

RPW: This is Tape #2 of a conversation with Mr. Malcolm X - proceed. Would your change in evaluation of Black Muslim movement in America - have you changed your view about separatism - political separatism to actual formation of an independent state of some kind?

MX: Well, I might say this, that the problem - the solution for the Afro-American is two-fold, long-range and short-range. I believe that a psychological, cultural and philosophical migration back to Africa will solve our problems. Not a physical migration, but a cultural, psychological, philosophical migration back to Africa, which means restoring our common bond, will give us the spiritual strength and the incentive to strengthen our political and social and economic position right here in America, and to fight for the things that are ours by right here on this continent, and at the same time this will also tend to give incentive to many of our people then to want to also visit and even migrate physically back to Africa, and those who stay here can help those who go back, and those who go back can help those who stay here in the same way that Jews who go to Israel, the Jews in America help those in Israel, and the Jews in Israel help those in America.

RPW: That's the long range - the second thing was your long range solution, is that it?

MX: Sir?

RPW: The second thing is the long range solution. There are two aspects of the solution, one is the short range -

MX: Yes. The short range involves the long range. Immediate steps have to be taken to re-educate our people into the - a more real view of political, economic and social conditions in this country and our ability in a self improvement program to gain control politically over every community in which we predominate, and also over the economy of that same community as here in Harlem; instead of all the stores in Harlem being owned by white people they should be owned and operated by black people, the same as in a German neighborhood the stores are run by Germans, and in a Chinese neighborhood they're run by Chinese. In the Negro neighborhood the businesses should be owned and operated by Negroes and thereby they would be creating employment for Negroes.

RPW: That is, you are thinking then of these, you might say, localities as being then operated by Negroes, not in terms of a political state, a separate nation?

MX: No. The separating a section of America for Afro-Americans is similar to expecting a heaven in the sky somewhere after you die.

RPW: It's not practical then?

MX: To say it is not practical one has to also admit that integration is not practical.

RPW: I don't quite follow that.

MX: In stating that the idea of a separate state is not practical, I am also stating that the idea of integration - forced integration as they have been making an effort to do in this country for the past ten years, is also just as impractical.

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RPW: Both these poles - these two opposite (talking together)

MX: Yes. Both of them are impractical.

RPW: Do you then envisage a Negro section, the Negro communities which are self determining as a better solution?

MX: Yes, I do. A re-education program is devised to bring out people to the intellectual, economic, political and social level wherein we can control, own, operate our own communities economically, politically, socially and otherwise - what any solution doesn't involve, that is, not even a solution. If I can't run my neighborhood you won't want me in your neighborhood.

RPW: You are saying in other words you see neighborhoods and communities that are all Afro-American and self determining, but these are parts of a larger political unity in the United States?

MX: Yes, because once the black man becomes the political master of his own community, it means that the politicians of that community will also be black, which also means that he then will be sending black representation or representatives, not only to represent him at the local level and at the state level but even at the federal level. All throughout the South, in areas where the black man predominates, he would have black representatives in Washington, D.C. Well, my contention is that the political system of this country is so designed criminally to prevent this, that if the black man even started in that direction, which is a mature step and it's the only way to really resolve this problem is to prove that he's the intellectual equal of others, why, the racist and the segregationist would

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fight that hard, and then they're fighting the present efforts to integrate.

RPW: They'll fight it - yes. Let me ask you two questions around this. One, there are Negroes now holding prominent place at the federal level - (talking together)

MX: I don't mean those kind of Negroes, who are placed in big jobs as window dressing. I refer to a Negro politician as a Negro who is selected by Negroes, who is backed by Negroes. Most of those Negroes have been given those jobs by the white political machine, and they serve no other function other than to - as window dressing.

RPW: Ralph Bunch too.

MX: Any Negro who occupies a position that was given to him by the white man - if you analyze his function, his function never enables him to really take a firm, uncompromising, militant stand on problems that confront our people. He opens up his mouth only to the degree that the political atmosphere at the time will allow him to do so without rocking the boat too much.

RPW: Is your organization supporting the voter registration drive in Mississippi this summer?

MX: Yes, we're going to -

RPW: Actively?

