

By Harriett Muhammad

DEAR HARRIETT: In the October issue, dated the 22nd, your article dealt with the need for unity among the Negro to get results. I quote "It will have to take more crises like the Watts riot it seems before ordinary citizens will learn the power of protest." This was a shocking statement to read in a religious newspaper, especially **MUHAMMAD SPEAKS** as it has often stated Muslims do not participate in violence.

I am concerned with riots among the Negro people, primarily because I am sadly aware of the effects it has on Caucasians. When any race is threatened with danger from another, they instinctively become a unit. I saw gruesome preparations of impending retaliation, had the Watts incidence spread beyond the boundaries of Watts.

Determination and "I dare you" attitude was frightfully in evidence—the Negroes involved would have been annihilated. So if you and your religion love and value the lives of your people, this unkindly statement would be retracted.

Miss M.K. Hollywood, Calif.

DEAR MISS M.K.—I fail to see anything "unkind" or "shocking" about my statement, consequently no reason to retract it. It was a personal opinion to which I am entitled, and was based on events that have happened in the past. The truth can be very painful to those who don't want and refuse to accept it. (For the benefit of those who didn't read the article in question) it concerned a mother of teenagers who wanted to know what she as a responsible citizen could do to fight the dope syndicates operating in Los Angeles, as she had been given the run-around by local officials.

I CITED SEVERAL letters and incidents that I have knowledge of in which the individual efforts of a few crusaders-against-crime were thwarted by officials and legal red tape. Then, I suggested the power of group action. You have taken this one statement out of context and have tried to run a touchdown.

We Muslims do not advocate violence as a means of

getting freedom, justice and equality, as we are quite aware of the counter attack that you mentioned. This is one reason why we were not involved in the riots. You can rest assured that we would not be so stupid as to start a fight if we didn't have equal or better odds of winning.

SO UNTIL SUCH is the case, relax as you have no logical reason to fear violence from us or violence advocated by us.

Although I do not go along with the Watts rioters, it is my contention that the riot DID have a psychological effect on Negroes. If good can ever come from bad — this is the case.

The Watts people and Negroes all over on the grass roots level have been constantly and consistently ignored and denied a REAL chance to rise above their economic conditions. They had not previously gained much by talking to and protesting to the white power structure. Apathy grows, insult is added to injury, and they exploded.

All this had to happen though before W.A.S.P. Americans realized that here were Negroes to whom they had better pay some attention. They realized this only after they had been hit where they hurt the most (in the pocketbook) and only when there was a real threat to their lives.

BUT THE Negroes were for the first time treated as if they were real people to be dealt with. This is what was good psychologically — that the black "boy" became a black "man."

But if neither people learn enough from this crisis, it will happen again, and not only I believe this — many

others do also.

Again I say, this is my opinion and I will not retract it because YOU find it "Shocking." Maybe that's what you need. I do love my people and find your last statement a bit absurd to say the least.

Something on your mind? Write and tell me about it.

Harriett Muhammad

Box 390

308 Westwood Plaza
Los Angeles, Calif. 90024