

SPIRA

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**PRIVATE LIFE OF
DOROTHEA TOWLES**

**CLEVELAND:
CITY OF CULTURE
AND CHALLENGE**

**MR. MUHAMMAD
AND HIS
FANATIC MOSLEM**

There are many controversies arising out of the growth of the Moslem organization in the United States. Many people are ignorant of the facts about the group. SEPIA herewith gives an objective story about the organization, what it is, what it does and what its objectives are. SEPIA's editors do not condemn or endorse this organization but are merely presenting the facts.

MR. MUHAMMAD AND HIS FANATIC MOSLEMS?

An unbiased report on the man who would 'throw Christianity into the garbage can'

THE NAME ELIJAH MUHAMMAD has a special meaning in America today, and that meaning depends largely upon who you are, what you are, and where you are.

Mention the name Elijah Muhammad to the police chiefs of any city where he has had a gathering and they will at once think of a slightly-built, somewhat gentle-looking but strong-faced man whose incendiary preachings and explosively radical teachings are capable of attracting 6,000 to 10,000 Negro followers whenever and wherever he chooses.

But since Mr. Muhammad's followers — estimated at 200,000 and upward Moslems scattered throughout every major urban area in the country — are strictly peaceful law-abiding folk, there is little the police chiefs can do other than the mere routine of assigning policemen to watch over their activities — just in case something does happen.

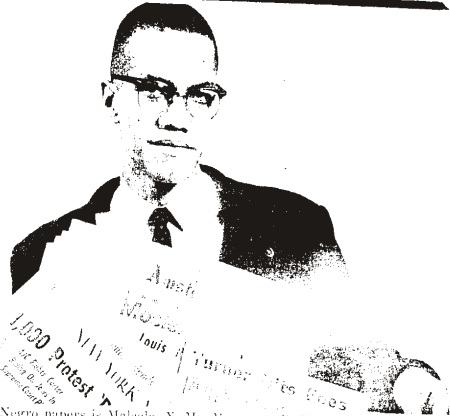
Mr. Muhammad sits silently, left, waiting to address the overflow crowd, below, which gathered to hear him in the Metropolitan Baptist Church in Chicago on recent occasion.



MOSLEMS continued



Surrounded by young, clean-cut bodyguards, Mr. Muhammad draws a standing ovation as he enters church for one of his meetings. No weapons are allowed.



Displaying Negro papers is Malcolm X, Mr. Muhammad's lieutenant in New York City. The religious leader uses press to good advantage in his work.



Sidewalk crusaders. Group of Moslems urges passersby to visit Muhammad's Temple of Islam in Harlem. Posters at left advertise Pittsburgh Courier.



A big Moslem meeting in Pittsburgh's Syria Mosque drew the usual large crowd. Officers seldom have any policing to do since meetings are peaceful.

'A purveyor of cold, black hatred,' a national magazine called Muhammad

TALK ABOUT ELIJAH MUHAMMAD and his Moslems to a preacher, a priest or a rabbi and he instantly recalls the copper-colored little man who has boldly told as many as 10,000 Negroes in a packed auditorium, arena or church, that "Christianity, as we know it, after 100 years of experience in it, is not a unifying religion for the darker people. Christianity is a white man's religion. All we can do is throw Christianity into the garbage can and then use the can as a weapon to fight back with."

To America's Negro leaders, Mr. Muhammad is a menacing thorn in their sides who keeps prodding his followers with statements that tell how the white men "... make fools and Uncle Toms out of all of our educated professional class of people with a false show of social equality." He does not approve of the Negro's fight for integration, but advocates complete separation of the Negro from the white race, and urges Negroes to become economically independent of whites.

"In this enlightened world of today," he once said, "the slavemasters' (white man's) Tom, boot-lickers, and stool pigeons we can not use, and must weed them out from among us as other nations have and still are doing. They are the hold-back of our progress among us. Remove them or isolate them and enjoy success. We have a few who are being paid to keep the enemies well informed of all we say. One day they will be out . . ."

