mixed up together, pretty soon you're going to have some very, very serious trouble because the black man is waking up. And when he wakes up, you can't contain him or trick him. You can't appease him. And tokenism doesn't move him. So if the white society will react as violently as it has only to the tokenism that the Negro is asking for, what do you think white society's reaction will be when the Negro wakes up and begins to ask for the real thing? White society will react violently and then to their shock they're going to find that Negro society reacting just as violently. You've forgotten right now that the majority of people on this earth are dark-skinned people, they're not white people. We represent a minority only in this particular society. But worldwide we're a part of the dark majority and we'll stand on that. And when our brothers over there wake up, they won't continue to be satisfied to come over here and go to the United Nations and berate South Africa for its racism and keeping hush-mouthed on Uncle Sam for his racism. No.

**Question:** To get what you want, what concrete plans do you have to push that through?

**Malcolm X:** The honorable Elijah Muhammad, as those of you who are Christians probably will recall in the Bible where Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Well, we believe that. We believe that when the black people in this country are exposed to the truth (that's why I said, "wake up") about themselves, their own past, then the worst crime that the white man committed against us will be corrected, because actually the worst crime that the white man today is guilty of is that he has destroyed a people; he has destroyed a human being. 20,000,000 Negroes have ceased to be human in the sight of white society simply because the white system has destroyed all evidences of culture that these people ever had. And when these cultural characteristics have been destroyed, then it is possible for the same system to convict us of having once been savages and cannibals, and then this means that the slave system which we underwent here was a favor to us rather than a crime. And most Negroes actually have fallen for this. But once Elijah Muhammad teaches us the truth about our past and about the cultural, the scientific achievements and contributions of our people in Africa at a time when your own forefathers were crawling around in caves, why immediately this restores within the so-called Negro some kind of racial pride and racial incentive and gives him the ability to stand on his own feet and start thinking with his own brain instead of waiting for a white man to think for him or a white man to do something to solve his problems for him. The truth is sufficient to wake our people up, and once our people wake up, you have a new man, a new people.



It won't be this old handkerchief-head, head-scratcher and knee-knocker that you've been dealing with. He'll be a man who'll meet you with respect as long as you carry yourself with respect. But he'll not be a man who will salute you just because your skin is white. Those days are over.

**Question:** Mr. X, I wonder if you can tell us if the Muslims, your people vote, and at the same time could you tell us your opinion of the three men who are already involved in the campaign — Mr. Goldwater, Mr. Rockefeller, Mr. Kennedy?

**Malcolm X:** The honorable Elijah Muhammad doesn't teach us to vote. He tells us to wake up. Once a man is awakened intellectually, he can think for himself. He knows whatever is good for himself and then he does that which is good for him, collectively and individually. I should say individually and collectively. Wake up is the first step. Most politicians don't want to wake Negroes up. They want Negroes to register and stay asleep, so they can hitch the Negro vote to their particular wagon. But you never hear any of the Negro leaders talking about waking the Negro up, make him intellectually and politically mature. They just say, "Get him to register." And if he registers in the mental condition that he is now, any politician can come along and use him. So Mr. Muhammad says, "Wake up." That is, "Think for yourself and then do whatever is good for yourself." So the three candidates who are front running—I forget their names, but whoever they are it doesn't make any difference to me. I would list them as foxes and wolves. Goldwater is a wolf. He lets you know where he stands. He doesn't like Negroes. At least all of his pronouncements and behavior give Negroes the impression that he's very vicious and dangerous, a wolf-type character. And as to the others...which one was it?

**Question:** Rockefeller.

**Malcolm X:** A fox. Foxes and wolves usually are of the same breed. They belong to the same family—I think it's called canine. And the difference is that the wolf when he shows you his teeth, you know that he's your enemy; and the fox, when he shows you his teeth, he appears to be smiling. But no matter which of them you go with, you end up in the dog house. And Negroes in New York State should probably be well acquainted with this because they have no more freedom, justice and equality here than they have anywhere else. The same thing is practiced in New York State as is practiced in Arizona and Mississippi. Only in New York it's done in a more subtle manner. It's done with a smile. It's done in a friendly way. But all of the demonstrations that have been taking place here in New York City I think will well bear out what I'm saying. I make no distinction between a fox and a wolf other than that distinction. One is a fox and the other is a wolf.