MX: Yes. We're going to give active support to voter registration drives, not only in Mississippi but in New York City. I just can't see where Mississippi is that much different from New York City. Maybe in method -

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RPW: I don't either.

MX: No, I don't see - I never will - let anyone make a - maneuver me into making a distinction between the Mississippi form of discrimination and the New York City form of discrimination. It's both discrimination. It's all discrimination.

RPW: Are you actually putting workers in Mississippi this summer?

MX: We will. They won't be nonviolent workers.

RPW: Nonviolent in which sense - upon attack or -

MX: We will never send a Negro anywhere and tell him to be non-violent.

RPW: If he's shot at, shoot back?

MX: If he's shot at, shoot back.

RPW: What about the matter of nonselective reprisals. Say, if a Negro is shot in Mississippi, and - like Medgar Evers, for instance - then shooting a white man or trying to shoot a responsible white man?

MX: Well, I'll tell you, if I go home and someone in my - my child has blood running down her leg and someone tells me that a snake bit her, I'm going out and kill the snake, and when I find the snake I'm not going to look and see if he has blood on his jaws.

RPW: You mean you'd kill any snake you find?

MX: I grew up in the country on a farm.

RPW: So did I.

MX: And it was - whenever someone said even that a snake was eating the chickens or bothering the chickens, we'd kill snakes. We never

knew whether that was the snake that did it.

RPW: To read your parallel, then, you would advocate non-selective reprisal - kill any white person around?

MX: I'm not saying that. I'm just telling you about snakes.

RPW: All right, we'll settle for that.

MX: Well, I mean what I say.

RPW: I know what you say. I know how the parables worked. Let us suppose that we have had - just suppose -

MX: Then perhaps you know the other one - when the snakes out in that field begin to realize that if one of their members get out of line, it's going to be detrimental to all of them, they'll keep that - perhaps they'll then take the necessary steps to keep their fellow snakes away from my chickens or away from my children. If the responsibility is placed upon them.

RPW: Suppose we had - maybe this is a big supposition, but suppose we had an adequate civil rights legislation, and fair employment (talking together)

MX: ... answer that, if I may. I believe when a Negro church is bound that a white church should be bound. (talking together) And I can give you the best example. When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, the United States struck back. She didn't go and - she bombed any part of Japan. She dropped a bomb on Hiroshima. Those people in Hiroshima probably hadn't even - some of them - most of them hadn't even killed anybody. But still she dropped that bomb. I think it

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killed eighty-some thousand people. Well, this is internationally recognized as justifiable during war. Any time a Negro community lives under fear that his churches are going to be bombed, then they have to realize they're living in a war zone, and once they recognize it as such, they can adopt the same measures against the community that harbors the criminals who are responsible for this activity.

RFW: Now we have it. It's a question of a Negro, say in Birmingham, being outside of the community - being no part of the community so he takes the same kind of reprisal he would take in wartime.

MX: He should realize that he is living in a war zone, and he is at war with an enemy that is suspicious and criminal and inhuman as any war-making country has ever been. And once he realizes that, then he can defend himself.

RFW: By the way, tell me, if you will, what was the exact content of the (interruption) - getting back to what I was about to say a moment ago, suppose we had an adequate civil rights legislation in force - suppose. Suppose you had fair employment practice code in force. Suppose you had a thing that by and large civil rights organizations looked to as their - suppose we had had the objectives demanded by most civil rights organizations now, actually in existence - then what?

MX: Suppose.

RFW: Just suppose - just suppose.

MX: You'd have civil war. You'd have a race war in this country. In

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order to enforce - you see, you can't force people to act right toward each other. You can't force - you can't legislate heart and conditions and attitudes. And when you have to pass a law to make a man let me have a house or you have to pass a law to make a man let me go to school or you have to pass a law to make a man let me walk down the street, you have to enforce that law, and you'd be living actually in a police state. It would take a police state in this country. I mean a real police state, right now, just to get a token recognition of a law. It took I think fifteen thousand troops and six million dollars to put one Negro in the University of Mississippi - that's police action - a police state. So actually all of the civil rights problems during the past ten years have created a situation where America right now is moving toward the police state. You can't have anything otherwise. So that's your supposition.

