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**BLACK MUSLIMS IN THE USA: AN EVOLUTION FROM
HETERODOXY TOWARDS SUNNI ISLAM, 1930 – 2003**

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DEDICATION

To my little sons, Acil and Djazil, who drove me mad during the writing of this thesis, I dedicate this paper.

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ABSTRACT

BLACK MUSLIMS IN THE USA: AN EVOLUTION FROM HETERODOXY TOWARDS SUNNI ISLAM, 1930 – 2003

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This thesis is an attempt to examine the Nation of Islam in the United States of America in its evolution from a black protest movement which used an eclectic ideology made up of a few Islamic tenets with an amalgam of Judaism, Christianity, Free Masonry and Oriental Philosophy, and Black Nationalism claiming that it was Islam. It aimed from this mixed ideology at providing a survival kit for the blacks in a racially hostile white society that rejected them and relegated them to a second class citizenship, and deprived them from the advantages of being US citizens. The founder, Wallace Dodd Fard, was a mysterious ex convict and drug dealer who claimed to have come from Mecca “the homeland of the blacks” to save them from the white man in North America and enable them to rule themselves in a separate state. When examined, it was found that the “Islam” of the NOI was contradictory and outrageous to real Islam. This continued from its inception to the death of Elijah Muhammad, its leader and “messenger” in 1975. However, soon his son Warith Deen Muhammad succeeded him and started an “Islamization” process in the biggest conversion operation to Islam in the US history. The adherents followed the principles of Islam and discarded the racial philosophy of the NOI as well as the hatred towards whites and integrated in mainstream America. Yet, numerous statements of Warith in the subject of Islamic put him out of this religion. As an example, he declared that he had no physical father and that his father was *Allah*. This is unacceptable in Islam. More study is needed on his former followers to verify their Islamic authenticity in order to direct them towards the true Islamic teachings.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMM	American Muslim Mission
ASM	American Society of Muslims
BOSS	Bureau of Special Services
COMINFIL	Communist Infiltration
COINTEL PRO	Counterintelligence Programme
CORE	Congress for Racial Equality
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigations
FOI	Fruit of Islam
GID	General Intelligence Division
KKK	Ku Klux Klan
MAS	Muslim American Society
MGT	Muslim Girls' Training
MMI	Muslim Mosque Incorporated
MSTA	Moorish Science Temple of America
MWDC	Muslim Women's Development Class
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NOI	Nation of Islam
OAAU	Organization of Afro-American Unity
RAM	Revolutionary Action Movement
SAC	Special Agent in Charge

SCLC	Southern Christian Leadership Conference
SNCC	Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
UNIA	Universal Negro Improvement Association
WCIW	World Community of Al-Islam in the West

INTRODUCTION

The present thesis examines the birth, rise, and fall of the Lost-Found Nation of Islam (NOI), commonly known as the Black Muslims' movement, with particular emphasis on its system of beliefs as a pseudo-Islamic religious sect and the evolution of its members from heterodoxy towards *Sunni* Islam. This movement was a black protest one, which came into existence as a reaction to the racially hostile white America to the blacks, in particular. The Movement was born among the most disinherited blacks of the ghetto in Detroit, Michigan, in 1930. The founder was a Wallace Dodd Fard, a man who appeared in the midst of blacks and enveloped himself with mystery, claiming to be a black with the divine mission of waking his "uncle," that is the black race in North America, from oppression of the "Cave Man". By the latter appellation, he meant the whites who had robbed the blacks and enslaved them for three hundred years, leaving them in a "mentally dead" state. Fard promised his followers that he had come to bring them freedom, justice, and equality. He told them that they belonged to the "Black Nation", the "first nation created" and from which the white man was "grafted". Fard told the black followers that they were a divine nation, whose time had come to topple the rule of the "white-eyed-devils". He later claimed to be the *Mahdi* who had been expected to come a thousand years ago to save his black people and destroy the United States, and to enable the "Black Man" to rule the world in peace.

