

Excerpts from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X, 1965*

...The teachings of Mr. Muhammad stressed how history had been "whitened" -when white men had written history books, the black man simply had been left out... You can hardly show me a black adult in America-or a white one, for that matter- who knows from the history books anything like the truth of the black man's role.....I found books like ... Souls of Black Folk by W.E.B. Du Bois gave me a glimpse into the black people's history before they came to this country. ...Mr. Muhammad's teaching about how the white man had been created led me to Findings In Genetics by Gregor Mendel. ... if you started with a black man, a white man could be produced; but starting with a white man, you never could produce a black man-because the white chromosome is recessive. And since no one disputes that there was but one Original Man, the conclusion is clear.

... I never will forget how shocked I was when I began reading about slavery's total horror...The world's most monstrous crime, the sin and the blood on the man's hands, are almost impossible to believe...I read descriptions of atrocities; saw those illustrations of black slave women tied up and flogged with whips; of black mothers watching their babies being dragged off, never to be seen by their mothers again; of dogs after slaves, and of the fugitive slave catchers, evil white men with whips and clubs and chains and guns. I read about the slave preacher Nat Turner, who put the fear of God into the white slave master.

Nat Turner wasn't going around preaching pie-in-the-sky and "non-violent" freedom for the black man. There in Virginia one night in 1831, Nat and seven other slaves started out at his master's home and through the night they went from one plantation "big house" to the next, killing until by the next morning 57 white people were dead and Nat had about 70 slaves following him. White people, terrified for their lives, fled from their homes, locked themselves up in public buildings, hid in the woods, and some even left the state. A small army of soldiers took two months to catch and hang Nat Turner. Somewhere I have read where Nat Turner's example is said to have inspired John Brown to invade Virginia and attack Harper's Ferry nearly thirty years later, with thirteen white men and five Negroes.

... the collective white man had acted like a devil in virtually every contact he had with the world's collective non-white man.

.... "Kill the foreign white devils!" was the 1901 Chinese war cry in the **Boxer Rebellion**. Losing again, this time the Chinese were driven from Peking's choicest areas. The vicious, arrogant white man put up the famous signs, "Chinese and dogs not allowed." ...Red China after World War II closed its doors to the Western white world. Massive Chinese agricultural, scientific and industrial efforts are described in a book that life magazine recently published. Some observers inside Red China have reported that the world never has known such hate-white campaign as is now going on in this non-white country where, present birth-rates continuing, in fifty more years Chinese will be half the earth's population. And it seems that some Chinese chickens will soon come home to roost, with China's recent successful nuclear tests.

...Yesterday I spoke in London, and both ways on the plane across the Atlantic I was studying a document about how the **United Nations** proposes to insure the **human rights** of the oppressed minorities of the world. The American black man is the world's most shameful case of minority oppression. What makes the black man think of himself as only an internal United States issue is just a catch-phrase, two words, and "civil rights." How is the black man going to get "civil rights" before first he wins his human rights, and then start thinking of himself as part of one of the world's great peoples, he will see he has a case for the United Nations. I can't think of a better case! Four hundred years of black blood and sweat invested here in America, and the white man still has the black man begging for what every immigrant fresh off the ship can take for granted the minute he walks down the gangplank.

...History has been so "whitened" by the white man that even the black professors have known little more than the most ignorant black man about the talents and rich civilizations and cultures of the black man of millenniums ago. I have lectured in Negro colleges and some of these brain washed black Ph.D.'s, with their suspenders dragging the ground with degrees, have run to the white man's newspapers calling me a "black fanatic." Why, a lot of them are fifty years behind the times. If I were president of one of these black colleges, I'd hock the campus if I had to, to send a bunch of students off digging in Africa for more, more and more proof of the black race's historical greatness. The white man is now in Africa digging and searching. An African elephant can't stumble without falling on some white man with a shovel. Practically every week, we read about some great new find from Africa's lost civilizations. All that's new is white science's attitude. The ancient civilizations of the black man have been buried on the Black Continent all the time.

...This species of man lived 1,818,036 years before Christ. And these bones were found in Tanganyika. In the Black Continent.

It's a crime, the lie that has been told to generations of black men and white men both. Little innocent black children, born of parents who believed that their race had no history. Little black children seeing, before they could talk, that their parents considered themselves inferior. Innocent black children growing up, living out their lives, dying of old age-and all of their lives ashamed of being black. But the truth is pouring out of the bag now.

...I have to admit a sad, shameful fact. I had so loved being around the white man that in prison I really disliked how Negro convicts stuck together so much. But when Mr. Muhammad's teachings reversed my attitude toward my black brothers, in my guilt and shame I began to catch every chance I could to recruit for Mr. Muhammad.

You have to be careful, very careful, introducing the truth to the black man who has never previously heard the truth about himself, his own kind, and the white man. My brother Reginald had told me that all Muslims experienced this in their recruiting for Mr. Muhammad. The black brother is so brainwashed that he may even be repelled when he first hears the truth had to be dropped only a little at a time. And you had to wait a while to let it sink in before advancing to the next step. I began first telling my black brother inmates about the glorious history of the black man-things they never had dreamed. I told them the horrible slavery-trade truths that they never knew. I would watch their faces when I told them about that, because the white man had completely erased the slaves' past...I would keep close watch on how each one reacted. I always had to be careful. I never knew when some brainwashed black imp, some dyed-in-the-wool Uncle Tom, would nod at me and then go running to tell the white man. When one was ripe -and I could tell-then away from the rest, I'd drop it on him, what Mr. Muhammad taught: "The white man is the devil."... the black convict is the most perfectly preconditioned to hear the words, "the white man is the devil." ... You let this caged up man start realizing, as I did, how from the first landing of this first slave ship, the millions of black men in America have been like a sheep in a den of wolves...

Malcolm X on the modern civil rights movement and nonviolent, passive resistance strategies led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

-Be peaceful, be courteous, obey the law, respect everyone; but if someone puts his hand on you, send him to the cemetery.

-I am for violence if non-violence means we continue postponing a solution to the American black man's problem just to avoid violence.

-The goal of Dr. Martin Luther King is to give Negroes a chance to sit in a segregated restaurant beside the same white man who had brutalized them for 400 years.

-If ballots won't work, bullets will.

After Malcolm X's pilgrimage to Mecca:

You're asking me "Didn't you say that now you accept white men as brothers?" Well, my answer is that in the Muslim world, I saw, I felt, and I wrote home how my thinking was broadened! Just as I wrote, I shared true, brotherly love with many white-complexioned Muslims who never gave a single thought to the race, or to the complexion, of another Muslim.

My pilgrimage broadened my scope. It blessed me with a new insight. In two weeks in the Holy Land, I saw what I never had seen in thirty-nine years here in America. I saw all races, all colors, -- blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans -- in true brotherhood! In unity! Living as one! Worshipping as one! No segregationists -- no liberals; they would not have known how to interpret the meaning of those words.

In the past, yes, I have made sweeping indictments of all white people. I will never be guilty of that again -- as I know now that some white people are truly sincere, that some truly are capable of being brotherly toward a black man. The true Islam has shown me that a blanket indictment of all white people is as wrong as when whites make blanket indictments against blacks.