RPW: All right. Then you see no possibility of self regeneration for our society then?

MX: When I was in Mecca I noticed that they had no color problem, that they had people there whose eyes were blue and people there whose eyes were black, people whose skin was white, people whose skin was black, people whose hair was blonde and people whose hair was black, from the whitest white person to the blackest black person.

RPW: I read your letter.

MX: There was no racism, there was no problem, but the religious philosophy that they had adopted in my opinion was the only thing and is the only thing that can remove the white from the mind of the white

man and the Negro from the mind of the Negro. Now, I have seen what Islam has done with our people - our people who had this feeling of Negro and the kind of psychological effect of putting them in a mental prison. When they accepted Islam it removed that. For white people whom I have met who had accepted Islam don't regard themselves as white, but as human beings, and by looking upon themselves as human beings their whiteness to them isn't the yardstick of perfection or honor or anything else, and therefore this creates within them an attitude that is different from the attitude of the whites that you meet here in America. It was in Mecca that I realized that white is actually an attitude, more so than is and I can prove it because among Negroes we have Negroes who are as white as some white people. Still there's a difference.

RFW: I was about to ask you about what is a Negro.

MX: Yes, it's an attitude. I'm telling you what it is. And white is an attitude, and it is the attitude of the American white man that is making him stand condemned today before the eyes of the entire dark world and even before the eyes of the Europeans. It is his attitude, his haughty, holier-than-thou attitude. He has the audacity to call himself even the leader of the free world, but he has a country who can't even give the basic human rights to over twenty-two million of its citizens. This takes audacity; this takes nerve. So it is this attitude today that is causing the Americans to be condemned.

RFW: What do you think of the western European white as opposed to

the American white?

MX: Well, there's a great deal of difference in them - a great deal of difference in the - when you say western European - even there's a difference between the western European and the east European.

RFW: That's what I'm talking about.

MX: Oh, yes. But there's a great deal of difference - there's a difference in them. Many of them who belong to these countries that were former colonial powers have racist attitudes, but their racist attitude is never displayed to the degree that the America's attitude of racism is displayed - never.

RFW: Do you know the book by Essiem Hudam on - called Black Nationalism? I know you must.

MX: I was with Essiem in Nigeria last month.

RFW: I wish you'd tell me about him - who is he?

MX: He's a Nigerian. At present he is a professor at Uni-
versity.

RFW: I didn't know where he was now. I knew he was a scholar. Do you agree with his analysis that the Black Muslim religion - Islam - in American has served as a concealed device to gratify the American Negro's aspirations for white middle class values?

MX: No, I don't think -

RFW: He takes that view, you know.

MX: Yes, but I don't think that the objective of the American Negro is white middle class values, because what are white middle class values? And what makes the whites who have the middle class values

have those values? Where did they get them? They didn't have these same values, you know, four hundred years or five hundred years ago. Where did they get their values system that they now have attained to? And my contention is that if you trace it back it was the people of the East who brought them out of the Dark Ages, who brought them out of the period that ushered in or initiated the atmosphere that brought into the Europe the period known as the Renaissance or the re-awakening of Europe. And this re-awakening actually involved an era during which the people of Europe who were coming out of the Dark Ages were then adopting the value system of the people in the East, of the Oriental society, many of which they were exposed to for the first time during the Crusades. Well, these were African - these were African-Arab-Asian values. The only section of Europe that had a high value system during the Dark Ages was - were those on the Iberian Peninsula and the Spanish Portuguese area - southern France, and that high state of culture existed there because Africans known as Moors had come there and brought it there. So that value system has been handed right down in European society, and today when you find Negroes that they even look like they're adopting these so-called middle class values - standards - it's not that they are taking something from the white man, but they are probably identifying again with a level or standard that these same whites have gotten from them back during that period.

RPW: That is, you would approach Essiem Hudam's theory on that ground - undercutting it/

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MX: Undercutting it - definitely. I think that if he had something he didn't take it back far enough in history to get it - a proper understanding of it.

