

Servants of the people

Meet the officials of the World Community of Islam in the West

By Curtis Shahid Sharif

ATLANTA — "One of the brightest stars in the nation (World Community) of Islam," is how Imam Abdul Haleem Farrakhan described Imam Ibrahim Pasha.

The description came during ceremonies in Atlanta, March 14, 1976 as Imam Pasha was being installed as Southern Regional Imam for the World Community of Islam in the West.

In this position, the young hard-working Imam oversees the propagation of Islam in the states of Georgia, Florida, Alabama, South Carolina and Tennessee. He also is chief administrator of Atlanta Mosque No. 15, and serves as consultant to the Imams of local Mosques throughout the Southern Region.

Though his present position requires much of him in terms of responsibility, travel, hard work and problem solving, laboring in the cause of Islam is nothing new to Imam Pasha. He has been a member of the World Community of Islam in the West since the age of four when he joined his grandmother — Sister Malikah Omar — in accepting the teachings of Islam and leadership of the Honorable Master Elijah Muhammad, in Cincinnati during the mid-1940's.

In the late 1950s the family moved to Chicago and Imam Pasha entered what was formally called the then - University of Islam, where he was a classmate of the Honorable Wallace D. Muhammad, Chief Imam of the World Community of Islam in the West.

During his adolescent years, Imam Pasha developed strong bonds of friendship and respect with his Chicago schoolmates, many of whom were members of the family of Master Elijah Muhammad (may peace be upon him).

His closeness to the Muhammad family is reflected in the late Master Elijah Muhammad's tendency to introduce him to visitors as a "son."

Even as a teen-ager, Imam Pasha displayed the qualities that make him such an able Imam and administrator today. His unhesitancy in responding to the call of Islam, and the enthusiasm displayed marked him as an outstanding aide in the cause of Islam, and led to his appointment, at the age of 14, to the post of Junior Fruit of Islam (FOI) lieutenant. In this post, he coordinated and conducted Junior FOI classes and was drill instructor for the crack Junior FOI Drill Team.

Imam Pasha said that their young



Ibrahim Pasha Southern Regional Imam

cadre was high-spirited and often challenged and vied with the Senior FOI in pushing the then Nation of Islam's programs.

CONSISTENTLY ACTIVE

As a 16-year-old Senior FOI, Imam Pasha worked under Elijah Muhammad II in providing security for the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. He remained active in this area throughout the Messenger's life and even designed and built the bulletproof rostrum used by Master Elijah Muhammad to deliver his last sermon.

As a Senior FOI, Imam Pasha became FOI secretary and later the organizer of FOI classes, thus learning the valuable skills of record-keeping, teaching and leadership which have well served him in his ministry.

During the 1960s, the Nation of Islam attracted the attention of the national broadcast and print media. The media portrayed the Nation as a threat to the United States and the government used the Muslim's refusal to bear arms as a device to imprison young FOI. Imam Pasha as well as Chief Imam W.D. Muhammad were among these men.

Imam Pasha was sentenced to one year and one day for refusing to be

inducted into the armed forces and served the time as a model prisoner. While in prison, he and fellow Muslims organized and worked to spread Islam among the prison population.

Following his release, Imam Pasha returned to his post in Chicago as FOI class organizer. Soon thereafter, he was promoted to 1st lieutenant of the FOI and worked as circulation manager of the newly established Muhammad Speaks Newspaper. He held both those positions through early 1975.

In 1964, Imam Pasha married a young lady who likewise had a long history of service in the Nation of Islam. Sister Faridah Pasha was summoned from New York to serve as personal Secretary to the Honorable Master Elijah Muhammad in Chicago. She worked in this capacity for two years before becoming an assistant to the former National Secretary John Ali.

Three years after her marriage, Sis. Pasha resigned her job to devote more time to their growing family. Today, the family has grown to six children: Tamar, 11; Ibrahim II, 9; Abdul Hakem, 6; Ahmad Raed, 5; Effat, 3; and Nasim, 9 months.

After the Honorable Wallace D. Muhammad assumed leadership of the

Nation of Islam, Imam Pasha was awarded the position of national consultant. Shortly thereafter, he was appointed Southern Regional Imam of the World Community of Islam in the West.

Describing his duties as Regional Imam, Pasha said they are, "first and most importantly, the clear delivery of the teachings of Islam as taught by the Chief Imam, the Honorable Wallace D. Muhammad. Following this, we (Pasha seldom uses the pronoun 'I') must attend to the administrative functions of this (Atlanta) Mosque and the regional mosques. We must attend to the welfare of the Muslim community — such as counseling Believers and offering advice on different problems. And we must represent the Chief Imam in the community at large.

TYPICAL EXPECTATIONS

Imam Pasha's ministry and administration has been marked by innovation, progress, and a refined atmosphere of peace:

— A regional telephone network developed and coordinated in Atlanta, beams live broadcasts of the Chief Imam throughout the South.

— Monthly Regional Imams Meetings now rotate from state to state and from mosque to mosque. "This is done to demonstrate that no matter what the size and status of the mosque, it is indeed a vital part of the World Community of Islam in the Southern Region....As a region, we are one and therefore we share and share alike," the regional Imam said.

— The peace and unity developed by the popular weekly Jumah Prayer is demonstrated by the regular and growing numbers of Arabic, African and Orthodox Bilalian Muslims that continue to attend the Friday prayer.

Imam Pasha said that a major goal of his administration is to "see that the Southern Region is the first or among the first to demonstrate natural growth and development in the society.

"We want to build the kind of society which will serve as an example as to what Islam can do to advance the quality of life of a people," he said.