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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

OPINION

Malcolm's X more than a logo



SPORTS

Huskers finish conference 12-0



MONDAY



35/30

Cloudy today. Chance of rain and snow tomorrow.

Panel discusses Malcolm X's life

Leader challenged Americans to face racism, teacher says

By Mindy L. Leiter
Staff Reporter

Spike Lee's long-awaited film "X" is a salute to Malcolm X's legacy, panel members said Sunday night during a discussion on the black-nationalist leader in the Nebraska Union Ballroom.

Keith Parker, an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said the five panel members were there to discuss the meaning of Malcolm X and his life.

"Some of us are too young to remember, some of us are too old to forget what he meant to us and what he continues to mean to us," Parker said. "But there are those of us who are active enough to know what the X symbolizes."

Malcolm X gained prominence as a nationalist leader in the Nation of Islam church under the Honorable Elijah Muhammed.

Thomas Christie, who teaches sociology and African-American literature at Lincoln High School, credited Malcolm X and Lee's movie with challenging people's perceptions.

"A reporter asked me a question about the movie," he said. "She asked, 'If it were produced by a European American, would it be different?'"

"I said, 'Yeah, it would be the same if 'Gone With the Wind' had been produced by an African American. It's a matter of different perceptions.'"

A problem today, he said, is that people consistently refuse to confront racist attitudes in themselves and others.

"Malcolm X made an attempt at honest confrontation," Christie said. "There were European Americans who feared Malcolm, but I think they respected his commitment."

Brother Adham Jabir Bahir, a UNL student and Sunni Muslim, said Malcolm X profoundly affected his life.

Bahir said his own study of Malcolm X and his experiences as a Muslim countered stereotypes of Malcolm X as a "hate teacher."

"For me, he is a symbol of love: love of self, love of one God and protector of women," he said. "He taught me how to be a black man."

Malcolm X later broke with the Nation of Islam and converted to orthodox Islam. He changed his name to El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz shortly before he was assassinated in 1965.

The sponsors of the panel discussion included the African-American Male Support Group, The Racial Pluralism Action Team, the Office of Multi-Cultural Affairs and the Islamic Foundation of Lincoln.

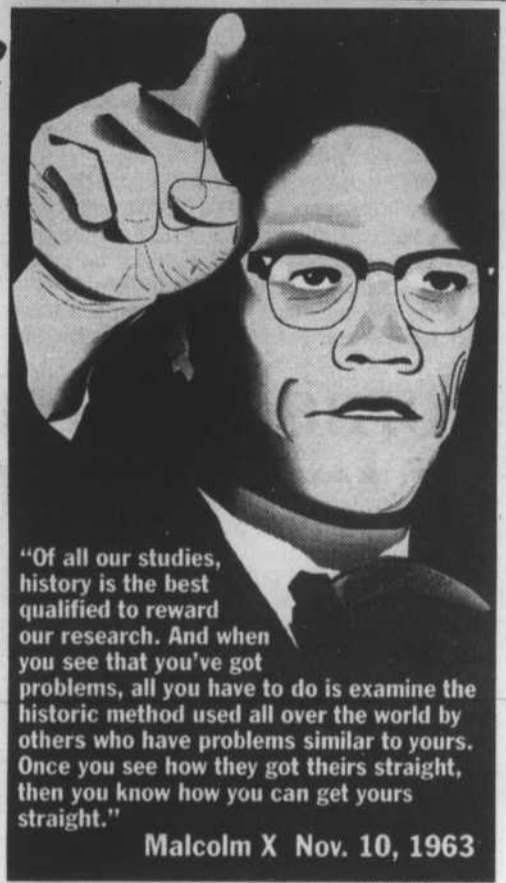
David Iaquina, an associate professor of sociology at Nebraska Wesleyan University, said the reason Malcolm X was such a controversial figure was because he challenged people.

"He challenged the conception that we are good and charitable people," he said. "The history of the United States tells us different."

By holding a position of privilege in this country, Iaquina said, people are able to choose when they deal with the problems created by racism — something Malcolm X chose to address.

