

## By any means necessary'

Legacy of Malcolm X should be remembered as America works towards racial equality

America has its fair share of success stories. Pulling one's self up by their bootstraps is revered in this country. It is the American way. When people rise from the pits of society, they are rewarded and respected for their journey towards success and considered heroes.



CHRISTIAN ROBBINS

When a man transforms himself from a hustler, drug-addict, and convict with a seventh grade education to a leader of pride and equality, he should be celebrated as a great American hero. This is not the case with Malcolm X. Though he only had a seventh grade education and his primary public speaking experience came from a prison debate team, he rose to become one of the greatest civil rights leaders and spoke to standing room only audiences at Harvard, Yale and other fine institutions. At one point in his career, he was the most sought after speaker in the United States.

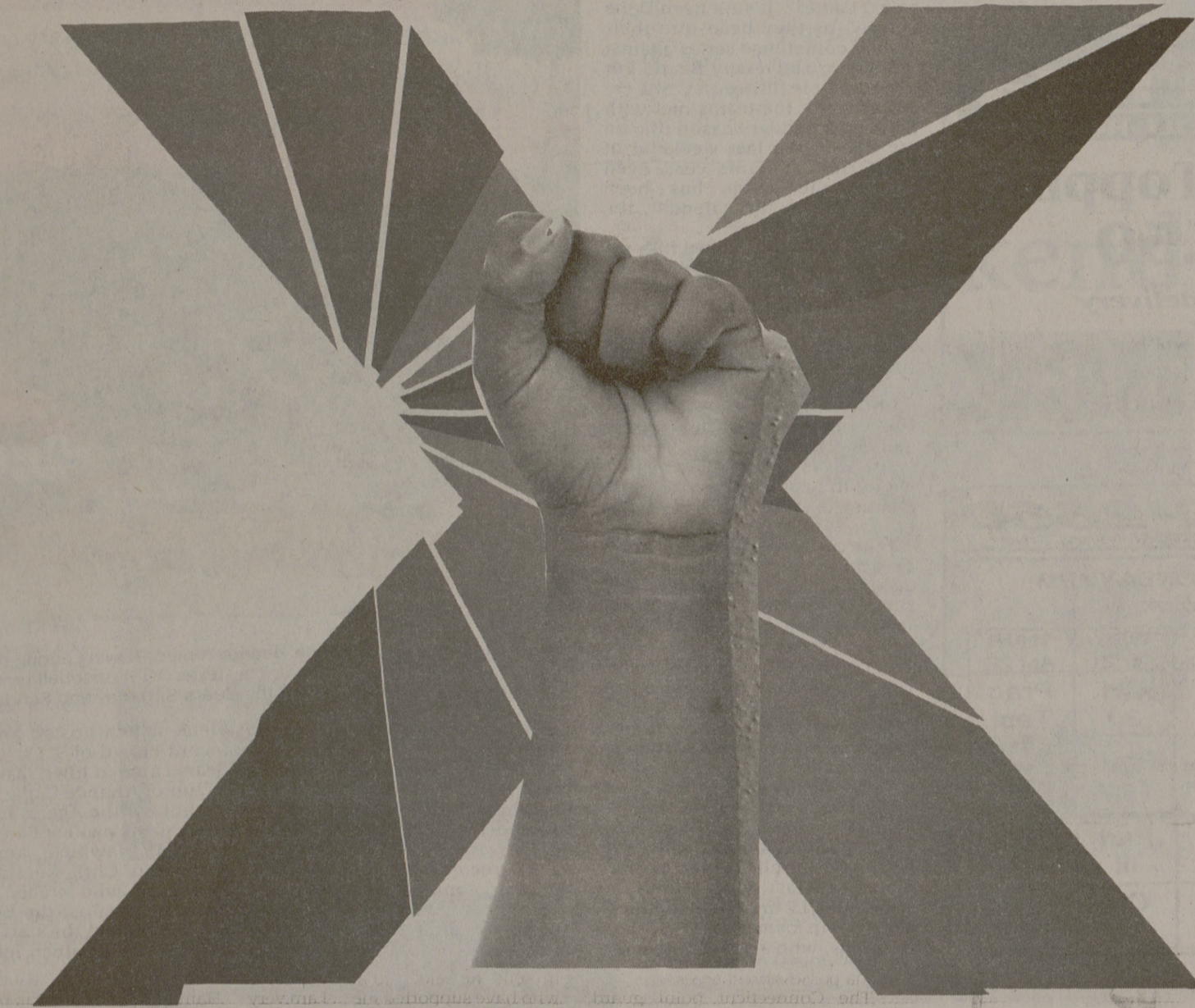
So why is it that 34 years after his death, he is still called a racist and highly criticized for his positions? It is because his message still rings as true today as it did 34 years ago and the current realities that he uncovered still are many Americans.

When people hear the famous phrase "by any means necessary," they immediately recall Malcolm X and they usually assume that his message was one of violence, yet Malcolm X stated, "You should never attack, anybody. But at the same time whenever you, yourself, are attacked . . . Make it even even. If I'm going to be nonviolent, then let them be nonviolent . . . Be intelligent."