For the federal government, especially the F.B.I., the name



Hurrying to school is a group of young Moslems in Chicago. All children attending Muhammad's schools learn to speak Arabic as well as English.



Studying in library, older students at the University of Islam No. 2 in Chicago pursue their courses. Enrollment at the school increases annually.



Working on lessons, girl Moslem pupils at school wear attire just like that worn by adult Moslems. School has many courses open to students.

Elijah Muhammad has a very special meaning which dates back to his earlier years in Chicago when he first established headquarters there and proceeded to preach against the "white man's war," and draft registration in World War II.

A conscientious objector, he subsequently spent several years in the federal prison at Milan, Mich., where he kept himself busy by converting a large number of prisoners over to his Moslem religious beliefs. Oddly enough, all of his followers know about his prison record, and the prison records of other Moslems.

Mr. Muhammad speaks quite freely of his prison record. When asked about it, "I'm not afraid of jail," he replied to a cheering audience of 10,000 at the Uline Arena in Washington, D. C. "When it comes to giving the truth to Negroes, jail looks like the Waldorf-Astoria."

Read the writings of any white news reporter who has ever attempted to cover a gathering starring this mysteriously popular man (he barred all white reporters for New York newspapers from his big meeting at that city's St. Nicholas Arena in July of this year), and you will get still another angle on the meaning and purpose of Elijah Muhammad.

Time magazine, for example, referred to him as "a purveyor of . . . cold, black hatred." The news magazine somberly warned the nation that "Muhammad's virulent anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism, plus his elite corps of dark-suited young 'honor guards' has lifted him well beyond the run-of-the-street crackpot Negro nationalist groups."

Another news weekly, U. S. News and World Report, reported that "Muhammad tells his listeners the white man is the 'greatest drunkard, greatest seducer, greatest murderer, greatest adulterer, greatest deceiver on earth' . . . Negroes are

promised that they will soon gain control of New York City — and that 'white rule' in the U. S. will be overthrown by 1970."

In answer to this charge, Malcolm X, a top Moslem leader in New York City, stated flatly, "We don't discriminate against whites. But there is no white man a Moslem can trust."

But to those thousands of Moslems who are reported to be devout followers of this controversial leader, his name symbolizes a "Black Moses" whose coming was prophesied, they claim, in several places in the Bible. They point to Chapter 3 in Malachi, which says "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." In Chapter 4 of Malachi they say there is justification for the coming of Elijah Muhammad in the fifth verse, which states, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

The Moslems deny that Mr. Muhammad is a preacher of hate and black supremacy, and insist they are a religious group — not an organization of fanatics. They maintain his critics have twisted his teachings so as to arouse public sentiment against Mr. Muhammad, and that he teaches black heritage — not black supremacy.

Mr. Muhammad, they further explain, believes Negroes should have a thorough knowledge of "self." His contention is that they have a long and proud history that all should know, but which has not been taught in our schools and not written in our history books. They strive to maintain a high standard in obedience, submission and kindness as a characteristic of their religion. It is not strange to hear an older Moslem say to a much younger man, "Yes sir" or "No, sir." In dealing with their own members and outsiders no matter what racial origin or background, Mr. Muhammad insists that his followers carry out their polite manners in all conversation, or contact.

continued

'I'm not afraid of jail. When it comes to giving the truth to Negroes, jail



Moslem-owned and operated, this Chicago grocery store is typical of many enterprises Muhammad urges to make followers economically independent.



Moslems are governed by strict dietary laws and eating habits and are as much concerned with their physical food as with their spiritual diet.

THE RECITATION of these historic facts about Negroes by Mr. Muhammad and his followers, according to one Moslem source, has been done with so much enthusiasm that some people have misinterpreted these recitations as the teaching of black supremacy.

When discussing past, present and future events, the Moslems back up their claims with generous references to the Bible. They use the 15th Chapter and 13th verse in Genesis to explain their belief that Negroes were destined to be held in bondage in the United States for 400 years of "suffering and affliction."

