

# Malcolm X

Editor's note: The following comment on Malcolm X was released by the Black Student's Union, in commemoration of Malcolm X Day.

Much has been said and written about the man Malcolm X. Malcolm X. A man. A Black Man. A Great Man. A great man for many reasons. It was four years ago today that he was silenced. Malcolm X speaks no more. But Malcolm's influence, as far as shaping basic present day revolutionary thought, lives on. Malcolm's contributions to his people and all mankind are infinite. This day should be spent in deep reflection as to who, and what and why a Malcolm X came to be.

What can and should be said of Malcolm X, and what can be considered to be one of his most valuable assets, was his tremendous capacity for change. We, as a University community should focus in on this particular attribute because we realize that it is through change that a better society can come to be, and because we realize that it is through the process of education that we can begin to build a better, more humane society.

Change, in Malcolm's life, was composed of many things. It meant the ability to think for himself, taking into account all that was said, but being able to rationally and logically draw personal conclusions. It meant analysis. Malcolm reanalyzed existant situations and problems, thinking about where they had come from, where they were now and who was keeping them there. If Malcolm had told him to be nonviolent. He looked to see if they themselves had been nonviolent and if they were now being nonviolent.

Change meant incessant questioning of not only himself, but institutions, system and structures. The truth was not accepted as such, until it had been questioned and found to be true. And if what had been thought to be true was found false, it meant a reorienting of self. Malcolm's development from Black nationalism to humanism on the international level is an example of this.

The ability to find new solutions marked Malcolm throughout his life. His brilliance in this area was intensified by the ability to communicate these solutions into a language easily understood by everyone. Malcolm was a man. Malcolm was a student of the world forever striving for a better world for his people and oppressed peoples everywhere. He was flexible.

To say that he was flexible is to say that he had a capacity for growth—that he could change.

As a university community we recognize the value of change, the need for flexibility in a time when inflexibility and a resistance to change are stifling and crushing the lives of aware people everywhere.

The ability to think. To analyze. To question. To reorient oneself, and to find new solutions helped make Malcolm the great man he was.

## Footnote

"He (the Whiteman) will make use of me dead, as he has made use of me alive, as a convenient symbol of "hatred"—and that will help him escape facing the truth that all I have been doing is holding up a mirror to reflect, to show, the history of unspeakable crimes that his race has committed against my race.

—Malcolm X

Roger Mellem

# Another step for Democracy

Editor's Note: Roger Mellem, a sophomore in economics at the University, is also chairman of the Students for 18-Year-Old Vote Committee. The following is a summary of his views on extending the franchise.

"The hour has come to take the next great step in the march of democracy." With this statement former President Lyndon Johnson urged Congress last spring to refer to the states a constitutional amendment lowering the voting age to 18. That, of course, has not yet happened. However, there are three bills in the Oregon Legislature to lower the voting age; shortly one should be referred to the people. It is quite possible that 100,000 young Oregonians will be able to cast their first ballots in November, 1970.

Young people have "adult" responsibilities but we have been denied the "adult" vote. We are raising families. We are legally responsible for nearly all of our actions; e.g., we can be sued. And we pay taxes.

### Tax statistics

UO economics Professor James Tattersall and Bruce McKinlay of the Bureau of Governmental Research recently estimated, after hours of careful statistical analysis, that 18-19- and 20-year-old citizens of this state pay taxes of \$20 million annually, including \$10 million in property taxes. Yet we have no say in how that money is spent.

Lowering the voting age would result in more and sustained interest and civic participation among young people. People who could vote during their senior year in high school, or shortly thereafter, would be more likely to keep up their interest after graduation. Averell Harriman said, "Young people are encouraged to take an interest in government in high school, and the right to vote would maintain this interest without lapse."

State Treasurer Robert Straub said at a mid-January press conference, "The minds and knowledge and enthusiasm of our young people are critically needed in government today."

### More graduates

In 1920, the year American women got to vote, less than 30 per cent of the high school age population was in high school, and only 17 per cent of that group actually was graduated. Today, 85 per cent of the 14 and 17 age group is in high school, and three-fourths receive diplomas.

In 1920, fewer than 600,000 Americans were enrolled as college students; that was less than 8 per cent of the 18 to 21 population. Today the nation's college enrollment exceeds five million, which is almost 50 per

cent of the 18 to 21 population. That people mature at an earlier age than ever before was expressed by Marcus Bickford in his argument for lowering the voting age from 21 to 18 at the New York State Constitutional Convention—"In this age in which we live, in this fast age, men mature both in body and mind at a great deal earlier period than formerly." Marcus Bickford said that in 1867.

From the Student National Education Association comes this statement: "Opponents of the 18-year-old vote charge that young people lack 'maturity of judgment.' Aside from the fact that the charge cannot be substantiated, 'maturity of judgment' was never a factor in selecting 21 as the present age of franchise.

Actually, we merely adopted the old English 'age of knight-hood' as our age for voting. The Normans and early English picked it as a magic number—three times seven. It was never related to any concept of 'maturity.'"

Nearly every recent major presidential contender has supported this goal.

In a letter to this writer U.S. Senator Edmund Muskie said, "We have assured the right to vote to women, to minority groups, and to the citizens of

the District of Columbia. It is now time for us to continue this expansion . . ."

Senator Ted Kennedy and his two brothers long favored this suffrage extension. A special commission on voting appointed by President Kennedy in 1963 recommended, after an eight month study, that 18-year-olds be given the right to vote.

In 1954 President Dwight Eisenhower urged Congress to propose, to the states, a constitutional amendment lowering the voting age to 18; it failed in the Senate by only five votes.

The physical qualities which would make a man capable of fighting certainly would not necessarily make him an intelligent voter. But that is not the point. As Gen. Eisenhower stated, to deny the right to vote to men who can be summoned to die for this country "is far worse than taxation without representation—it is sacrifice without representation." That is the point.

### Must have faith

The President, June 27, 1968: "A nation without faith in its sons and daughters is a nation without faith in itself."

Polls have shown that most people do favor lowering the voting age. The Playboy College Opinion Survey of 1965 found 55 per cent of both students and faculty lending at least moral support. A recent telephone poll by radio station KEED resulted in a 3 to 1 "Yes," showing added strength.

Gallup polls have shown that the percentage of the American public favoring giving 18-year-olds the right to vote has been steadily increasing over the past several generations. It now stands at over 60 per cent.

How can you help? Join the Students for the 18-Year-Old Vote Committee, or other such organizations. Devote your time and energies to the task ahead and success is inevitable.

## Emerald Editor:

### Campus backlash

Emerald Editor:

It's lamentable what kind of a White backlash we still get on campus towards the present mood of many Black students—and from a coed who calls herself a senior in political science, too. Is she serious?

I see why the Negro attitude (Continued on page 11)



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