



*The Diary of Malcolm X, El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz 1964* edited by Herb Boyd and Ilyasah Al-Shabazz with annotations and commentary by Haki R. Madhubuti and afterword by James H. Cone (Chicago: Third World Press, 2013, pp. 216), ISBN: 978-0-88378-351-1. LCCN: BP233.Z8L57 2013; 320.54'6092-dc23 reviewed by Itibari M. Zulu (editor, *The Journal of Pan African Studies* and former member, Afro-American Institute Malcolm X Unity House, San Francisco, California).

Journalist, activist, author, biographer, and New York City College teacher Herb Boyd, activist, organizer, motivational speaker, writer and author Ilyasah Al-Shabazz, the third daughter of El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz; and Betty Shabazz (1934-1997), award-winning poet, educator, essayist, editor and founder-publisher of Third World Press (the oldest independent book

publisher of Black thought/literature in the U.S.) Haki R. Madhubuti, and Union Theological Seminary distinguished professor of Systematic Theology; Black liberation theology founder and theologian James H. Cone and others (Fred L. Hord of the National Association for Black Culture Centers, James Turner of Cornell University, 1986 Nobel Prize for Literature winner Wole Soyinka, HRH Princess Alia bint Al Hussein of Jordan, Edmund W. Gordon professor emeritus of Yale University and Teachers College at Columbia University, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. of Harvard University and notwithstanding, boxing great Muhammad Ali, a friend, mentor and often confidant to Malcolm X, El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz) have endorsed this book.

In an attempt to seemingly stay clear of any future controversy, the acknowledgments (p. ix) states that El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X) intended to publish his travel journal as a book which the editors and publisher now consider it to be a great honor for them to complete this bio-documentarial book in an effort to insure that he attains his rightful place in history by publishing an authentic volume that can increase the understanding of Malcolm X and inspire future projects about him. This book also was published with the cooperation and support of Malcolm X and Betty Shabazz's daughters, Attallah, Qubilah, Ilyasha, Gamilh-Lumumba, Malikah and Malaak Shabazz, and the staff of Third World Press, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture of the New York Public Library (the repository of Malcolm X archives and materials), George R. Brokmond of Highland Community Bank (Chicago, IL), Alter and Beverly Lomax, and Wesley Snipes.

In general, *The Diary of Malcolm X* is a more complete view of Malcolm X (El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz) than the now more than 45 editions (in many languages) of the *Autobiography of Malcolm X* as told to Alex Haley (p. xiii). Therefore, the diary is poised as a more mature and politically astute picture of Malcolm X, in an internationalist context, who was under constant governmental observation because of his call for the internalization of the African American liberation struggle in the U.S. (p. xii, xiii), with an outline of how Malcolm (an ambassador without portfolio) planned to formerly petition the U.N. on behalf of the African American

community in the U.S. and formerly document/record U.S. human right violations (enslavement, racial discrimination, etc.) perpetrated against the African American community, with the support of leaders in Africa and the Middle East (ibid.).

In an effort to allow readers to experience *The Diary* as it was written, the editors have included annotations, 36 pages of biographical material (with selected references), and commentary that direct the reader to particular dates in *The Diary* with the intent to offer no or little interference in the train of thought of Malcolm X as he wrote his diary (p.176), and at the same time, include: Malcolm X mentioning how he visited Kwame Nkrumah "... for over an hour at the University of Accra ... (p.194)"; how in the late fifties there were between 200 to 250 African American expatriates living Ghana; how Abdul Rahman Mohamed Babu (1924-1996) was frequently in touch with Malcolm X during the sixties (p.211); how Milton Henry (1919-2006), co-founder of the Republic of New Africa made sure Malcolm X was properly cared for in Africa when he was poisoned (p.212); and host of other references that identify particular people, places and landmarks mentioned by Malcolm X that set some of his references in a historical, political context to add clarity, answer questions, and open future dialogue on Malcolm X's observations and documentation of his travels (p.187).