The Biblical verse actually states, "And he said unto Abram, know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years." While his critics charge that Mr. Muhammad and his Moslems are off in their calendar calculations, and accuse them of interpreting the Bible to their own advantage, the Moslems believe the Genesis passage refers directly to the Negro's forced arrival here as slaves almost 400 years ago, and that the Negro's 400 years of suffering under the "white devil's" rule are about to end.

Who is Elijah Muhammad, and where did he come from? Born October 7, 1897 at Sandersville, Ga., Elijah Muhammad's real name is Elijah Poole, and he was the son of a Baptist minister who eventually moved his family to Detroit.

According to the story Mr. Muhammad tells his followers, he became the "messenger" or Elijah Muhammad one historic day when a Fard Muhammad met him and revealed himself to be "Allah on earth." It was this Fard Muhammad, the Moslems claim, who chose Elijah Poole as the "messenger" mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4 in Malachi, one of the shortest books in the Bible. Dropping the name Poole, which he describes as "white slavemaster name," he adopted the spiritual surname of Muhammad.

Today he is the most talked-about and controversial religious leader in the United States. This is chiefly because his religious views are at once at odds with the majority of the church denominations in the country, inasmuch as he teaches an anti-Christian doctrine.

Among Negroes there are those who admit there is some merit in many of the things he says, but they also hasten to add the familiar line: "But I don't agree with everything he says."

One Chicago businessman said, "When Mr. Muhammad urges Negroes to build up solid economic holdings in the community, I agree with him 100 per cent. But I can't go along with some of his other ideas."

A Philadelphia lawyer's comment was, "He's merely trying to give the Negro the education and understanding, strictly from an economic point of view, that the Jew has been getting and using for centuries. It would be a tough job, but organizing the Negro's financial intelligence into one solid buying power would be a good thing. We don't stick together and pool our capital as other groups do."

In Los Angeles, a real estate broker's comment was, "I don't know too much about the other things they want, but if they can get colored people to support colored business 100 per cent, I wouldn't be able to count all the money I'd make selling houses."

A Hartford, Conn., man said "... if they (the American Negroes) want better schools, good jobs and homes they should follow the leadership of Elijah Muhammad. We need to turn to Elijah Muhammad, for he is telling the Negro to unite because unity is the key to their freedom."

From Nashville, Tenn., came a strong anti-Muhammad statement which said, "Under the guise of religious teachings this writer (referring to Elijah Muhammad's column, "Mr. Muhammad Speaks," which appears weekly in the Pittsburgh Courier newspaper) invites Negroes to join a nationalism that has no relevancy to the aspiration of Negroes in America. Therefore this writer does the race a disservice. Also, his

looks like the Waldorf-Astoria,' he says

blanket condemnation of all that is white, and on occasion Christian, does not win any friends for us.

"... Personally I find his column repulsive and full of half-truths" and that it tends to "divide an already divided Negro community along religious and class lines."

But perhaps the most widely quoted statement on the Moslems and Mr. Muhammad came from Edwin C. Berry, director of Chicago's Urban League. "A guy like this Moslem leader," said Berry, "makes a lot more sense than I do to the man in the street who's getting his teeth kicked out. I have a sinking feeling that Elijah Muhammad is very significant."

Whether or not Mr. Muhammad is significant, the important thing is that his beliefs and his mushrooming followers are a strangely different but challenging phenomena on the American scene. He is growing, and becoming more powerful in influence almost daily.

Before he was sent to the federal prison in 1942 for refusing to allow himself to be drafted into the armed services, he had just four temples. In 1957, just 10 years after his release from prison in 1947, there were 30 temples, each strategically located in an urban center teeming with Negroes.

Those people he fails to reach with his voice, or through his widely read column in the Pittsburgh Courier, he reaches through a thoroughly efficient and smooth public relations staff. The Moslems have a way of making the kind of news that sells newspapers.

They have their own "circulation man" who has charge of the distribution and selling of the nationally circulated Courier, the Los Angeles Herald Dispatch, and the New Jersey Herald News — three papers which generously feature Moslem news. The Moslems claim that they sell around 50,000 copies of the Courier each week themselves.