Malcolm X believed that African-Americans were entitled to basic human rights and should not beg the government or caucasian people to give them what was rightfully theirs.

Ironically, at a time when caucasians look out their racial frustrations by punching and brutally beating African-American men, women and children, Malcolm X was criticized for telling his people to fight back. Back then, urging African-Americans to defend themselves against senseless violence was a radical message and sadly this sentiment still rings true.

Even today, when the Rodney King beating is mentioned, someone will attempt to justify this injustice by arguing that Rodney King should not have tried to fight back, or that Americans



J.P. BEATO/THE BATTALION

did not see the whole tape — basically any possible excuse would suffice to justify the excessive force that African-Americans have endured at the hand of caucasians for years.

Malcolm X was not just criticized for his position on action, but also his position on separatism. In the '60s, integration became the battle cry for African-Americans and many liberal caucasians, but Malcolm X did not agree. Why? He saw people forget the

main problem with "separate but equal" was not facilities being separate, but with them being unequal. So when Malcolm X pointed out that African-Americans should not jump at the chance to patronize caucasian establishments, he was criticized.

In actuality, his prediction that integration would cause the downfall of many African-Americans business was correct. Odell Hairston, African-American business owner before integration,

states, "Well, my business started going under during integration . . . I suppose it was glamorous to eat on the caucasian side of town. The food was the same, I got the same movies, but I don't really think we were as welcomed there, but you know, everyone wondered what it would be like."

Malcolm X believed that if African-Americans could control their own government and business, they would be successful. Intelligent caucasians in the

'60s knew this was true. They only had to examine how far African-Americans had come since slavery despite all the adversity, violence, disenfranchisement, and inequality they had faced.

What does this have to do with the present? Well, caucasians see this progress again. It has been over 30 years since the pinnacle of the civil rights movement and though segregation is still not complete, African-Americans have soared over obstacles, shattered glass ceilings and earned political power.

It is hard to imagine the days of separate water fountains, grandfather clauses and unpunished lynchings. The success of the African-American community in such a relatively short period of time collectively scares caucasian America, but now there is no Malcolm X to criticize.

Instead, they try to take away all of the tools that have been put in place to give African-Americans equality. In neighborhoods, it appears that when the population becomes more than 10 percent African-American, caucasian people move away.

In the workplace, they complain that underqualified African-Americans are stealing their jobs and being hired the name of silly old diversity.

And in schools where the population is less the 6 percent African-Americans, urban legends are created about caucasian students with 4.0 G.P.A.'s and perfect S.A.T. scores who were rejected because sub-standard African-American students took their places.

Malcolm X stated, "All we need is African-Americans people who believe in the brotherhood of man."

African-Americans power focuses on African-Americans and the accomplishments of African-Americans.

Malcolm X was an extraordinary orator and leader. He inspired pride in his people and should be respected as a American hero because of his climb from the slums of Detroit to one of the most visible civil rights leaders in the country. America boasts about being the land of equality and justice, but even today African-Americans do not have the human rights guaranteed to them under the law.

Americans live in a society where there is discrimination in wages, the criminal justice system and education. When some look at the societal inconsistencies, they wish that another Malcolm X would come along and open our eyes to the truths of the present.

Christian Robbins is a junior speech communications major.

## United States needs to take Russian interests seriously, should not underestimate threat

In the past year, the United States and its allies have often stomped in the toes of the Russian bear with surprising unceremoniousness. Still intoxicated by Western victory in the Cold War, no one seems to be taking Moscow seriously anymore, an attitude Russians are beginning to regard with bitter resentment.



CALEB MCDANIEL

In the most recent conflict in Kosovo between the Great Bear and its old nemesis, NATO, this resentment has threatened to turn into violence, as Serbian sympathizers in Boris Yeltsin's splintering government have aroused jamming anti-Western sentiments in Russia. The American embassy in Moscow has been bombarded with angry protest, and as a *New York Times* headline blared earlier this week, "Hostility to U.S. is Now Popular in Moscow."

The blame for this precarious diplomatic situation lies largely on the doorstep of the White House, where President Clinton has once again proven his unique ability to turn operations for peace into occasions of pugnacity. Unless the West wants Russian relations to sink into another deep freeze, President Clinton and NATO must finally start to treat the Russian bear as if its opinion mattered.

They will have to begin by rebuilding several bridges that have already been burned. NATO has already made Russian nationalists nervous by its expansion into the former Soviet client states of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, which has brought the old bastion of Western liberal democracies to Russia's own border. The senseless exclusion of Russia from this expansion enraged Moscow and delivered a major blow to diplomatic relations with the West.

The next blow came over the now all too familiar skies of Iraq. Russian opposition to air strikes against Saddam Hussein earlier this year was flippantly disregarded by U.S. De-

partment of State officials. At first, the vocal Russian dissent was all but ignored by hawkish American diplomats, and when the Russian disagreement was addressed, it was not with a conciliatory explanation of Western reasoning or a friendly agreement to disagree.

