

11/11/65

LIFE WITH LYNDON IN THE GREAT SOCIETY, Vol. 1. No. 41

Copyright by Jack Minnis,  
1965.

A very important book has just been published by Merit Publishers, 5 E. Third St., New York, N.Y. The book contains the text of speeches made by Malcolm X during the last year of his life. It costs \$5.95.

All civil rights workers and all black Americans who are interested in what we call "freedom", should read this book, think about what Malcolm X had to say, and then make some basic decisions about what they're doing and what they intend to do. Persons who can't read should get someone to read the book to them. It should be the subject of serious discussion wherever people gather to try to figure out what they can do to change the racist nature of the Great Society.

One of the reasons the book is important, is that when Malcolm X spoke, he leveled right down on his point, and he talked in the language of the people of the streets, of the ghettos. What he talked about is the common experience of oppressed people and the conclusions he drew about what must be done are based upon that experience. Those who disagree with him, and there will be many, must reconcile their disagreement with the basic facts of life in the Great Society as he described it. We don't see how they'll manage.

Another reason the book is important is that it clears up a lot of misinformation, misrepresentation, and downright lies about Malcolm X and the black nationalism he advocated. He defines precisely what he means by black nationalism, and why it is politically necessary for American Negroes to adhere to it. "The political philosophy of black nationalism means," said Malcolm, we must control the politics and the politicians of our community. They must no longer take orders from outside forces. We will organize, and sweep out of office all Negro politicians who are puppets for the outside forces."

Notice that black nationalism, as Malcolm expressed it, does not call merely for the election of people with black skins to public office. Indeed, as he points out, it would be foolish to suppose that black skin alone will ensure that the black peoples' interests will be represented by an elected official. Much more is necessary. The black people must control the politicians they elect, and they must control the politics of these officials.

This means, first of all, that Negroes must look very carefully at the organizations which support black candidates for public office. If those organizations are

page two

are controlled by whites, then it follows that the candidate, once elected, will represent the white-controlled organization, not the black votes that put him in office. But it is not enough must to say this. It is necessary that every black voter understand the reasons why it is so. This understanding is to be found in the text of Malcolm's speeches, and in the discussion those speeches will give rise to.

Malcolm, also, was very realistic about Lyndon and the Great Society. Lyndon, he said, is just another Southern cracker:

"And what a good president we have. If he wasn't good in Texas, he sure can't be good in Washington, D.C. Because Texas is a lynch state. It is in the same breath as Mississippi, no different; only they lynch you in Texas with a Texas accent and lynch you in Mississippi with a Mississippi accent. And these Negro leaders have the audacity to go and have some coffee in the White House with a Texan, a Southern cracker--that's all he is--and then come out and tell you and me that he's going to be better for us because, since he's from the South, he knows how to deal with the Southerners. What kind of logic is that? Let Eastland be president, he's from the South too. He should be better able to deal with them than Johnson."

\*

\*

\*

There are those who claim that Malcolm was a racist, because he advocated the black nationalism described above. We suppose there are those who will claim that we are advocating black racism because we agree with Malcolm. Well, we don't care whose mouth, black or white, that kind of claim come out of--it's the same old Mr. Charlie talking.

The same principle that says the poor folks should have control of policy in the war on poverty says that black people must have control of the politicians who represent them. Poor black people have two problems--black and poor.

Lyndon, of course, is as much against black people controlling their politicians as he is against poor people controlling the poverty program.

\*

\*

\*

There have been indications for some time that Lyndon is going to make some changes in the poverty program. The main change, apparently, is that he's gradually going to drop the whole idea that poor-folks ought to have something to say about how it's run. This week Lyndon's Bureau of the Budget came out with the idea that poor people ought

page three

to work in the poverty program, but that they shouldn't have anything to say about what they're doing. The New York Times reports that "encouraging the poor to organize and raise their voices" about where poverty money ought to be spent, and how it ought to be spent, "is unsettling politics."

The Washington Post reports that an "authoritative source", inside Lyndon's administration, says: We've learned that a \$100,000 grant to a community action project can cause a million-dollar headache." So, say the reports, Lyndon is going to take most of the community action project money out of that fund and use the money for Job Corps and Neighborhood Youth Corps, projects. These projects have been run, thus far, by either Universities (and non-profit foundations) or business corporations. We detailed just who some of the corporations are, and why they're interested, in previous pages. The poor have nothing to do with these phases of the poverty war. They're run entirely by big business and big education.

A few weeks ago, Sargent Shriver was running around the country complaining that the Universities which were running these programs were doing a lousy job. However, Shriver had nothing but praise for the big business corporations that were running Job Corps camps. So now it looks like more and more of the poverty money is going to be channeled into the programs in which big business predominates, and that more and more of the contracts for conducting these programs will be going directly to corporations, rather than to universities.

Thus does control by the corporations continue to extend, through Lyndon's government, to more and more of the people.

\*

\*

\*

We're told that a west coast fink for the FBI sends these pages each week to J. Edgar, who promptly files them under "Subversive activities within SNCC". We experience a sense of relief. We're reminded of the poem Bertolt Brecht wrote to the Nazi Government of Germany, in which he pleaded with them to burn his books. In Nazi Germany if a writer was permitted to publish, to communicate with the people, this alone was sufficient evidence that he had made his peace with the monstrosity of the Nazi animal.