The mysterious Fard told his black followers that their ancestors were Muslims who spoke Arabic, but the "white devil" destroyed their culture and converted them to Christianity, his religion which was used to enslave them. In order to cement the solidarity of the group, he presented to them a system of belief made up of Masonic, Jewish, Christian, Ancient Egyptian beliefs, and rituals, telling them that this was Islam. He also claimed to be a prophet, and eventually he told them that he was Allah. In 1934, he disappeared without leaving a trace. Then a black man from Georgia named Elijah Muhammad succeeded him and led the movement until 1975. Under his leadership the movement grew and became a financial empire, but after his death his son, Warith Deen Muhammad, led the Nation of Islam and started an *Islamization* process. This led to the

conversion of thousands of Black Muslims into Islam. In 2003 Warith stepped down from this movement and its successive organizations to leave his followers to their own.

However, very recently, some of his statements were found to be contrary to the teachings of Islam, such as claiming that he had no physical father, and that his father, in a biblical sense, was God. In addition, he declared that he did not accept all the *hadiths*. All this has cast doubts as to the correctness of his Islamic beliefs and his *Islamization* of the Black Muslims.

The choice of this subject came from the conviction of its importance and the inadequate studies that had scrutinized it before. Its primary importance stems from its being an “Islamic” movement in America, which “represented” a false Islam and gave the general public a distorted image of this religion by portraying it as one of racial superiority and hatred and a refuge for blacks with a criminal background. The NOI system of beliefs taught that Islam was for the blacks, and that the whites could not embrace it, as they were too proud to be brothers to non-whites in a religion of brotherhood. The other reason is that the general public in the Arab countries knows about the Muslim blacks in the USA, but does not know that many of them were Black Muslims with a false Islam. Hence, this study comes to show that these “brothers” are not all true Muslims. An analysis of their *aqeeda* (faith) and practice will prove that Black Muslims were strangers to Islam, which they claimed they followed and preached. Their long-time leader, Elijah Muhammad even claimed that he was the “Spiritual Head of the Muslims in the West”.

In addition, this thesis is the first one written by a Muslim on Black Muslims. The previous ones were written by Christians like Charles Eric Lincoln, who wrote his Ph.D thesis on them and published it in 1961. The second was Essien-Udosen Essien –Udom, who published his in 1962. The other thesis on the same subject was written for obtaining a Master’s Degree by Clifton E. Marsh in 1996. These were the only theses written on this subject, and none of them explored the *aqeeda* aspect from an authentic Islamic angle. This is the first one to analyse it with reference to the *Qur’an* and the *Sunnah*.

Furthermore, the previous theses scrutinized the Moorish Science Temple of America (MSTA) established by Noble Drew Ali in 1913, who claimed to be a “prophet” who

had come to relieve the plight of being “everyday Negroes in racial America”. He taught his black followers that they were Moors from Morocco and “Asiatics”, not Negroes. More importantly, he told them that their religion was Islam and he wrote a book, which he entitled “*Circle Seven Koran*”. Yet, when examined, the book proved to be a mixture of the Aquarian Gospel and other beliefs like Gnosticism, Egyptian, and Pagan Mysteries. The previous studies in the aforementioned theses did not show that the Moors were not real Muslims.

The present study also follows the transition of the Black Muslims’ historical itinerary from heterodoxy to an Islam much closer to the real one. The *Bilalians*, as the followers of Warith were called, were moulded by his teachings of Islam and might also be influenced by his heresies. However, their Islam, even though tainted with a few heresies, is likely to become pure when they interact with ordinary Muslims in the USA.

Another contribution of this thesis to the subject of Black Muslims’ research is the use of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) previously secret archives to show that the NOI was founded by a con man. He was a mysterious person and a drug dealer, and he had established the movement for the racket as he declared to the Detroit police in 1933. This study is also the first to try to solve the mystery of W. D. Fard by using the FBI archives in reconstructing his life and giving a clear image of it. It is also used to show that a con man with an un-Islamic life could not have rightly founded a real Islamic organization.

The thesis also explores the reaction of the strongest and longest-lived black protest movement in the twentieth century that resorted to an Islam, though false, to face the age-long racial discrimination against the blacks in the USA. Before the NOI, “Islam” was used by the Moorish Science Temple of America (MSTA) to provide a psychological escape from the hostile Christian white America. Afterwards, the NOI came and used it to boost solidarity between its adherents in the face of racist America. The other reason was to seek formal recognition from the US government as a legitimate Muslim religious sect to be protected by the law, for the US Constitution guarantees the freedom of religion.

