

Malcolm X and The FBI

Malcolm K. Little was a prominent black nationalist leader and a speaker for the Nation of Islam. Due largely to his efforts, the Nation of Islam grew from a mere 400 members at the time he was released from prison in 1952 to 40,000 members by 1960. Due to Malcolm's dad's civil rights activism, the family was subjected to frequent harassment from white supremacist groups including the Ku Klux Klan and one of its splinter factions, the Black Legion. Later his father died to a reported accident, but Malcolm believed it was the Black Legion. Malcolm had a tough life as a child. In the 1950's the FBI's focus was on potential communists and spies because of the tension during the Cold War. For this reason Malcolm X was under much FBI surveillance.

Clashes between communism and capitalism dominated the decade, especially in the Northern Hemisphere. The conflicts included the Korean War in the beginnings of the fifties. Along with this, the Cold War had turned into a heated "battle" between the United States and the Soviet Union. In prison Malcolm admitted to being a communist. This really must have caught the FBI's attention because during that time period people were scared and a large amount of people in the United States had anti-communist sentiments. With this information, the FBI would want to watch him carefully because of possible ties with the communists.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation collected much information on Malcolm K. Little. The most notable data they collected on him was his association with the "Muslim Cult Of Islam" and his criminal past. The Nation of Islam "teaches that the Korean war is a futile effort" and that "North America and Great Britain will be doomed." This would raise suspicion that Malcolm could be anti-American and therefore have sentiments with the communists. His past criminal records also would indicate that Malcolm may act again.

The FBI may have had some sensible reasons for keeping such close tabs on Malcolm, they also showed signs of prejudice. Prejudice is defined as, "an irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics," by the Merriam Webster dictionary. The FBI includes information on Malcolm and his "cult" as if because he is a muslim, that he is a communist criminal.

During the 1950's there was a lot of tension between the two superpowers of the world, America and the Soviet Union. This created a lot of anti-communist sentiments and paranoia that was not very fair. Malcolm K. Little is a great example of paranoia and fear that the Federal Bureau of Investigation held of communists. He was not only under constant surveillance because of his support of the communist party, but also because of ties with the Nation of Islam. The group's views on the wars most likely let to the FBI's suspicions.