RFW: Do you know there's a theory - this is sometimes enunciated by people like Reverend Walker, for one, or Whitney Young - that the Black Muslim is primarily treated by the white press - it exists but its importance was created by the white press.

MX: Whyatt doesn't say that as much as Whitney Young does.

RFW: Both of them say it. Both of them said it to me, anyway.
is what Wyatt Welter calls it.

MX: Yes, well, I can answer that like this. Wyatt Walker can walk through Harlem - no one would know it. Whitney Young could walk through Harlem - no one would know him. Any of the Black Muslims can walk through Harlem - and the people know them. I don't think that anyone has been really created more by the white press than the civil rights leaders. The white press itself created them, and they themselves in their pronouncements will tell you they need white allies, they need white help, they need white this.

RFW: Yes, they do.

MX: They are more a creation of the white press and the white community and are more dependent on the white community than any other group in the community.

RFW: Almost word for word what you have said I could turn around to what Wyatt Walker said to me about - not you personally but about the whole Black Muslim movement. If you go outside of New York City,

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Dr. King is known to ninety percent of the Negroes of the United States, and is respected and is identified more or less with him as a hero of one kind or another. That the Black Muslim outside one or two communities like New York, are unknown.

MX: Well, that's their opinion - that's their opinion. I myself have never been concerned with whether we are considered known or unknown. This is no problem of ours. I will say this, that any time there's a fire in a Negro community, and it's burning out of control, you send any one of them - send Whitney Young in to put it out -

RPW: What do you think of Abraham Lincoln?

MX: I think that he probably did more to trick Negroes than any other man in history. Because if he - well, there's his own - where he always - I have read where he said he wasn't interested in freeing the slaves.

RPW: He said that, yes.

MX: He was interested in saving the Union. Well, more Negroes have been tricked into thinking that Lincoln was a Negro lover whose primary aim was to free them and he died because he freed them. I think Lincoln did more to deceive Negroes and to make the race problem in this country worse than any man in history.

RPW: How does Kennedy relate to -

MX: Kennedy I relate right along with Lincoln. To me, Kennedy was a deceitful man. He was a cold blooded politician whose purpose was to get elected, and the only time Kennedy made any - took any action to even look like he identified with Negroes was when he was forced to.

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Kennedy didn't even make his speech based on this problem being a moral issue until the Negroes exploded in Birmingham.

RPW: (talking together) - yes.

MX: During the whole month that Negroes were being beaten by police and washed down the sewer with water hoses, Kennedy and - King was in jail waiting for the federal government to intervene - Kennedy's reply was, no federal statute had been violated. And it was only when the Negroes erupted that Kennedy come on the television with all his old pretty words. No - the man was a deceiver - he was a deceitful and I will never bite my tongue in saying that. I don't think he was anything but a politician, and he used Negroes to get elected and to get votes.

RPW: What about Roosevelt?

MX: The same thing. No president ever had more power than Roosevelt. Roosevelt could have solved many problems, and all he did was put - took Negroes off welfare or - first he put them on welfare - WPA and other projects that he had, and then, if it hadn't been for Hitler going on the rampage, Negroes would still be on the welfare.

RPW: What about Eleanor Roosevelt?

MX: The same thing. Eleanor Roosevelt was the chairman of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, I think it was, at a time when this country - at the time that the human rights - the covenant on human rights was formed, this country didn't even sign it. This country has never signed the United Nations Covenant on Human Rights.

They signed the Declaration on Human Rights, but if they had signed the covenant they would have had to get it ratified by the Congress and the Senate, and they could never get the Congress and the Senate to agree to an international law on human rights when they couldn't even get Congress and the Senate to agree on a civil rights law. So Eleanor Roosevelt could easily have told Negroes that the deceitful maneuvering of the United States Government that was going on behind the scenes - she never did it. In my opinion, she was just another white woman whose profession was to make it appear that she was on the Negro side. There are a lot of whites who are in this category. They have made Negro loving a profession. They are what I call professional liberals who take advantage of the confidence the Negroes place in them, and therefore this enhances their own prestige and it gives them a key role to play in the politics of this country.

RPW: What about James Baldwin?

MK: Jimmy Baldwin? He is a Negro writer.