The first chapter covers the period from around 1818 to 1929. It scrutinizes Black Nationalism as a preparatory background to the rise of the NOI. It traces back the roots of Black Nationalism to its precursor movements in the fraternal lodges, black churches and the colonization movement which aimed to transport blacks from the USA to Africa or other parts of the world. This led to the birth of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) under the leadership of Marcus Garvey in 1914, who aimed to uplift the blacks in America and Africa and free them from the shackles of slavery and exploitation. Then the Moorish Science Temple of America came in 1913 as a result of religious Black Nationalism. This movement paved the way for the coming of the NOI.

The second chapter covers the time span from 1930 to 1951 and studies the birth and rise of this movement as well as its system of beliefs such as the nature of God, the Afterlife, the end of the white man and others. In the third chapter, which covers the period from 1952 to 1964, a scrutiny will be made of the impact of Malcolm X on the Nation and its organizational aspects such as the goals, economic programme, membership, relations with other communities, reaction of the whites and Muslims and other groups in the USA and abroad.

The fourth chapter, which covers the period from 1965 to 2003, will study the period immediately following the dissidence of Malcolm X and then his assassination, and the survival of this crisis by the NOI. An examination of its relationship with the US government will also be made. Then, the Islamization process initiated by Warith Deen Muhammad will be surveyed. Thereafter, the *Aqeedah* of Warith will be examined from an Islamic point of view to show certain irrelevance with real Islam. This will be followed by the splinter of Louis Farrakhan from the movement of Warith and the establishment of his own movement in the image of the old Nation of Islam that had been led by Elijah Muhammad.

Finally, researching this subject proved to be particularly difficult, as only one book (the autobiography of Malcolm X) was available in Algeria. All the researches on this subject were conducted and published in the USA. Still, even in America only a limited number were done on Black Muslims. Documentation had to be fetched in the American University in Cairo, Egypt, and the Bodleyan Libraries at the University of Oxford, in the United Kingdom. Other resources had to be sent from Canada. However,

the Internet proved to be extremely helpful to retrieve the relevant articles from American websites. It also proved an invaluable tool in downloading part of the FBI archives on the NOI, which counted about forty-eight thousand.

Other obstacles were the inability to travel to America for conducting interviews and questionnaires with former Black Muslims. The other was the secrecy with which this movement wrapped its activities, the fact that caused the absence of reliable statistics.

CHAPTER ONE

BLACK NATIONALISM AS A PREPARATORY BACKGROUND TO THE NATION OF ISLAM, 1818 – 1929

This chapter attempts to answer the following questions: Who were Black Muslims? In what particular circumstances did their movement come into existence? Who was the first founder? What were the historical events and movements that prepared the terrain for the birth of the NOI? To what extent did Black Nationalism play the major role in the creation of the NOI? What is Black Nationalism? Did the Black Church contribute, even though it was generally considered as anti-nationalistic? What were the limitations of the Black Church? What were the other black associations that contributed to the crystallization of Black Nationalism? What roles did the MSTA and the UNIA play in preparing blacks in the USA to adhere to the NOI?

I. Birth Circumstances of the Black Muslims' Movement

“Black Muslims” were a black protest movement founded by Wali Fard, usually known as W. D. Fard, a silk peddler, among the Negro community of Paradise Valley in Detroit, Michigan, in 1930.¹ The members of this movement were known as the Nation of Islam or Muslims, but the police called them the Voodoo Cult², for their religious rituals included human sacrifice.³ People outside the movement falsely applied the “Black Muslims” appellation to the members of the Nation of Islam, though the adherents rejected it definitely.⁴ They used the spelling “Muslim” to differentiate themselves from ordinary Muslims, who had existed in the USA for generations.⁵ They did not wish to follow exactly the same religion, i.e., true Islam.⁶ Besides, the Muslims wished

to be distinguished from another Negro protest group called MSTA, founded by Noble Drew Ali in 1913.⁷ The latter used the spelling “Moslem” or “Mooslem.”⁸

