

and I didn't even touch him. In 1942, the FBI told me of some things that had happened to trains carrying some of my followers to prison. When one train was going to Sandstone, Minnesota, a rail on the train track broke right at the edge of a river. The engine dropped dead at the throttle of another train taking some more of my followers to prison. There must be a power behind me. I don't have soldiers guarding my house.

"Allah put a chastisement on those white people who killed our brother in Los Angeles. That plane with all those people from Atlanta that crashed in France was Allah's doing. There was also that military plane that crashed in Dakota; and that big submarine was sunk by Allah. He (W. D. Fard) told me, 'If they kill one of your least ones, I'll kill ten of their best ones.'"

Coffee finished, we said our farewell. "God go with you," said Mr. Muhammad as I left.

His shiny, new Lincoln Continental parked near the carriage house at the end of the long driveway was another sign of the affluence that is particularly noticeable among the Black Muslims in Chicago. Among their holdings in Chicago alone are modern apartment buildings, commercial real estate, a new restaurant, a grocery store, a clothing factory, clothing store, barbershop, and dry-cleaning plant. One of the leader's sons, Herbert, runs the newspaper; he and Elijah, Jr., whose main interest is a bakery shop, seem to be the most enterprising in business.

The scholar of the family is Akbar Muhammad, a student at Al-Azhar University in Egypt. In addition to his eight children, Elijah Muhammad has 34 grandchildren. It was to learn, if I could, whether there was some line of succession in the movement that I phoned Mr. Muhammad to request one final session. He readily consented and suggested I come again for coffee on Sunday morning.

Lucas: "Mr. Muhammad, in Louis Lomax's book, *When the Word Is Given*, it is intimated that the Black Muslims will soon register and vote in large numbers."

MUHAMMAD: "No! I have not talked with Lomax in two years. We don't want to use this rotten system of

devils, the children of the slave masters, the children of the murderers—and they're still murdering our people—I think they're foolish to do so. And if—to tell you the truth—if I ever get our people on my side, I'll stop it!

"What do you look like, marrying the devil when you have been told he's the devil, and he can't deny he's the devil? You're a devil, too! Why, you're not fit for our race or his! Our people who accept them will be destroyed along with them. *Revelations* says, 'All those that had the name of the beast went down with the beast.' They all were pushed in the lake of fire with the beast."

LUCAS: "Mr. Muhammad, is there any hope at all for the white people?"

MUHAMMAD: "No! There is no hope for the white man in this country! He said to me that no white person, old or young, will be saved."

LUCAS: "He? You mean W. D. Fard?"

MUHAMMAD: "That's right. This is the only country that will be totally destroyed, so no one will copy after them. After one thousand years, the righteous will come and tread on the ashes. This country has three hundred and ninety years to burn after being set afire, erasing a civilization so completely there will be no trace—like Sodom and Gomorrah."

LUCAS: "But suppose they give you the land for the nation you want to build?"

MUHAMMAD: "This will save America from total destruction for a long time to come. But getting her people out of the land given to us will be her headache. I told them the places we will leave from will be vacant; take the places we leave."

LUCAS: "What region of the country would you like?"

MUHAMMAD: "I told them we wanted an outlet to the sea . . . no desert. I told them we want land that is rich in minerals, and not to isolate us within the borders, like they did the Indians. She (America) must support us in everything to start a civilization as it is now, not as it was when the United States started. Something's got to be done and done at once. America can't take care of our unemployment while her own is increasing."

LUCAS: "Do you really think that

white people will willingly give up part of this country?"

MUHAMMAD: "It is written that all a man has he will give to preserve his life. We want a piece of earth, but I do not mean necessarily a home in this country. The earth is a big place."

LUCAS: "Suppose full equal rights for Negroes were granted immediately?"

MUHAMMAD: "There is no such thing as reform in the white man. He must be removed. We're in that time when he will be removed. Not all whites will be destroyed at the same time. Two-thirds will be killed, others will escape. Turkey won't be destroyed immediately; England won't be destroyed right away. That's because of Daniel's prophecy to 'cut the tree, but leave the roots. Then put an iron band around it.'"

LUCAS: "Is the fire you talk about, that which will come with Armageddon, really the atom bomb?"

MUHAMMAD: "If they use atom bombs, it will ruin our planet. England is playing the hypocrite between the United States and Russia, so there will be no bombs dropped on Europe. They may fight, and it will look like a devastated desert when it's over. Afterward, both the United States and Russia will be too weak to do anything. The few (whites) take who will come back, you could take a walking cane and beat them up."

"This country is the most hated in the world. America is like a rich, proud boy, drunk, running up and down the streets with his pockets full of money. And people are waiting to rob him, or accept his gifts, and waiting for him to fall on his face. He tries to buy friendship, but you can't buy friendship."

LUCAS: "There has been much speculation on just how the Muslim leadership operates. For instance, Malcolm X has been mentioned as a possible successor; also your son, Nathaniel, and Mr. Sharrieff and . . ."

MUHAMMAD: "Stop, I know what you're going to say. This is not like that. You can't take my place any more than someone could take Moses' or Jesus' place. Only God can name my successor. In the end of the world, God will have one shepherd—this is the prediction of the Qur'an and the Bible. There's nobody after me but God himself!"

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