ing the accounts, analyze some of the differences in these perceptions by answering the questions that follow.

**FIVE ACCOUNTS OF THE ASSASSINATION OF MALCOLM X**


Malcolm X, the 39-year-old leader of a militant Black Nationalist movement, was shot to death yesterday afternoon at a rally of his followers in a ballroom in Washington Heights. The bearded Negro extremist had said only a few words of greeting when a fusillade rang out. The bullets knocked him over backwards.

A 22-year-old Negro, Thomas Hagan, was charged with the killing. The police rescued him from the ballroom crowd after he had been shot and beaten.

Pandemonium broke out among the 400 Negroes in the Audubon Ballroom at 160th Street and Broadway. As men, women and children ducked under tables and flattened themselves on the floor, more shots were fired. The police said seven bullets struck Malcolm. Three other Negroes were shot. Witnesses reported that as many as 30 shots had been fired. About two hours later the police said the shooting had apparently been a result of a feud between followers of Malcolm and members of the extremist group he broke with last year, the Black Muslims.

**Life March 5, 1965**

His life oozing out through a half dozen or more gunshot wounds in his chest, Malcolm X, once the shrillest voice of black supremacy, lay dying on the stage of a Manhattan auditorium. Moments before, he had stepped up to the lectern and 400 of the faithful had settled down expectantly to hear the sort of speech for which he was famous — flaying the hated white man. Then a scuffle broke out in the hall and Malcolm's bodyguards bolted from his side to break it up — only to discover that they had been faked out. At least two men with pistols rose from the audience and pumped bullets into the speaker, while a third cut loose at close range with both barrels of a sawed-off shotgun. In the confusion the pistol man got away. The shotgunner lunged through the crowd and out the door, but not before the guards came to their wits and shot him in the leg. Outside he was swiftly overtaken by other supporters of Malcolm and very likely would have been
stomped to death if the police hadn’t saved him. Most shocking of all to the residents of Harlem was the fact that Malcolm had been killed not by “whitey” but by members of his own race.

The New York Post (February 22, 1965)
They came early to the Audubon Ballroom, perhaps drawn by the expectation that Malcolm X would name the men who firebombed his home last Sunday. ... I sat at the left in the 12th row and, as we waited, the man next to me spoke of Malcolm and his followers: “Malcolm is our only hope. ... You can depend on him to tell it like it is and to give Whitey hell.” ...

There was a prolonged ovation as Malcolm walked to the rostrum. ... Malcolm looked up and said “A salaam aleikum (Peace be unto you)” and the audience replied “We aleikum salaam (And unto you, peace).”

Bespectacled and dapper in a dark suit, sandy hair glinting in the light, Malcolm said: “Brothers and sisters . . .” He was interrupted by two men in the center of the ballroom, ... who rose and, arguing with each other, moved forward. Then there was a scuffle at the back of the room. ... I heard Malcolm X say his last words: “Now, brothers, break it up,” he said softly. “Be cool, be calm.”

Then all hell broke loose. There was a muffled sound of shots and Malcolm, blood on his face and chest, fell limply back over the chairs behind him. The two men who had approached him ran to the exit on my side of the room, shooting wildly behind them as they ran. ... I heard people screaming, “Don’t let them kill him.” “Kill those bastards.” ... At an exit I saw some of Malcolm’s men beating with all their strength on two men. ... I saw a half dozen of Malcolm’s followers bending over his inert body on the stage. Their clothes stained with their leader’s blood. ...

Four policemen took the stretcher and carried Malcolm through the crowd and some of the women came out of their shock ... and one said: “... I hope he doesn’t die, but I don’t think he’s going to make it.” ...

Associated Press (February 22, 1965)
A week after being bombed out of his Queens home, Black Nationalist leader Malcolm X was shot to death shortly after 3 (P.M.) yesterday at a Washington Heights rally of 400 of his devoted followers. Early today, police brass ordered a homicide charge placed against a 22-year-old man they rescued from a savage beating by Malcolm X supporters after the
shooting. The suspect, Thomas Hagan, had been shot in the left leg by one of Malcolm’s bodyguards as, police said, Hagan and another assassin fled when pandemonium erupted. Two other men were wounded in the wild burst of firing from at least three weapons. The firearms were a .38, a .45 automatic and a sawed-off shotgun. Hagan allegedly shot Malcolm X with the shotgun, a double-barrelled sawed-off weapon on which the stock also had been shortened, possibly to facilitate concealment. Cops charged Reuben Frances, of 871 E. 179th St., Bronx, with felonious assault in the shooting of Hagan, and with Sullivan Law violation — possession of the .45. Police recovered the shotgun and the .45.

The Amsterdam News (February 27, 1965)

“We interrupt this program to bring you a special newscast . . . ,” the announcer said as the Sunday afternoon movie on the TV set was halted temporarily. “Malcolm X was shot four times . . . while addressing a crowd at the Audubon Ballroom on 166th Street.” “Oh no!” That was my first reaction to the shocking event that followed one week after the slender, articulate leader of the Afro-American Unity was routed from his East Elmhurst home by a bomb explosion. Minutes later we alighted from a cab at the corner of Broadway and 166th St. just a short 15 blocks from where I live on Broadway. About 200 men and women, neatly dressed, were milling around, some with expressions of awe and disbelief. Others were in small clusters talking loudly and with deep emotion in their voices. Mostly they were screaming for vengeance. One woman, small, dressed in a light gray coat and her eyes flaming with indignation, argued with a cop at the St. Nicholas corner of the block. “This is not the end of it. What they were going to do to the Statue of Liberty will be small in comparison. We black people are tired of being shoved around.” Standing across the street near the memorial park one of Malcolm’s close associates commented: “It’s a shame.” Later he added that “if it’s war they want, they’ll get it.” He would not say whether Elijah Muhammed’s followers had anything to do with the assassination. About 3:30 p.m. Malcolm X’s wife, Betty, was escorted by three men and a woman from the Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. Tears streamed down her face. She was screaming, “They killed him!” Malcolm X had no last words . . . The bombing and burning of the No. 7 Mosque early Tuesday morning was the first blow by those who are seeking revenge for the cold-blooded murder of