The Nation of Islam had a unique expression of race consciousness, different from the other black protest groups such as the MSTA or the UNIA. As a result of the teachings of W. D. Fard and then Elijah Muhammad, the NOI developed a black supremacist doctrine, which conceived blacks as superior to whites. Moreover, it was an isolationist and separatist movement, because its members lived in a way that consolidated the cohesion among the same group to the exclusion of all other groups, even those of the Negro community. They considered other blacks outside their group ignorant, since they did not follow their “religion.” Black Muslims were separatists in that they believed it was impossible to live decently with whites in the same society. Hence, they sought to acquire a state for blacks alone within the US territory to rule themselves. They were different from the other black protest groups in their conception of equal rights, desegregation, and freedom, which the others were seeking to attain. The relation between them and white people to whom they referred as “Caucasians” came to be viewed as between good and evil, the whites representing evil. Christianity, the religion of the white “Caucasian,” was seen as a means of enslaving blacks. W. D. Fard dubbed his movement the Lost-Found Nation of Islam.

He taught his followers that he had come from the Holy City of Mecca, Arabia, to save his “Uncle in the wilderness of North America.” He meant by “Uncle” the Negroes who had been enslaved and exploited by the “Cave Man,” i.e., the “Caucasian”⁹ whom he also called the “blue-eyed devil.”

The overwhelming majority of the recruits were migrant Negroes who had left the rural South and moved to the industrial North in search of jobs. They were in the lowest rung of the social ladder, and that is where the NOI made its recruits. The movement’s appeal was directed to these people. Small agricultural communities of the southern States such as Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi were the departure areas of these people.¹⁰ The NOI

was founded as a result of the increasing disillusionment in the opportunities, which the North had hitherto represented. The Negro migrants, when in the South, hoped to get better jobs and a decent life in the cities of the North. However, when they arrived there, they soon discovered that the northern industrial cities were in need of their labour, not their presence. They could get jobs during the First World War, but as the war ended they found themselves undesirable and whites replaced them at work.¹¹ The total number of the Negroes who left the southern farms and plantations between 1900 and 1930 reached 2,250,000.¹² Most of them selected urban areas such as New York, Philadelphia and Chicago. Detroit represented the most popular destination, because of the automotive industry jobs offered. Between 1910 and 1920 the number of the Negro residents of Detroit increased by 611%. During the same period, the Negro population of the whole North increased from 75,000 to 300,000, an increase of 400%.¹³

The causes of the Negro departure from the South could be summed up in the following: floods, crop failures, boll weevils, and the revival of the Ku Klux Klan.¹⁴ To illustrate the persecutions of the Negroes in the South, the number of 100 lynched Negroes in 1901 could be advanced. By 1914 the number reached 1,100. The lynching paused during the First World War, but it resumed immediately after its end, and 28 were burnt alive between 1918 and 1921. Tens of others were hanged, dragged by cars, shot, drowned or hacked to death.¹⁵ The Negro migrants could find a temporary welcome in the urban areas of the North, though the congenial conditions were not pleasant. It was a common practice for the industries to send agents to the South to invite blacks to migrate to the North, with the promise of getting good jobs. The agents often bought tickets for whole families and moved them *en masse* to the North for resettlement. The northern industries were in need of labour supplies from the southern rural areas, because the war drained away white manpower employed in building the ships, working the steel and manning the machines. Another cause of the shortage in labour was the disturbance in the regular flow of immigrants from Europe as a result of the First World War.

As the war ended, the Negroes in the great, northern industrial cities felt unwelcome. This was translated by the increasing difficulty to find jobs. Often the limited cases where they could be employed were to break strikes. As jobs became scarce, Negroes were fired in thousands and replaced by whites.

