

"We are the victorious people! We will rule!"

events they stage, reminiscent in some ways of the huge meetings at which Hitler screamed his doctrines of Aryan supremacy. We attended their latest rally in Philadelphia last October. Three hours before meeting time at the Philadelphia Arena a vanguard of 40 charter buses and caravans of cars began arriving from as far away as Boston and Atlanta. Most passengers wore the Muslim "uniform"—for men, dark suits and dark shoes; for women, Arabic-type white robes and kerchiefs.

Fruit of Islam guards patrolled the doors outside. Before being admitted, everyone—including a dozen reporters and photographers—was lined up against a wall and searched.

"What is the reason for this," we asked a guard. He looked at us warily. "We have many enemies," he said.

Inside the Arena approximately 5,000 men and women were seated—segregated by sex as Elijah had ordered. In front of them blared a banner: THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH, MUHAMMAD IS HIS APOSTLE. Guards were everywhere.

The crowd was strangely silent. Suddenly applause erupted from one corner of the vast hall.

Elijah Muhammad had arrived. He was a short, rather unimpressive-looking man, slight and light-skinned. He wore a dark

suit, bow tie and black-embroidered fez. His face showing no expression, he moved quickly to the speaker's platform.

As soon as he was seated the introduction began. "A man who has *seen* God," he was called, "a man who has *heard* God, the *boldest* black man in America, the *smartest* black man in America, the *most powerful* black man in America!"

During the introduction the tiny Muhammad sat impassively. Then, as he rose to speak, he seemed transformed. His movements became abrupt, jerky. He stared piercingly at his audience, spitting out his words in harsh, thin tones.

The Black race, he began, was "Original Man," created 66,000,000,000 years ago. Adam was grafted from a black man 6,000 years ago by a black scientist. Thus whites were weaker. They were, in fact, devils. They had kidnapped Negroes from a high civilization in Mecca, enslaved them, brainwashed them into a false sense of inferiority, and made them worship a white Jesus. But the Nation of Islam, he said, would rise again. Whites were corrupt; their civilization was doomed.

"Get away from them!" he shouted. "They wasn't *taught* to do good! They was taught to do *evil*! They was taught to *hate* you and me! Stand up and fight the white man!"

"We are the victorious people! We will rule!"

"Prophet!" cried a voice. "Messenger!" screamed another. "Teach us!" The crowd began applauding wildly. Some shook their fists in the air. It was an unforgettable performance.

But it is not only in such mass rallies that Muslims demonstrate their remarkable dedication, discipline and solidarity. They also subscribe to a puritanical personal code—they eat only one meal a day, abstain from alcohol and tobacco, and the women use no cosmetics. Gambling, narcotics and sexual promiscuity are prohibited. Muslims are urged to marry, always within their race, preferably within their faith. They dress neatly, practice a ritualistic politeness, refrain from raucous laughter or loud talk.

Muslims stick together

Muslims pledge one tenth to one third of their income to the movement. They patronize its businesses or those owned by Muslims. They face east and pray to Mecca three times daily and refrain from eating pork or anything cooked with pork. They are required to attend services regularly at a Muslim "temple" or "mosque." In most temples, decorations include a painting of a Negro hung from

a tree limb, a replica of an American flag captioned, SLAVERY SUFFERING AND DEATH, and an Islamic star and crescent proclaiming, FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND EQUALITY. Large letters demand, WHICH WILL SURVIVE THE WAR OF ARMAGEDDON?

"Shocking as this sounds to many people," says Negro scholar Dr. C. Eric Lincoln of Clark College in Atlanta, "to Negro masses who live in big-city ghettos it has undeniable appeal."

"They are uneducated, unskilled, isolated by poverty and discrimination from the common values of society. They are strangers in their own country, shunned by successful whites and Negroes alike. They see no hope of improvement. Then they hear the voice of Elijah 'Muhammad,' challenging them to recover their self-respect, urging them to repudiate the white man's religion and culture, daring them to believe in race pride and black supremacy. And they not only listen, they act."

Perhaps typical of the Muslim leadership in terms of his background and bitterness is a lanky, energetic, good-looking man named Malcolm Little, once known in Harlem as "Big Red." One of 11 children of an uneducated Baptist preacher, Little was born in Omaha 37 years ago. He lived in crowded, crime-



Facing eastward, Muslim trainees are taught Arabic prayers from the Koran.