In the Great Society, it's impossible to be honest without being officially labeled "subversive". This is simply a fact. It's still possible to be honest but one is never sure he's being honest until officially, he is labeled "subversive." That, you might say, is his certification of integrity by the Great Society.

page four

We thank you, J. Edgar-Senator Eastland--HUAC--FBI--CIA- Lyndon, for our certification. We shall try in the future to deserve the honor you have bestowed on us.

\*

\*

\*

Speaking of "subversive," J. Edgar's boys found some right on their doorstep the other day. They were called in by an official of Campbell's Music Co., Inc. in Washington. It seems that some six months ago a customer had complained about the possible "subversive" contents of a song book that was being sold by the store. So, apparently, C. A. Astle, manager of the Campbell store, asked that the FBI come in and examine the songs that were contained in the book, in order to see whether or not they had any political content that might conflict with J. Edgar's fascist views and, therefore, qualify as "subversive." Presumably, the songs in the book were found to be "subversive" by J. Edgar's thought police, because the manager said he'd taken the books off his shelves and was reviewing all other books published by Oak Publications.

The Washington Post said the FBI refused to comment on this operation, but that "order sources" provided information indicating that the book was "We Shall Overcome" which for some time has been distributed by SNCC under an arrangement with the publisher. The book contains the words and music of many of the freedom songs which have developed out of the civil rights movement during the past five years.

While J. Edgar's boys in Washington were snooping around trying to find "subversive songs", a group of white businessmen in Natchez were threatening to fire all their Negro employees if the Negro boycott in Natchez was not called off. Some of the businessmen involved in the threat represents firms like International Paper Co., Armstrong Tire Co., Mississippi Valley Gas Co. and others which clearly come under the provisions of the fair employment practices section of the civil rights act of 1964.

Just a couple of weeks ago J. Edgar said: "Sowing contempt for law and order and promoting pride in law-breaking among the Nation's youth can only result in an acceleration of a serious crime problem."

We agree. The example set by the Washington FBI agents, in presuming to have the authority to decide whether or not a song is "subversive"; and the example set by some of the top corporations in the country when they openly defy civil rights laws by threatening to fire all Negro employees, is certainly going to increase the likelihood that the Boy Scouts will develop into an American Hitler Youth Corps. That's just about the most serious crime problem we've got.

page five

We wonder what you propose to do about these serious developments, J. Edgar?

\*

\*

\*

The producers of the aluminum from which all those warplanes are made are running true to form. They're raising their prices as they see that more and more of their aluminum is going to be sold to Lyndon's air force, as more and more of Lyndon's planes are shot down and worn out in the struggle to preserve American freedoms for the Vietnamese people. Lyndon says he is going to flood the market with aluminum from the national stockpile so the price will be lowered, and the aluminum companies will be punished for raising their prices. If you'll pardon the expression--that's a lot of crap.

In the first place, the aluminum companies have been trying to get Lyndon to sell them part of the national stockpile for some time. The only holdup has been that the companies wanted less of it sold to them at a time than Lyndon wanted to sell. In the second place, there are only three companies in the country who have the facilities for handling the kind of aluminum that's in the national stockpile. Those companies are Aluminum Company of America, Reynolds Metals, and Kaiser--the very companies that have raised their prices, and whom Lyndon says he is going to punish by selling aluminum from the stockpile. Now, if the selling of the aluminum by Lyndon is going to punish these companies, then they have a very simple way of avoiding the punishment--they don't have to buy the aluminum.

But let's guess that maybe something else is going on. Let's suppose (now, just suppose mind you) that the companies want to buy some of the aluminum that's in the stockpile, but they want to get it at the cheapest price possible. So, let's suppose, they raise the prices of aluminum they sell (which has already been processed). Then, Lyndon flies into a towering rage because they're causing "inflation." He says he's going to punish them by dumping aluminum on the market from the national stockpile. He does so. The price of aluminum "falls" because suddenly there's a much greater supply than there had been, with an no increase in demand (even grade school economists will tell you that, in a free enterprise system, when supply goes up, and demand remains the same, prices goes down). The price falls. Then the aluminum which Lyndon dumped onto the market sells at the reduced price. But who buys the aluminum at the reduced price? Alcoa, Reynolds and Kaiser, because they're the only possible buyers.

Who got punished? The taxpayers whose money was originally used to buy the stockpile aluminum for a price higher than that at which it ultimately sold because the "dumping" had lowered the price.

page six

Now we don't say this is what is going on. We don't know what is going on. But from what we do know has happened, it seems reasonable to guess that something like the above is really what's being done by the aluminum companies and Lyndon to the people.

And it's not that we don't trust Lyndon. We trust him. We trust him to screw the people every chance he gets, and to spend a good part of his time looking for chances.

That's the great society in a nutshell.

\*

\*

\*

The newspapers report that a leaflet was passed out last week in a suburb of Boston that asked the question "Why Kill LBJ?" The leaflet answered it's question: "Because he is responsible for the deaths of thousands of American in Viet Nam...."

We agree that he's responsible, but we don't see that killing him is any solution. Because if Lyndon were removed, there'd just be somebody else who'd be slipped in to take his place, and the killing would go on.

The trouble is not with the man who's in the office, but with the office itself. As long as you've got a society that's controlled by the corporate empire, the president is going to be controlled by the corporate empire, and he's going to do whatever the corporations (like Alcoa, Reynolds and Kaier) tell him to do.

No matter how many presidents you kill, you're not going to change anything until you change the control.

When that's done, the Great Society will change.

Until it's done, the killing will go on.

\*

\*

\*

Jack Minnis  
November 11, 1965