"It's a privilege we extend to people when they can choose to deal with racism and choose when not to deal with it," he said. "Here was a man that didn't give in."

"If you were in his presence, he made you deal with racism."



"Of all our studies, history is the best qualified to reward our research. And when you see that you've got problems, all you have to do is examine the historic method used all over the world by others who have problems similar to yours. Once you see how they got theirs straight, then you know how you can get yours straight."

Malcolm X Nov. 10, 1963

Scott Maurer/DN



Knock 'n down the needles

Charles MacLean, owner of MacLean's Pinecrest Christmas Tree Farm in Blue Springs, cuts down a tree for a customer who is getting an early start on Christmas decorating.

Julia Mikolajcik/DN

Regent upset, calls meeting 'clandestine'

By Susie Arth
Senior Reporter

NU Regent Rosemary Skrupa of Omaha said she was disappointed with four regents for meeting with University of Nebraska President Martin Massengale last Sunday.

"I'm only upset in that half of the board of regents was meeting in a clandestine way," Skrupa said. "I don't think they were playing poker."

Regent Charles Wilson of Lincoln said Massengale and Regents John Payne of Kearney, Don Blank of McCook and Nancy Hoch of Nebraska City met at his home to discuss Massengale's upcoming April evaluation.

"I see nothing wrong with that," Wilson said. "It is one of the ways the board keeps itself informed."

Payne, chairman of the board, said the gathering dealt with university personnel and was a private matter.

"We discussed university business, which falls under personnel matters," Payne said.

Wilson said the meeting evolved from a series of one-on-one conversations.

See REGENTS on 3

UNL makes 'best values' grade in top 101 list

By Chuck Green
Senior Reporter

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's inclusion in a recent listing of the country's top colleges and universities will give a small boost to the university's national image, an official said.

But that compliment could be withdrawn quickly if massive budget cuts are forced on UNL, said Mike Mulnix, executive director of university relations.

"We have to be able to back up what they say about us on these lists," he said. "That's hard to do if we can't have reliable, sustained funding."

UNL was included in a book titled "101 Best Values in America's Colleges and Universities," published by the Center for College Enrollment and Tuition Issues in Bridgewater, Mass.

The center, which also publishes a newsletter for high school guidance counselors nation-

Bubble may soon burst, official says

wide, compiles the book annually.

UNL also was included in last year's book.

The "Best Values" book lists the 101 best values of colleges and universities. Only 20-25 state universities are included in the list.

Creighton University is the only other Nebraska college included in this year's edition.

Lists including UNL as one of the country's top institutions of higher learning are important to the school's success, Mulnix said, but other factors — such as money — are more important.

State Sen. Scott Moore of Seward, chairman of the Nebraska Legislature's Appropriations Committee, said UNL could be facing across-the-board cuts of as much as 10 percent.

Such cuts would be disastrous for UNL's image, Mulnix said.

"There's no question about it," he said. "Any time you make budget cuts of this magnitude, you make news just by taking the cuts, and it hurts your image both nationally and internationally."

"Any time you start tinkering and toying with the budget, sooner or later, it's going to affect the way people look at you."

Herb Howe, associate to the chancellor, said UNL's appearance on such lists "can't help but be positive" for the university, particularly in recruiting new students.

"There's no question about it," Howe said. "High school students these days are more aggressive in checking out institutions, particularly when they're from out of state."

In September, however, UNL was included in a U.S. News & World Report publication titled "America's Best Colleges." In that report, UNL was placed in the third quartile, somewhere between 103 and 153 out of the country's 204 "national universities."

"In the U.S. News & World Reports list, we were in the third category, which made us not look as good as we wanted to," Mulnix said. "I know that's their best-selling issue of the year, so a lot of people see it, and it has a lot to do with their perception of us."

However, the "Best Values" book is not a major seller at newsstands, Mulnix said, and it probably won't have much of an impact on UNL's national perception.

"(The 'Best Values' book) isn't going to sell a lot of issues, because it isn't very widely known," Mulnix said. "It's nice to be in it, but it really doesn't do much for us."