RPW: What's the content of that?

MK: He is a Negro writer who has gained fame because of his indictment and his very acid descriptions - I call it an acid description - of what's going on in this country. I don't agree with his nonviolent peaceful loving approach. I just saw his play - Blues for Mr. Charlie - which I thought was an excellent play until it ended. And if you've seen the end of it you'll see what that means.

RPW: I haven't seen it yet.

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MX: Well, you see it. All during the play I'm thinking that at the final act that revenge will be taken or justice will be given for the murder that has taken place.

RPW: I understand that the Ford Foundation is financing the play now - I hear this - I'm not certain of it - financing it to keep it open a little while longer. That's a strange situation, isn't it?

MX: Not to me.

RPW: Why?

MX: I don't know, but it's not strange. As I say, I liked the play - Blues for Mr. Charlie. But the ending of it has the Negro again forgetting that a lynching has just taken place.

RPW: That's why the Ford Foundation might subsidize it - is that it ?

MX: Well, I think that a white - that segments like that of the white power structure will subsidize anything that implies that the Negroes should be forgiving and long suffering.

R PW: Do you know Ralph Ellison's work?

MX: Not too well. All I know is that he wrote The Invisible Man.

RPW: Yes. Have you read that?

MX: No, but I know that - I got the point.

RPW: Yes. What do you think of his position?

MX: I don't know what his position is. If his position is that the Negro in this society is an invisible man, then that's a good position. Whatever else goes with it I don't know.

RPW: Taking another, somewhat different tack - what about Nehru?

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MX: I would like to add to -

RPW: Please do.

MX: - to Ellison's Invisible Man - see, the Negro has an invisible man. Usually when a man is invisible he knows more about those who are visible than those who are visible know about him. And my contention is that the Negro knows more about the white man and white society than the white man knows about the Negro and Negro society.

RPW: I think that's true.

MX: The servant always knows his master better than the master knows his servant. The servant watches the master sleep, but the master never sees the servant sleep. The servant sees the master angry; the master never sees the servant angry. So the servant always knows the master better than the master knows the servant. In fact, the servant knows the house better than the master does. And my contention is that the Negro knows this country better than the white man does - every facet of it, and when he wakes up he'll prove it. Now, about Nehru?

RPW: Yes.

MX: I think that Nehru probably was a good man, although I didn't go for him. I don't go for anybody who is passive. I don't go for anybody who is - who advocates pacifism or peaceful suffering in any form whatsoever - I don't go for it.

RPW: What about Jesus Christ?

MX: I go for Mao-tse-tung much more than Nehru because I think that Nehru brought his country up in a beggar's role. The role of India

in this reliance upon the West during the years since it got its supposed independence, has just today just as helpless and dependent as it was when it first got its independence. Whereas in China, the Chinese fought for their independence, they became militant right from the outstart, and today they're - even though they aren't loved they are respected. Though the West doesn't love them, the West respects them. Now, the West doesn't respect India, but it loves India.

RPW: I see your distinction.

MX: Can you see my distinction?

RPW: I do, indeed.

MX: I admire, really, the stand of China and the stand of Mao-tse-tung, but I can't admire with respect the stand of Nehru in India - I just can't do it.

RPW: What about the Reverend Gulammuson?

MX: Reverend Gulammuson is fighting a hard battle against great opposition, and I admire a man who fights a hard battle against great opposition.

RPW: No matter what he's fighting for or against?

MX: Well, I admire a man who fights a battle against opposition, and if there wasn't something about Gulammuson that the people - I noticed that the power structure is against Gulammuson, and most of the Negro leaders who get the support of the power structure end up being against Gulammuson. So my suspicious nature is that there's something that Gulammuson - about Gulammuson that must have some good in it or

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some right in it -

RPW: But his policy is one of integration, and that isn't exactly your policy.

MX: No, but at the same time, the policy is intelligent enough where he can't be used to attack me, and most of these other Negro leaders who are supposedly integrationists aren't that intelligent.

RPW: I see.

MX: (laughing) All right, then.

RPW: Now you're being dragged away?

MX: Yes, I'm being dragged away.

RPW: All right.

(end of tape)