Housing, too, was in shortage and they were housed in the black ghettos in overcrowded homes in the worst part of the inner city. Added to this, the law - enforcement agencies and landlords had no sympathy for them.¹⁶

Although the living conditions in the North were bad, still Negroes continued to come, hoping for a better life than that they had experienced in the South. Most of them were illiterate and unskilled workers.¹⁷

In 1930 when the Great Depression¹⁸ started, the Negroes were hit hard. Its consequences were hunger, confusion, disillusionment, despair and discontent. They became dependent on public relief to survive.¹⁹ However, the welfare agents' attitudes towards them increased their hatred for white civilization. The latter made the Negro recipients stand long hours in queues to get their dole. As a result, they became aware that racial discrimination existed in the North, too. Even the black agents treated them in the same way as the whites. They became symbols of all what the unemployed Negroes hated. The extent of this hatred could be illustrated by the threat of death by fanatical Black Muslims like Robert Harris, who had sacrificed his roommate. This threat was reported in a text published by the *Detroit Times* of November 22, 1932:

An Asiatic trend among Negro dole recipients of the Elmwood district, noted at the time as a passing whim, to-day came back with horror to two women welfare workers on learning that the fanatical Robert Harris had intended them for human sacrifices as infidels...

Harris stated to the police that each of these was a "no good Christian," and that they would have been sacrificed if he knew where he could have found them.²⁰

More disillusionment came to the Negroes in the North from their physical ailments as a result of living in overcrowded quarters, especially in cold winters. A detailed description of their physical condition could be found in the writings of the movement's founder, W. D. Fard:

He had fever, headaches, chills, grippe, hay fever, regular fever rheumatism, also pains in all joints. He was disturbed with foot ailment and toothaches. His pulse beat more than eighty-eight times per minute; therefore he goes to the doctor every day and gets medicine for every day in the year: one after each meal and three times a day, also one at bedtime.²¹

As the Negroes in the North grew desperate, they became bitter towards the whites and all that represented the white civilization. They felt now certain that they were not accepted by white society as a whole. This gave way to crime, delinquency and trouble with the police. These were the conditions that contributed to the rising of a mass movement of protest. The Lost–Found Nation of Islam, thus, came into existence. It came when the destitute Negroes were feeling complete despair.

It was in these circumstances that W. D. Fard suddenly made his first appearance in the black ghetto of Detroit in 1930. He claimed he was Noble Drew Ali reincarnated.²² The latter died of tuberculosis in 1929. Fard proclaimed that his mission was to secure freedom, justice and equality for the blacks, whom he called “my uncle” who lives in the “wilderness of North America, surrounded and robbed completely by the Cave Man.”²³ “The Cave Man” referred to the white man. He also referred to him as “Satan,” or “the Caucasian devil.”

Fard began his contact with the Negro community in the Paradise Valley neighbourhood as a silk peddler, who like Syrian and other Arab peddlers carried his wares from house to house.²⁴ Although he claimed to be an Arab, yet his racial and national identity is still undocumented.²⁵ His identity is an enigma of the 20th century as no study could uncover who he was and where he had gone. The Negroes, who were culturally hungry, welcomed him in their homes and purchased his silks and other artifacts, which he claimed they were the same kind that their people used in their home country. Besides, he told them that he had come from there. His customers were eager to know about their home country and kept inviting him to their homes. As Sister Denke Majied, formerly Mrs. Lawrence Adams, reported:

If we asked him to eat with us, he would eat whatever we had on the table, but after the meal he began to talk: “Now don’t eat this food. It is poison for you. The people in your home country do not eat it. Since they eat the right kind of food they have the best health all the time. If you live just like the people in your home country, you would never be sick any more.” So we all wanted him to tell us more about

ourselves and about our home country and about how we could be free from rheumatism, aches and pains.²⁶

As Fard's customers were anxious to know about their history and their homeland, he started by narrating his past experiences in the foreign lands that he had visited, and by admonishing certain foods as well as advising them about how to improve their physical health.²⁷ At his suggestion, a group of people was invited to one of his customers' houses to hear the story in which they all were very interested. Since the Negroes had the custom of organizing the cottage prayer meetings of the Negro Methodist²⁸ and Baptist²⁹ churches they could hold informal meetings at their homes without particular difficulty.³⁰

The meetings began taking place on evenings, and the peddler gradually told his hearers that he was a prophet.³¹ At first, he used the Bible as a textbook to teach the gathered Negroes about their true religion, which was not Christianity. Since his hearers knew only the Bible, he pretended that he used it to prepare them for the Holy *Qur'an*.³² He told them that their religion was that of the Black Men of Asia and Africa.³³ As his group increased, however, he was emboldened and began to denunciate the "Caucasians" in bitter terms. Furthermore, he did not spare the Bible and started to attack its teachings in a shocking way. His hearers were brought to an emotional crisis. In this way, people were converted quickly and became his followers. One of them, Brother Challar Sharrieff, told of his experience:

The very first time I went to a meeting I heard him say: "The Bible tells you that the sun rises and sets. That is not so. The sun stands still. All your lives you have been thinking that the earth never moved. Stand and look toward the sun and know that it is the earth you are standing on which is moving." Up to that day I always went to the Baptist church. After I heard that sermon from the prophet, I was turned around completely. When I went home and heard that dinner was ready, I said: "I don't want to eat dinner. I just want to go back to the meetings." I wouldn't eat my meals but I goes back that night and I goes to every meeting after that. Just to think that the sun over me never moved at all and that the earth we are on was doing all the moving. That changed every thing for me.³⁴

Fard also taught his followers that he had come from the holy city of Mecca, Arabia, "to wake 'the dead Nation in the West,' to teach [them] the truth about the white man, and to prepare [them] for the Armageddon."³⁵

Fard interpreted the Battle of Armageddon mentioned in the Book of Revelation in which there was a promise that a final battle would take place at Har-Magedon, “the Mountain of Megiddo,” in the Great Plain of Esdraelon in Asia Minor. He taught that it would happen between blacks and whites in America. To him, the forces of good and evil represented those of black and white, and the Valley of Esdraelon symbolized what he called the “Wilderness of North America.” The Battle of Armageddon is in his belief the final Black Man’s confrontation of the whites, who had long oppressed him.³⁶

News of Fard’s casual meetings and what he called his “mission to North America” soon spread among the Detroit Negroes and won him fame. People who heard him invited their friends and relatives to the meetings to listen to him talk on all subjects. The attendance kept increasing until it was not possible to accommodate all the hearers and to carry on the house meetings. To put order, he divided his hearers into several groups and assigned to each group an evening to hear him. It was inconvenient to the followers, and as a solution, they contributed enough money to hire a hall. Fard transformed the hall into what he called a temple.³⁷ This was the way Temple of Islam No.1 came into existence. The establishment of this temple marked the birth of the Nation of Islam movement.³⁸

The house-to-house meetings were discontinued. The members of the movement were tightly organized and a whole hierarchy was established. Members now had to be examined before they were accepted and then registered. At this point, some of the followers of the late Noble Drew Ali started to pledge themselves to Fard to become members of his movement.³⁹

After the disappearance of Fard in 1934, the registration required a procedure. The individual who wished to become a member of the NOI had to attend three or four meetings, then he would raise his hand and indicate that he desired to join. His name and address were to be taken and he was furnished a form letter to copy exactly and return by mail to Elijah Muhammad. The content of the letter read:

As Salaam-Alaikum:

Dear Savior and Deliverer:

I have been attending the Temple of Islam, for the past two or three meetings, and I believe in the teaching. Please give me my Original name. My slave name and address is as follows...⁴⁰

After about a month without ceasing the attendance of meetings, he would be notified that his letter had been examined and accepted. Then he was questioned as to why he wanted to join and whether he believed in the teachings of Islam. Afterwards, he was told that he had become a member of the Temple as well as a member of the Fruit of Islam (FOI).⁴¹ Finally, he was furnished with an enrolment lesson entitled “Student Enrollment⁴² Rules of Islam.”

This is how Black Muslims appeared in the American society. However, this movement had preceding black movements which paved the way for it and made its birth and rise possible. In this chapter, Black Nationalism and two major movements will be examined. The first will be the Moorish Science Temple of America (MSTA) established by Noble Drew Ali in 1913, and the second will be the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) established by Marcus Garvey in 1914. The study of both movements is necessary for a fuller understanding of the Nation of Islam. The beginning will be with Black Nationalism and its impact on both preceding movements and the NOI.

