

### **Who Wrote the Autobiography of Malcolm X? Leading Journal Redefines His Legacy**

Forty years after Malcolm X was assassinated, his life and struggle remain distorted, according to leading scholars in Black history. A special issue of *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society* (Volume 7, Number 1), unearths remarkable new facts about Malcolm X and redefines his legacy for Black America today.

Drawing on new archival and electronic compilations of Malcolm X's writings, the authors reassess his politics and personality, from his cruel childhood to his impending reconciliation with Martin Luther King, Jr. at the time of his death.

"The first, most original, and most talented revisionist of Malcolm X was Malcolm X himself," says **Manning Marable**, Professor of Public Affairs, Political Science, History and African-American Studies at Columbia University and the author of a forthcoming biography. "Malcolm X, the *real* Malcolm X, was infinitely more remarkable than the personality he presented in the *Autobiography*."

New information discussed in the special issue of the journal includes:

- Information about the three "missing" chapters of the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, edited out by the publisher and by co-author **Alex Haley**.
- Secrets behind Malcolm's assassination: Two of the men convicted of the crime were probably not even at the Audubon Ballroom that day, and the police that usually accompanied his appearances was inexplicably absent.
- Closely guarded FBI files that have ironically proven to be one of the most reliable antidotes to the distortions of Malcolm's early biographers.
- The growing consensus among scholars that the missions of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., were compatible rather than contradictory.

"Had they lived, Malcolm and Martin might have advised their followers that the differences between the two were not as significant as was their shared sense of dedication to the struggle for racial advancement," says **Clayborne Carson**, Professor of History at Stanford University. "Both saw the building of strong, Black-controlled institutions in African-American communities did not contradict the goal of achieving equal rights within the American political system."

Marable's article, "Rediscovering Malcolm's Life," traces a twenty-year journey to recover Malcolm's legacy from scattered archives, nearly lost papers, elusive former friends and

associates, and family members who are intensely protective of his image and intellectual property. Other articles in the special issue include:

- A study of Malcolm X's transition from the Nation of Islam's view that Black Americans were heirs of Arab culture to a more Afro-centric view.
- An evaluation of the "other September 11 effect": The sharp increase in conversions to Islam in the U.S., Europe, and Latin America after the World Trade Center bombing.
- An interview with Herman Ferguson, a founding member of the Organization of Afro-American Unity who was present at Malcolm X's assassination.

Together the articles move beyond the one-dimensional popular portraits in rap music or the *Autobiography* to provide a more nuanced portrait of a misunderstood leader.

"The man had the potential to become much more dangerous to white America than any single individual had ever been," says Marable. "Despite [his] serious contradictions and personal failings, Malcolm X also possessed the unique potential for uniting Black America in an unprecedented coalition with African, Asian, and Caribbean nations."

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Published by Taylor & Francis, *Souls* is a quarterly interdisciplinary journal that maps the intellectual contours of the contemporary Black experience. Each issue contains articles, symposia, interviews, and book reviews by scholars, writers, and political leaders in the Black community.

Subscription information for *Souls* or a sample copy of the special issue "**Malcolm X**" (**Volume 7, Numbers 1**) can be obtained from the address below. A copy of the journal can be viewed online at <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/10999949.asp>.

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**Malcolm X**

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