

Misrepresented Himself And the Divine Messenger

PART I OF A 3-PART SERIES

By Abdul Basit Naeem

While preparing to undertake a journey to Africa and the Middle East a couple of months ago, I found myself one day receiving a bit of "good, sound advice" from an Eastern Muslim well-wisher: "Before you go, Abdul Basit, be sure to equip yourself to meet the hostility that awaits you at home. . ."

"Hostility? . . . Awaiting me?" I asked my learned brother, in candid amazement.

"It's all due to the late Malcolm X" he proceeded to explain. "When he was residing in the Middle East last year, he had waged a rather relentless and, of course, uncontested campaign of vilifying the (so-called)



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'Black Muslim' movement . . ." Then, with a broad grin, he added, "And that includes you, Abdul Basit . . . You are considered an inseparable part of the U.S. Islamic phenomenon."

"But where does the 'hostility' come in? What, exactly, did Malcolm say about me. . .?"

Responded my friend and well-wisher: "In a closed (private) meeting with a group of prominent Eastern Muslims, Malcolm had represented your avowed admiration and open support for the Nation of Islam as the work of a . . . scholar forced by unfavorable economic circumstances in the United States to turn a hired writer for (the Honorable) Elijah Muhammad . . ."

The "news" did not, of course, take me by surprise. Having known Malcolm X as long and as well as I had,

I recognized that he was fully capable of making the most unkind remark my "Eastern" brother attributed to him.

Believing in an ancient Persian (Iranian) adage that "silence is the best means of rebutting a fool," at first I wanted to ignore this whole matter. Besides, my ill-informed critic was dead now and I didn't see what I would gain from defending myself before a mass of flesh and bones decaying under tons of earth. However, I also realized that to leave Malcolm's accusation unanswered would be tantamount to "admission of guilt" and hence, perhaps, a potential threat to my professional reputation. I also felt that I simply had to repudiate Malcolm—in the interest of the Nation of Islam itself, if not my own.

Consequently, for several days that followed, I pursued the matter with considerable vigor, attempting to calculate the extent of Malcolm's callous outbursts. I wrote scores of letters to my contacts abroad, especially among the Muslim journalists, inquiring of what they possibly knew of Malcolm's malicious propaganda in the Islamic East.

I perused as many foreign newspapers and periodicals as I could secure, seeking additional clues to the late Mr. Little's campaign of ill-will. I also discussed certain aspects of Malcolm's extended stay in the Middle

East with several knowledgeable African and Asian personalities in New York and at the United Nations—representatives of "Eastern" Muslim governments.

Then, about two weeks ago, I received the first overseas publication — WORLD MUSLIM LEAGUE (dated April, 1965), published in Singapore, Malaysia — that contained an article which reported, in some detail, the overseas doings (or misdoings) of the "former fiery spokesman of the Nation of Islam."

While it mentioned nothing derogatory about me or even about my respected brother, Honorable Elijah Muhammad, its contents proved no less distasteful: In the first place, it called Malcolm X "the leader of the Black Muslims in America" (which, indeed, he was not). Second, the article referred to ". . . the Muslim Mosque establishment headed by him, and its efforts in unifying the ranks of Muslims . . ."

Now, just fancy that! An individual who was indubitably guilty of causing what a white writer (friend of Malcolm X) had once described as the "first major crack in the hitherto solid wall of Muslims' unity . . ." was being lauded for his efforts in behalf of "unity!"

My investigations later revealed that the brief WORLD MUSLIM LEAGUE article had been written "solely on the basis of Malcolm's own claims and contentions . . ." thus proving that, in a desperate attempt to gain support from foreign Muslims, Malcolm X had lied not only about his own former mentor (Honorable Elijah Muhammad) and his noble work, but also about himself.

(To be continued)