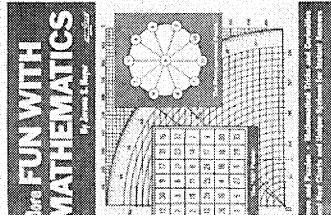


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convicts who have been rehabilitated.
Each mosque operates its own em-
ployment service to help find jobs for
members who are out of work. The
Black Muslims own a number of suc-
cessful small businesses which they
hold up as models of what they hope
to accomplish once they establish
their Black nation.

Another potent factor in winning
converts is their program to
strengthen family ties. Smoking and
drinking are forbidden. At weekly
meetings of the FOM, men are ex-
horted to support their families and
protect their women. At meetings of
the MORTC (Muslim Girls Training
and Civilization Class), women are
taught never to go bareheaded in
public and to preserve their modesty
by wearing long skirts.

Members are not supposed to buy
on credit, and they are wary of sign-
ing their names to any document.
(This is one reason why they do not
register to vote. Many Black Muslims,
including Elijah Muhammad and one
of his sons, Wallace, have served
prison terms rather than register for
Selective Service.)

MUHAMMAD: "He (the white man)
is after the weak ones, those who
have not yet come into the knowledge
(Negroes who are not Muslims), like
the Bible symbolically teaches you:
That he (the white man) is the beast,
or the dragon, who stood before the
woman ready to destroy her child
before it's born.

"Just like a woman giving birth
to a baby, this (Islam) is giving
birth to a nation, a better nation. And
he's (the white man) here, ready to
take that convert as soon as I teach
him, if he can. That's the baby, he's
the woman in the knowledge of himself, and
the woman is the Messenger. As the
Bible says, the dragon has swallowed
you up, and God says in the Bible,
'I will bring out of the dragon that
which he has swallowed. That which
he has swallowed is people.'

LUCAS: "Some people are surprised
that in your teaching you quote from
the Bible. You take the same things
we learned in Sunday School and give
them a new interpretation."

MUHAMMAD: "Give them the right
interpretation! And when a person
gives the right interpretation, this is
the best way to understand. If I say
that seven and three-quarters is his
hat size (pointing to Sharrieff), if it

the name of the devil and await your
real name. You don't know what it is;
the 'X' stands for unknown quantity.
You didn't know your real name be-
fore you put the 'X' there. Now you
put the 'X' there as a member waiting
for your right name and he (the
white man) will accept that.

"That's another thing... you know
it must be the time of separation. If
you tell him (the white man) you
have nothing but 'X,' he'll write it
down. Allah gave to me Elijah Mu-
hammad—Elijah, I always had; my
grandfather was named Elijah—and
I was on welfare. I went to the wel-
fare and had the welfare change my
name. I had them take away Poole.
I said Poole is not my name. They
said, 'Well, you gave it to us,' I said,
'But it's not my name. Muhammad is
my name. I just got it!'"

(Mr. Muhammad was born Elijah
Poole 65 years ago in rural Georgia.
From early childhood, he says, he
had a sense of destiny.)

MUHAMMAD: "When I was six or
seven years old, I went to school for
only one objective—to study the
Bible, to learn to read it. My grand-
mother helped me, and from then
until 1931 all I wanted was to become
a preacher. My father, who was a
preacher, told me that each man in-
terprets the Bible according to his
own fancy, and I asked him wasn't
there one right interpretation? He
used to say, 'That boy worries me to
death, chasing me until he gets the
right answers. I knew when I finally
started to preach, other preachers
wouldn't like what I said.'

"I told my wife, when I was work-
ing on a job, that no matter how well
I did, I wouldn't be satisfied until I
was preaching. Sometimes the spirit
in me to preach was so strong that I
almost cried. I was thirty-five years
old when I discovered the truth. Then
I converted to Black Muslim legend,
of my family."

It was in Detroit, during the depths
of the Depression, that Elijah Poole
found the "truth," as taught by W. D.
Fard, a door-to-door peddler of silks.
According to Black Muslim legend,
Fard—also known as Professor Ford
and "The Prophet"—was an Arab
who came to this country to "awaken
the lost-found nation of Islam"
(Negroes).

(A Los Angeles newspaper re-

cently ran a story "exposing" Fard
as a white man from Australia and
detailed his alleged police record: an
arrest in 1926 in California, followed
by a three-year prison term at San
Quentin; an arrest in Detroit in 1932,
and one in 1933, with no conviction
on either charge.

(The Black Muslims were quick to
reply. In their official newspaper,
Muhammad Speaks, Mr. Muhammad
offered \$100,000 to anyone proving
that the Fard uncovered by the white
newspaper was the man who founded
the Black Muslim movement. To date,
there have been no takers.)

As Fard made his way through De-
troit's Negro ghetto, he told his
customers that they were "original
black men" and superior to whites
who had gained the upper hand
through "trickology." Eventually,
he set up a temple. Some time later,
he vanished, and two factions arose
within the newly organized sect. The
one headed by Elijah Muhammad
survived.

LUCAS: "Have you ever had to dis-

cipline any of your followers?"
MUHAMMAD: "In 1934, I had thirty-
six ministers in a class. Every one of
them failed me, except my brother.
Three or four of them trailed me;
they wanted my life. One of my
brothers was envious and rose up
against me. I was living on Wabash
Avenue (in Chicago), and he was my
captain. Out of three hundred mem-
bers, only three in Detroit and twelve
in Chicago stuck by me. But Allah
put a chastisement on those who
failed me."

LUCAS: "Do you see any parallel
between what happened at your
mosque in Los Angeles (where one
Muslim was killed in a battle with
police) and the bombing of that Bap-
tist church in Birmingham?"

MUHAMMAD: "Yes. It shows that
the white man likes to kill. He doesn't
like Christians, he doesn't like Bud-
dhists, he doesn't like Muslims. That's
his nature... to kill.

"There have been five clashes with
the police, and the first man I lost was
in Los Angeles. If they (Muslims in
the L.A. mosque) had done right,
none would have been lost. If you
believe Allah is on your side, you're
bound to win.

"In Chicago, years ago, a police
captain dropped dead (during a court
hearing of a case involving Muslims),

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