**Question:** How would you classify President Kennedy?

**Malcolm X:** Same. A fox. John F. That "F" stands for fox. He's undoubtedly more foxier than any of the others because any time a man can become President and be in office three years and do as little for Negroes as he has done despite the fact that Negroes went for him 80% and he can still maintain the friendly image in the mind of Negroes, I'll have to say he's the foxiest of the foxy.

**Question:** Out of these three candidates, whom would you vote for next year?

**Malcolm X:** I don't think that if I was cornered by any fox or a wolf, that I would have to take a choice between either one. I don't see any choice between a fox or a wolf. A fox is a fox and a wolf is a wolf—to me. Neither one is the lesser of two evils. Both of them are evil. And Negroes, when they become politically mature, I think will realize that you don't have to throw the bullets out of your gun just because you have a gun. Likewise you should wait until you have a target and bring that target down. I think when Negroes become really mature, they

won't vote just because they can vote. Sometimes they'll abstain. Ofttimes in a position of abstaining is as effective in its results as an actual vote, as is proved in the UN. You have those who say "yes," those who say "no," and those who abstain. And those who abstain have just as much weight. And probably the most intelligent thing Negroes could do at this juncture would be to abstain and withhold their vote completely and make both the fox and the wolf fight it out among themselves.

**Question:** Could you give me some idea of the strength of the black Muslims here in New York City?

**Malcolm X:** No. I don't know how strong they are. I have no idea whatsoever.

**Question:** Are there any records of membership?

**Malcolm X:** No. If there are, I don't have them. I'm not the secretary. I have no idea how many Muslims there are in New York or elsewhere. Murray Kempton, writing for the *New York Post*, said that he has a sneaking suspicion that, he said that he doesn't think there will ever be very many Negro Muslims, but he has a sneaking suspicion that most Negroes have some Muslim in them. I think he was speaking with reason in one breath and with emotion in the next breath. As an intelligent person, his analysis would force him to see that if he were a Negro and he heard what Mr. Muhammad were teaching, he would accept it, but as a white person, he could see it would be against him; so he's hoping that Negroes don't accept it. But I think you would be shocked if you knew how many.

**Question:** Mr. Muhammad claimed that by 1970, 90% of the Negroes would be converted to Islam. Are you able to state whether its increased in membership?

**Malcolm X:** Yes, I heard Mr. Muhammad when he made that statement to Lou Lomax when Lomax was a reporter for Mike Wallace; that by 1970, he said that all the Negroes in this country would be resurrected from the grave; and the symbolic language used there only means that they would know the truth, and this truth would wake them up—by 1970. And there is every indication that the momentum that is gathering speed as that date arrives. Negroes are waking up, and frankly I believe that if white people knew the degree of speed with which Negroes are waking up, their whole attitude would be a lot different. And the only way you are going to know how fast Negroes are waking up is when you start asking these Uncle Toms, and go out into the Negro community and ask somebody who represents the Negro community.

**Question:** You said that white men are responsible for the condition that black people are in, and then you said that they should give the black people land, how do you reconcile these two?

**Malcolm X:** I think it's easily reconciled. When you consider that our people were slaves in this country for over 310 years, this was the contribution of free labor, slave labor. Any time that you take the people that are in this classroom right now and take their individual income, individually it would amount to nothing; but collectively it would tip the scales—just your earning power. Now take the same earning power and multiply that, not weekly, but yearly and you could imagine just what income you'd have from the group right here in this small room. When you look at it like that and realize that America didn't have a hundred but had millions of black people in this country whom they could work as animals for over 300 years without having to pay out one dime even in upkeep nor wage, you can see how it was possible for this particular country to become richer than any other country in history faster than any country in history. This is the contribution that the Negro made to the American economic, political and social system.

Now, based on that, the only just compensation today would not be an integrated cup of

coffee. Since we have made this contribution to help this country become what it is and now that we are in it we can't get along, and believe me, we can't get along, not as brothers and sisters—it will never happen—the only sensible thing that the whites can do to preserve at least part of what you have is to go ahead and give the Negro his share, let him depart and go back to his own homeland and start life among his own people.