II. Black Nationalism

What is Black Nationalism? And how could it lead to the creation of the NOI? To begin with, Essien - Udosen, Essien - Udom defines Black Nationalism in the United States as:

The effort of thousands of American Negroes to resolve for themselves the fundamental problem of identity and to provide a context for their moral, cultural, and material advancement within the limits set by the American scene.⁴³

Essien – Udom believes that the Negro in the USA lives a tragedy, which can be described essentially as his rejection of his origins. By doing so, he rejects the human meaning in the heritage of slavery, long time suffering, and the white social rejection. His rejection of his group’s particular experience and favouring assimilation and biological amalgamation deprives him of the creative possibilities inherent in it and in his folk culture. According to the author, this dilemma is fundamental in the Negro’s life. It puts a severe limitation to his

evolving a new identity or a meaningful synthesis, capable of giving his life a meaning and a purpose.⁴⁴

Another author, James Clyde Sellman⁴⁵, defines this phenomenon as:

Black nationalism, also known as black separatism, is a complex set of beliefs emphasising the need for the cultural, political, and economic separation of African Americans from white society...Over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, black nationalists have agreed upon two defining principles: black pride and racial separatism. Black nationalism calls for black pride and seeks a unity that is racially based rather than one grounded in a specific African culture or ethnicity.

According to this author, the adherents to the Black Nationalism philosophies have envisioned nationalism in quite different ways. For some, it demanded a territorial base; for others, it required only separate institutions within American society.⁴⁶

III. Negro Church and Fraternal Societies Preparation for Black Nationalism

The desire of African Americans for independence and self-determination goes back to the 18th century when Richard Allen formed the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1786 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.⁴⁷ The driving force behind this action was the embarrassment and estrangement that the free blacks felt in white churches before the separation of the latter. When allowed to worship in them, blacks had either to keep to a specified section away from whites, or they were made to worship at a different time, but not mixed with white worshippers. The Negro church, as it was called, prepared the way for Black Nationalism, though it sought to solve the Negro problems within the confines of white society, not striving to total separation of the two communities. The relationship between Negro church and Black Nationalism is real, though the former had been held traditionally as anti-nationalistic.⁴⁸ Firstly, it was the best-organized black institution in the USA, providing, thus, an example of success to its members. Blacks valued the church success in erecting numerous edifices, and in the position and money which ministers earned. They represented for them an example of success, so they identified their aspirations with those of the successful ministers. Secondly, the Negro church realized for blacks the satisfaction of the need to belong by providing a wide community of the national membership and the widest Christian community. In addition, the missions organized by the Negro church to convert peoples in Africa to

Christianity consolidated their identification with Africa. Thirdly, the said church met the blacks' desire for enjoying freedom and independence from the control and leadership of whites. Black ministers found total freedom in criticizing white and black societies alike. The Negro leadership and authority found in it an adequate tool for evolution in Negro community, as this was stifled in the white dominated society. Fourthly, it represented once the most important centre of social life for Negroes. The preacher had authority and prestige, and offered counsel and friendship to the less fortunate, and organized the social welfare and other social activities.⁴⁹

The Negro church was an important institution in the blacks' life. Later, its role as a source of civic leadership became increasingly less significant. Nonetheless, it continues to furnish a few prominent black leaders from time to time. Its primary significance is that it used to symbolize blacks' desire for being independent from whites, and feeling at home once a week among friends and peers.

The Negro church, despite its role in furnishing blacks the fulfilment of the desire for securing independence which eventually helped in the birth of Black Nationalism, has remained anti-nationalistic on the whole.⁵⁰ It did not wish to totally separate blacks from whites in all walks of life. This attitude was due to its otherworldliness and its split into a number of denominations. The other reason was that its work was done in conformity with the white church. As a reaction, black nationalists generally opposed it and took an anti-Christian stand.

Another phenomenon that contributed to the advent of Black Nationalism by providing blacks with a certain degree of independence from whites was the establishment of the Freemasonic African Lodge No. 459 by a West Indian Prince Hall in 1775, in Boston. He also presided over it as the Master. Although it received its charter from the Grand Lodge of England, white Freemasons considered it clandestine.⁵¹ Then a Negro lodge, called the Masons, was established in 1787. More than a century later, a third Negro fraternal society, the Elks, was organized in 1898. These came into being as a result of the denial of membership, which free blacks received from white freemasonic lodges.