Their ultimate goal is to "Awaken, unite, elevate our people here in America, and qualify ourselves as a nation of our own, where we can enjoy freedom, justice and equality, wisdom, understanding, food, clothing and shelter — in other words, a heaven on earth." Those are the words of Malcolm X, the dynamic New York Moslem leader.

However, the Moslems regard their two universities (University of Islam), one in Chicago and the other in Detroit, and their thriving business enterprises as their biggest achievements so far.

Discipline is an important thing in Mr. Muhammad's religious kingdom. Those who are visiting one of his temples for the first time are usually surprised to see hundreds of young men who are all neatly shaved, carefully and conservatively dressed in dark suits, and not smoking cigarettes, pipes or cigars.

Mr. Muhammad asks his followers to give up such things as coffee, opium, hashish, alcohol — and even narcotics. Moslems are often and emphasize cleanliness. The women dress modestly and use no lipstick or excessive make-up. The religion forbids any man or woman to have sexual relations with a person whom he or she is not married. Fornication and adultery are not tolerated.



Ultra-modern barber shop in Chicago also is owned and operated by Moslems. Such businesses operate to the benefit of both the sect and its membership.



Department store in Chicago sells nearly everything for men, women and children. Products bought here are as good as can be bought anywhere.

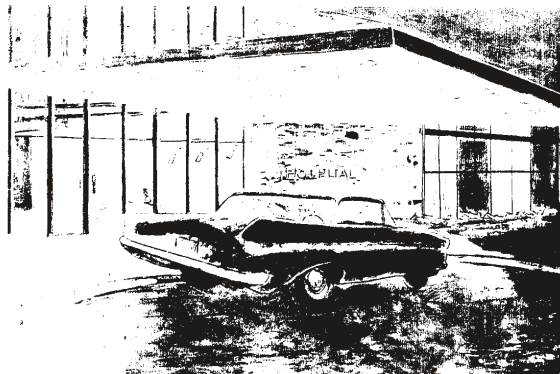


Men and women shop for clothing and accessories in a Moslem-owned store. Moslems patronize stores owned by the sect whenever it's at all possible.



continued

MOSLEMS continued



Next on the list of Moslem-operated enterprises is this hospital as envisioned by an artist. It will have glass front, curving driveway, recessed lighting.

DIVORCE IS SANCTIONED by the Moslems. Although they teach that every effort should be made to protect and save a marriage, no effort is made to prevent a couple from divorcing when it is known that all attempts to save the marriage have been tried and failed.

But, as put by one Moslem leader, "The Moslem husband's duties to a Moslem wife are so strictly enforced that seldom do conditions that usually lead to divorce in most homes lead to a divorce in a Moslem home."

When asked to explain what is meant by the "Moslem" or "Muslim," and the difference between the two, Malcolm X had this answer:

"Islam is a verbal noun," he said, "meaning to submit or surrender to the divine supreme being whose proper name is Allah. The past participle of 'submit' or Islam is Muslim. Muslim means one who has submitted himself to the divine supreme being, or Allah. The word Moslem is the English spelling and pronunciation of the word Muslim."

The Moslems have secret codes of communication which are not made known to outsiders. However there is one internationally known Arabic greeting, known to followers of the Moslem religion whether in Africa or Harlem. That greeting is the expression "As-Salaam-Alaikum," which means "peace be unto you." The courteous reply to this is "Wa-Alaikum-Salaam," meaning "and peace be unto you."

This softly spoken phrase can often be heard at Moslem gatherings throughout the United States.

Among the many Moslem beliefs that puzzle Christians is the teaching that there is no spiritual or "spooky" "hereafter," and that their "heaven on earth" idea is more important. A Moslem looks at the word "hereafter" as two distinct words that make up one compound word that consists of the word "here" and the word "after." They will frankly tell you that when a person is dead, he is dead, and that is all. But regarding the "hereafter," they believe that the "here" is a geographical term meaning Heaven will be set up by God right here on this earth — "after" He has destroyed the "devil."

