

Wallace Was 'Behind-The-Scenes Man'

Minister Wallace is regarded as a "behind-the-scenes man." He traveled extensively in the interest of the Muslim Movement, acting as a troubleshooter for his father in helping to establish new temples and in soothing tensions between factious Muslims. In time, according to Black historian, C. Eric Lincoln, Wallace earned a reputation as "one of the Messenger's ablest sons."

Minister Wallace received his entire formal education in the Nation's University of Islam, a point which was emphasized by Saviour's Day speakers.

But, indeed, there were those who said that Minister Wallace's elevation was mandated by divine intervention.

There were reasons for this. First, Wallace D. Fard, the founding Prophet of the Nation, is said to have told Elijah Muhammad that his seventh child would be a son, and his successor. The seventh child was a son, and the Messenger promptly named him Wallace in honor of Fard. Also, like his father, Minister Wallace was born in October—a fact regarded by Elijah Muhammad as being more than coincidence.

Presumably, there are other reasons behind Minister Wallace's succession to the leadership. But, if they exist, they are known only to members of the Black Muslim's inner circle.

However, a view of Wallace D. Muhammad's life as a young man and a review of some of the observations he made in his first ad-

dress as the new leader of the Nation show him to be at once a kind man who is also strong and dedicated to Muslim philosophies.

When he was 26 years old and minister of the Philadelphia Temple in 1960, Wallace helped to begin a fund drive on behalf of Mrs. Daisy Bates, NAACP regional executive, who along with her husband, L. C. Bates, lost their newspaper and personal fortune because of their activities in trying to integrate Little Rock, Ark., high schools.

In Wallace's first speech as the leader of the Nation of Islam, he, like his father, described Christianity and the "white man" as the enemies of the Black man.

"Elijah Muhammad said your graveyard is the Christian reading of the Bible," he said. "When he preached those words in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, most of them (Black people) laughed at him. They referred to the followers of Elijah Muhammad as 'those old Muslims.'"

He said that in the 1930s, the Black man's dilemma in America was so pronounced that "the solution to the problem was to bring something very strange. Allah himself had to come."

He said "Elijah Muhammad unlocked the Bible," by teaching the true translation of it—the Muslim translation.

Muhammad received sustained applause when he told the throng of followers that the Muslims had lived "to see integration come apart at the seams. . . ."



Photo by Roy Lewis
Smiling happily, new Muslim leader Wallace Muhammad is hoisted above crowd by family members (l-r) Elijah Jr., John and Mourad. "This is a time for joy, not sadness," the Saviour's Day delegates shouted.