Instead, the Russian protest was greeted quite bluntly with indifference. The Russians, Westerners were told by their diplomats in no uncertain terms, are harmless — all bark and no bite. So the jilted Russians barked even louder.

Now some Russians appear ready to bite. Russian nationalists have ancient cultural ties to ethnic Slavs, as well as an uncomfortable feeling that problematic breakaway movements like the one in Kosovo are all too close to home. (Think Chechnya.)

After firing blustery rhetoric at NATO at the beginning of its air campaign against Slobodan Milosevic, Moscow has begun to take some ominous actions.

A flotilla of Russian ships has been dispatched to the Adriatic Sea for a "routine" naval exercise.

Earlier this week, panic erupted for a few hours when a leader in the Communist Party claimed — falsely, as it turned out — that Russia had aimed its nuclear missiles at the United States.

President Yeltsin, caught politically between the need to strike a deal with the West for more financial aid and the need to appease a Communist-controlled legislature, has vacillated on the crisis.

But the latest word from the Kremlin is a thinly veiled threat that any ground troops in Kosovo would be met with active resistance from the Russian military.

Apparently, the more American officials have tried to make Russia look like a silly old bear, the less like Winnie the Pooh it has become.

Let the Western diplomatic corps fall once again under the delusion that Russia is just doing some harmless spouting off, they

should consider a few facts.

First, the generally pro-Western Boris Yeltsin is on his last legs, physically and politically. The Russian President's ailing health seems to worsen daily, and this might not be a major cause for concern if there were a pro-Democracy successor waiting in the wings.

There is not. Instead, the resurgent Communist Party is chomping at the bit for the reins of power, and they have widespread public support. Although they have not yet succeeded, they have been trying diligently to impeach President Yeltsin. Clearly, Yeltsin is up against the ropes, and there is no telling what desperate attempts he might make to muscle his way back into political favor.

Secondly, the stakes involved in these dangerous conditions are high. Americans have been given the false impression that because the Cold War is over, the threat of nuclear catastrophe is gone, too.

This is far from the truth. Russia still has thousands of perfectly active nuclear warheads, and its Parliament has yet to ratify the START II non-proliferation treaty negotiated years ago with the United States. The likelihood that the treaty will be signed, of course, decreases the more that Communist-sponsored anti-Americanism increases.

And these are serious potentialities indeed. Russia is definitely not a pushover, and it cannot be ignored by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and company. The more it is treated like a non-player in world affairs, the more it wants to play.

Before President Clinton botches his mission in Kosovo by destroying Russo-American relations indefinitely, his administration must wise up to these concerns. If the United States intends to be the world's last Boy Scout, it should at least remember a lesson that every scout learns even before he can tie his shoes: never tease the bears.

Caleb McDaniel is a sophomore history major.

### MAIL CALL

#### Corps practices not out of ordinary

In response to Lesley Haddella's Apr. 14 mail call.

I was very interested to read a comment by Lesley Haddella that Corps members are harassed into voting for the Corps. Now Lesley, I love you, but I have to disagree. Corps members are encouraged to vote Corps just as frat members are encouraged to vote frat.

As a member of an organization you are expected to support those in the organization. Some individuals may not, because they have the courage to stand up against the crowd, if they feel the need to.

The Corps of Cadets is an organization, like any other on campus, and members of organizations support each other, especially in elections. So for once, let us quit dismissing the Corps for doing what is a common practice among all organizations.

After all, is it any different than looking down on the Democratic National Convention because they expect their members to vote the democratic ticket?

Jerilyn Gragg  
Class of '01

#### Corps practices not out of ordinary

In response to Michael Palmer's Apr. 14 mail call.

Protecting their country? How, Michael can you believe something like this. But wait, if you think protesting your country means murdering innocent civilians to rid Serbia of ethnic Albanians then you might be on the right track to understanding "protection."

The truth of the matter is that

the Balkan region continues to destabilize the eastern Europe, and by implying that Slobodan Milosevic is doing some sort of moral deed for his country is an atrocity in itself.

NATO (i.e. The United States) is the one protecting here. The strikes against Serbia have limited their military capability, and is slowly forcing Milosevic to rethink his whole idea of ethnic cleansing. A half-million Albanians have been driven out of Kosovo due to their religion. You forgot to mention that. Oh, I forgot. That is Slobodan's "protection" for his country and people. Protection from what?

It disturbs me that you should bring up the train incident. War is a nasty business, and accidents do happen. Please take into account the fact that NATO has flown over 5,000 missions, and over 1,500 of them have been live-fire cases. Not every weapon that we fire is foolproof.

I am not belittling your defense for the Serbians, if in fact that is where you stand on the matter. I am, however, going to say that most of your statements had no substance, and please inform yourself on a subject before you publish your beliefs.

Jonathan Reid  
Class of '02

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

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