As one reads this book, the true elegance and intelligence of Malcolm X comes forth as many of his statements and observations are worth quoting in relationship to a host of situations. For example, on religion he said, "Religion is a personal thing, and cannot be forced upon anyone" (p. 21), on the question of the contradiction he observed, he said, "Never in America had I received such respect and honor as here in the Muslim world ..." (p. 4). In terms of solitude and inner peace, he said, "There is no greater serenity of mind than when one can shut the hectic noise & pace of the materialistic outside world, & seek inner peace within one's self (p. 24)." Notwithstanding also is that Malcolm X recognized the importance and significance of his travel, especially in Africa, as he writes "It is difficult to believe that I could be so widely known (& respected) here on this continent. The negative image the Western press has tried to paint of me certainly hasn't succeeded (p.168-169)."

Throughout the diary Malcolm X mentions his wife, how he would see a movie or simply walked unescorted to relax from his busy schedule, and that he even went hiking in the mountains in Ethiopia. Most can't imagine Malcolm X with a movie and still camera, taking pictures as a tourist, watching TV or watching the sun set by the Nile in Egypt while drinking tea (p. 113-114). Yet, the diary separates the myths from the reality with a passionate epilogue by Malcolm's daughter Ilyasah (a co-editor of this work) as she writes that *The Diary* is a treasure trove of timeless insights and perceptions that reveal the essence of a great man as he speaks quietly and earnestly during a critical time in his life, absent of the noise of rhetoric and analysis, and now, via *The Diary*, the world can accurately assess the true value, contribution and magnitude of Malcolm X, El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz.

Her assessment is important in contrast to how past views by her and other relatives have been generally guarded as she mentions how Malcolm was received as a peer by kings, presidents and prime ministers (p.180), how he met thirty-three African Heads of State (p.180). Also critical to this volume is the discussion on how Malcolm X built the Nation of Islam, and how it took great courage and commitment from him to leave Africa, not seek refuge there for himself and his family, and subsequently "... return to the United States with the knowledge that enemies committed to his destruction lie in wait (p.184)."

In an asthenic context, the photos in the book are less that desirable, thus *Malcolm X: The Great Photographs* (1993) provides a quality alternative, and second, the book could have had a more complete structure if it had an index to assist detailed research, but overall, the book demonstrates Malcolm's love of the religion of Islam as articulated by the Qur'an; the importance of travel, learning a foreign language, reciprocity, humility, politeness, and critical thinking. Furthermore, this outstanding volume adds new value to the process of appreciating Malcolm X historically and in a contemporary framework which juxtaposes James H. Cone's concern that today we need Malcolm X "... more than ever because we are in danger of forgetting how essential he is for our thinking about Martin King, America, and the world (p.231)."

In the end, this book should be read along with the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, *The Political Legacy of Malcolm X* (1983), *Malcolm X: Make it Plain* (1994), *Growing Up X: A Memoir by the Daughter of Malcolm X* (2003), *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (2011), *The Re-Assassination of Malcolm X* (2011), *Malcolm X Visits Aboard: April 1964-February 1965* (2011), *A Lie of Reinvention: Correcting Manning Marable's Malcolm X* (2012), *Malcolm X: The FBI File* (2012), *The Night Malcolm X Spoke at the Oxford Union: A Transatlantic Story of Antiracist Protest* (2014), and the forthcoming book on the liberation ethics of Malcolm X by Maulana Karenga, and other sources (his letters and film) that explore the life and work of Malcolm X (El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz), our own shining Black prince as Ossie Davis (1917-2005) referred to him, "who didn't hesitate to die, because he loved us so." And thus, the book is more than simply a record of Malcolm X's thoughts and travels in 1964, but instead a testament to his detailed insight about himself and the world around him in a self-actualization posture, not unlike many historical icons, around the world.