

Malcolm Little, more popularly known as Malcolm X, was a prominent figure in civil rights history in America. He was a human rights activist and a voice for the movement called Nation of Islam. The FBI created an intelligence report on Malcolm X in 1953 as he started gaining popularity amongst the African American community. The report mainly consisted of Malcolm's background such as his date of birth, employment status, residence, military service, criminal record, and the groups he was affiliated with. One group in particular was interesting to the FBI: the Communist Party Activities. America and the Soviet Union were in the midst of the Cold War that lasted from 1945 to 1990. Malcolm identified as a communist, which was against the U.S.'s beliefs, so that immediately put him on the FBI's radar. Because there was hostility between these two countries, one of America's focuses and fears was communism existing within their borders. This information could have been useful given the organization's priorities because it is reasonable to keep tabs on another country's ideology spreading, but Malcolm's nationality was American, so it was unlikely he would use it to betray his country. Although the U.S. was not concerned that he was affiliated with the Nation of Islam, they still felt the need to include it in the FBI's report. The Nation of Islam was not officially referred to in the report, but it might have been renamed to Muslim Cult of Islam. The word 'cult' has a negative connotation to it, which is why it may have been added to the report to scare the public. A quote that is put in parenthesis paints the group in a bad light because it is taken out of context; the quote reflects how they exist only to serve Allah, and would rather be fooled by the devil if it means they still get to serve their god. This served as evidence that Malcolm was not a "typical" American citizen because he believes in completely different ideas and is meant to scare Americans that are afraid of the unknown. In spite of the fact that this should be a formal, unbiased report, it does a great job of persuading someone who is not well versed in Malcolm's background that he is on the wrong side of history. Based on the time period, this document was most probably written by white, Christian men. Looking back on this report now, it does seem prejudiced towards the Soviet Union because of how they put an emphasis on his connection to the communist party. It's interesting to note how that if this same report was written now, the FBI would put a greater accent on how he was a Muslim, instead of how he was part of a communist group, because of the events of 9/11. But as they were preparing the report, they probably did their best to make it as cut and dry as possible.