I might add, if you'll notice I said earlier, this and the alternative and I stopped, because there's got to be a result if either the solution or the alternative doesn't work. There's got to be a result. We're not going to wait around another five years, ten years or another century to get this race problem solved. It's got to be solved or there won't be any problem to solve.

**Question:** You haven't yet specified whether any particular area where you want to go. Is there any indication of what area you have in mind or whether the people will assent to you or whether you'll be able to find the kind of place you want?

**Malcolm X:** Oh, yes. These are our people back home. What would they look like not accepting us? Although, if you'll excuse me for saying this, the colonial system has always been divide and conquer, and the American government has put out the propaganda that our brothers in Africa don't want us, and they've put out the propaganda among Africans that our people over here don't want them. And when the Africans come to this country there's a mile gap between us and we never knew why. It's this same old divide and conquer, plus the fact that they know that if they keep Negroes thinking that they have no place else to go, then the Negro has to be a beggar over here in America because he thinks there's no other alternative. And most Negro integrationists are nothing but beggars; whereas what Mr. Muhammad is saying is, "Let us go. Give us something here that will enable us to solve the problem with the masses."

And if I might take the time to point this out: You see, the difference between what Mr. Muhammad is asking and what the Negro civil rights leaders are asking is this: Mr. Muhammad's solution solves the problem for the masses, and it solves it permanently, once and for all. Whereas the Negro civil rights leaders—their solution will solve the problem for a handful of hand-picked Negroes, and even that solution is temporary, because you can't name one place in America where integration has been brought about other than on a token basis. Wherever it is brought about on a token basis the only ones who receive the benefits of it are the hand-picked Negroes. A handful of hand-picked Negroes. And the masses still remain completely up in arms. So you only make a fool out of yourselves coming up with tokenism which doesn't solve anything. Whereas if you come up with a complete separation and a settlement right now, the problem would be solved once and for all.

**Question:** You didn't answer my question.

**Malcolm X:** Answer your question? Well, I don't think it would be wise on our part to specify any geographic or political area on this earth where we would settle other than to say that our people back home will accept us with open arms, and I don't think you should hold it against me for being reluctant to speak on that. Any time a sheep finds itself in a den of wolves and the shepherd comes to take him, what would he look like telling the wolf where he's going?

**Question:** Sir, would you be in favor, instead of the Negroes withholding their vote, of an all-Negro party perhaps?

**Malcolm X:** I'm sorry I don't know whether I understood your question.

**Question:** You said that instead of voting for these three men who are running for President that the Negroes ought to withhold their vote. Do you think that instead of this, maybe the Negroes should set up their own all-Negro party in order to get these aims which are political?

**Malcolm X:** Well, I don't know. You mentioned freedom Now, well, I think they attempt to do that. You'll notice that whenever Negroes attempt to set up an all-Negro anything, the Negro leaders of national stature knock it. Because, you see, Negroes of national stature aren't really leaders of the Negro community, and they don't go along with anything that's really designed to solve the problem for the Negro community. They're controlled, their salaries are paid by what you call white liberals who are the most dangerous things in America, these things who call themselves white liberals. And so you'll never find one of these nationally recognized Negroes going along with anything that's all Negro or anything that's all black because their own position stems from their ability to draw a paycheck, and they don't feel that they can really draw a paycheck in any society that's all black. They're more interested in solving their own personal, individual problem than they are the masses of black people. I shouldn't say that we as Muslims couldn't endorse any specific party whether it was all anything. But the very fact that we are Muslims and are black I think pretty well speaks for itself as to which direction our weight would be thrown in if going in that direction was going to bring about a solution to the problem for the masses, not just a few handpicked Negroes. The top Negroes are insufficient to meet the Negro's needs.

**Question:** Why doesn't the black Muslim movement assume the leadership of a party? What is that reason for this?

**Malcolm X:** What the present Negro leadership in this country is doing will destroy it; they're riding a tiger. If you'll notice, the Negro leaders have never been really militant, never truly militant, nothing that you call Negro leaders. They only became militant when the masses became militant. And then the Negro leaders had to pretend to be militant in order to keep their position in front of the masses. So when they jumped out and pretended to be militant, they began to ride a tiger, which they themselves can't ride nor can they control it. So whenever you find any stirring up by these big Negroes, you'll find that they're stirring up people that they can't control. There's only one man who can ride that tiger. And they admit it in private, but they won't admit it in public. The tiger will eat them.