Probably the most controversial point in the Moslem doctrine is the strongly believed and espoused contention that after Armageddon (the time designated Biblically as the end of the world), there will be no whites — and that only then will there be any brotherhood upon the earth.

"Where you have people not of one kind," said Minister Malcolm X "that's not brotherhood."

Mr. Elijah Muhammad, on the other hand, had a different approach in his Pittsburgh column, when he blasted the "robbers" of the Negro's "mentally dead carcass." He wrote, "It is a shame and a sin on the robbers of my people. I find robbers of them from black, brown, yellow, red, and white races. They come from all walks of life, from the gamblers and dope peddlers to the religious leaders of all faiths and their members, even to the weak Muslims of America and Asia, not to mention

the Christian leaders who have eaten the flesh and left the bones for foreigners."

Malcolm X, the New York leader of the Moslem movement, is a tall, slender man with deep-set serious eyes that rarely miss anything.

Now 31, he has had a very unusual life since he was born Malcolm Little May 19, 1925, at Omaha.

The son of a Baptist preacher, Malcolm X's bitter feelings toward the whites and Christianity began finding their way into his life when he was 6. "My father was a race man," he said with a deep, resonant voice, "A Garveyite — a little too outspoken for Lansing, Mich., where we moved when I was a child. I remember waking up in my room back in 1929 and seeing the house on fire. The firemen came and just sat there without making any effort to put one drop of water on the fire. The fire burned down the store that my father was building.

"A typical Garveyite, he was making his first step toward economic independence by building his own store. At the time we were the only Negroes in the block. Then two years later my father was found with his head bashed and his body mangled under a streetcar."

A Muhammad follower since 1947, Malcolm X resumed his interrupted education soon after he became a Moslem. "I have learned has been from the Islamic faith," he said, "Muhammad," said this proud Moslem leader.

Admitting that Time magazine was right in saying that he had a prison record, Mr. X said, "Yes, I am what you would call an ex-convict. I am not ashamed of this because it was all done when I was a part of the white man's Christian world. As a Moslem I would never have done these awful things that caused me to go to prison."

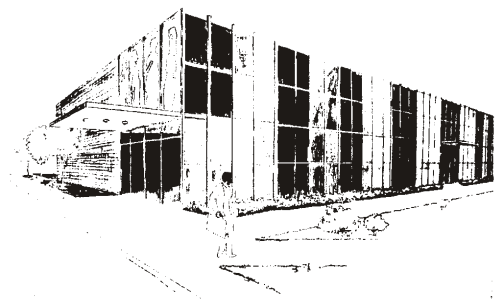
An indication of how closely attached the Moslems are to their leader is shown in Malcolm X's confession that he feels Mr. Muhammad's life "is more precious than mine. Should someone attempt to assassinate or do harm to him, I'd like to be near so that I can shield him from the bullet with my body. He has done so much for me."

A powerfully clannish group that will not turn their backs on a brother or sister in trouble, the Moslems can, within a few minutes, organize into a silent and orderly group in an emergency. An example of this occurred not so long ago in Brooklyn when a white policeman "carried out an unprovoked assault upon a Moslem woman whose husband was being questioned in connection with an alleged rape."

A few minutes after word of the couple's arrest was flashed to Moslems in other parts of New York, around 300 Moslems led by Malcolm X were at the police station, quietly and politely insisting that justice be given to their members.

At the station the white woman who had accused the Moslem brother of rape said the Moslem was not the man, once she saw him under the bright lights. The couple were dismissed, after being charged with "third-degree assault," which the Moslems say was a "trumped-up" charge to cover up a false arrest.

In their temples, where most of the activity takes place before and after meetings or discussions, every session is closed with this bit of Moslem instruction: "Do nothing to anybody that you would not want them to do to you. Never be the aggressor, but always defend yourself when attacked."



Artist's sketch of a new school being planned by Moslems. Education of their own young is one of the big objectives of the followers of Muhammad.

End