**Question:** Sir, how do you reconcile the fact that you say the Negro is waking up when at a rally in Harlem only a few thousand people attend

**Malcolm X:** Well, let me answer you in this way: I read in the paper here where the Big Six, with the support of all the news media, TV, radio and the press were going to have a rally at the Polo Grounds. And with all of that support, they only rallied I think 500 people. If you check back, I think you'll agree with me that this is what happened. And also whenever Muslims give a rally, if the press says there were 2000 present, you can bet how many were present. The white press acts in concert to play down the effect of Muslims and the influence of Muslims in the so-called Negro community at a local level, a state level and a national level, because the wishful thinking of many of these whites is that most Negroes certainly don't think like Muslims claim they do. So they try and delude themselves. This is one of the most dangerous mistakes this present generation of white people are making. They delude themselves with wishful thinking.

**Question:** What about the thousand Negroes that marched on Washington?

**Malcolm X:** I can explain it easily. The march on Washington had reached a complete block and was not getting any reaction at all...originally the idea to march on Washington was brought by the mass of people across the country who were discontent and extremely disenchanted. And at the time that they were talking about marching on Washington—if you go back and check all the press reports—Wilkins and the national leaders weren't involved in it at all: those Big Six weren't involved in it at all. It was talked about developing into such an

uncontrollable thing that you will recall President Kennedy called in Wilkins and I think Randolph and one of the others and told them to call it off. And then the President was told that they couldn't call it off because they weren't the ones that had started it, then shortly after that, Wilkins and them returned to New York and a meeting was held at the Carleton Hotel in downtown New York, the hotel that Kennedy stays at, I think owned by his family or somebody close to him.

This meeting was called by a philanthropic society called the Foundation which is headed by Stephen Courier, and Stephen Courier had these Negro leaders where they were destroying themselves by fighting each other and that we should unite into what they called the united civil rights leadership committee—something like that. And once they formed this thing—it was supposed to be for fund-raising purposes, Courier maneuvered Young into the chairmanship of it and he became the Co-Chairman. And this particular organization was then used to represent and control and influence all the civil rights movement. The first step was to take over the march on Washington. And the Big Six were projected by the news media as the leaders of the march, as being in control of the march. And as soon as the public accepted them or identified them as being inseparable with the march image, their next step was to invite Walter Reuther, a rabbi, a priest and a preacher to join; the same white clique that put Kennedy in power in Washington, D.C. joined the march in Washington because when Kennedy himself found that he couldn't stop it, fox that he is, he joined it. He endorsed it; he welcomed it, and said, "Come on to Washington." And he got his friends to join it. And when they joined it, they weakened it. It became nothing. It's like when you have a black cup of coffee that's too strong to drink, you integrate it with cream; or you pour cream in it, and as you pour the cream in it, it cools down and it weakens it, you eventually don't have the same substance that you started out with. The march on Washington turned out the same way. It shows the shrewd political reassuring and trickery of this group that is running the country right now. They joined it. And they put so many whites in it that it lost its militancy; it lost its flavor; it lost its anger.

They controlled it completely and they controlled it lock, stock and barrel to the point where the government was the one that told those Negroes what time to leave town, when to arrive, where they could march, and what they could say, what they could sing, and told them they better leave town by sundown. This was your march on Washington. Most of the real militant Negroes haven't been to Washington yet. As soon as the whites took it over they stayed away from it. The only ones who really believe that the March on Washington accomplished anything are a handful of bourgeois Negroes and a lot of wishful thinking whites. It was controlled by whites, not by Negroes. And it benefitted nothing.

To show you the extent to which it was worthless, within two weeks after it was over they bombed a church down in Birmingham, murdered four little girls, shot two more little black boys in the back; and Kennedy had things under control to the extent where he didn't even send any help and sent a football coach down there to... Negroes are just a football team...and he sent his head coach down there to make sure that things didn't get out of hand. So don't mention the march on Washington. It was a farce, and it didn't impress anybody except those who wanted to be impressed by it even before it took place.

I want to thank you for the invitation and I hope that my blunt speaking won't be taken by you as a manner of disrespect. This is not the case. I know that you invited me here to speak what I think, not just what you want to hear. Some of the others come and tell you what you want to bear.