These societies consolidated group solidarity, promoted the sense of belonging and developed mutual assistance among members. They helped in the recruitment of black leaders and freed the members from being controlled by whites in this area. However, the influence of fraternal societies upon the Negro community mainly in urban centres eventually made a considerable decline.⁵²

IV. The Colonization Movement and Black Nationalism

The roots of Black Nationalism in the 19th century are associated with an emigration movement started by the American Colonization Society to remove free Negroes from the United States and transport them to Africa and Latin America.⁵³ The back-to-Africa idea had been long a recurring theme in Negro thought. The earlier Negro writers, thinkers and abolitionists among free Negroes, who felt the uncertainty of their position as freedmen in a slave-holding society, voiced this consciousness.⁵⁴

In 1788 The Negro Union of Newport, Rhode Island, proposed to the Free African Society of Philadelphia a general exodus of free Negroes to Africa.⁵⁵ The desire had been deeply rooted in the consciousness of the earliest slaves in America, as W. E. B. DuBois pointed it on the celebration of the Second Anniversary of the Bandung Conference on April 30, 1957. He said:

From the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries, the Africans imported to America regarded themselves as temporary settlers destined to return eventually to Africa.⁵⁶

The first sponsor of black emigration from the USA was black wealthy ship owner Paul Cuffee, from New Bedford, Massachusetts, who sent the first Negro emigrants to West Africa in 1815.⁵⁷ A free black from a slave father, he changed his name from Slocum to Cuffee (Kofi), a Ghanaian name, and founded The Friendly Society for the Emigration of Free Negroes from America. In 1811, Cuffee inaugurated his first maritime line to West Africa by sailing his ship “The *Traveller*” to Sierra Leone, where he introduced his association The Friendly Society from America to the locals. Later, he personally financed the shipment of the first 38 emigrant Negroes. However, the most active period of what came to be known as the American Colonization occurred after the death of

Cuffee in 1817. His venture is believed to be the inspiring action for the foundation of the American Colonization Society.⁵⁸

Another articulate advocate of Negro repatriation to Africa was Martin R. Delaney, who was born the son of free Negroes in Charleston, West Virginia, in 1812. His parents fled persecution to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, where he was educated till 1831. In 1847 he joined Frederick Douglass in publishing *The North Star*, and in 1848 he entered The Harvard Medical School.⁵⁹ Dorothy Sterling referred to him as “the father of black nationalism,”⁶⁰ and he was freedom fighter, dentist, writer, editor, doctor, explorer, scientist, politician, and soldier. After the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850,⁶¹ feeling that life had been unbearable in the bitter racial climate in America, he proposed the establishment of a black state in the Niger Valley of present-day Nigeria. And in 1859, he led an exploratory party to the said land and carried out scientific studies and obtained several African kings’ agreements to settle American Negroes. Blacks continued to emigrate to Africa in individual families for the next fifty years; and according to Clarke, it was successful to a moderate degree.

Emigration to Africa was not the only emigrationist prospect for American Negroes. The most important social movement to which Martin Delaney adhered was the Negro Convention Movement, which met for thirty years before the Civil War (1861 – 1865). Its main concern was to study ways to alleviate the Negro’s wretched condition in the USA, while emigration was only a secondary issue on its agenda. It rather preferred emigration to Canada, not to the East of the Atlantic.

When the first Convention was held in January 1817, in Philadelphia, the representatives castigated the American Colonization Society and determined to combat it by asking Congress to stop appropriating funds to it. In the Convention of 1830, the representatives raised the question of emigration to Canada West and recommended the purchase of land for a colony there. An area of 800 acres of land had already been secured and two thousand Negroes crossed to Canada by the Convention of 1832. The delegates were not interested in Africa, and by the Convention of 1835, some even voiced anti-African feelings.

Desiring acceptance by American whites, some of them began to stress their difference from uncivilized Africans, calling for the removal of the word African from the names of societies, institutions, lodges, churches and other Negro institutions. Those leaders were ashamed of their African origins and rejected any affinities with its peoples,⁶² as they fell to the white stereotype, which portrayed the inhabitants of Africa as comic-opera savages. The majority of black leaders were against the emigration- to- Africa scheme and so did even their dissidents. Then, the dissidents called another convention to discuss the issue and decide upon it. Their object was now to examine the possibility of emigration to the West Indies, Central and South America, and the Canadas. But the Emigration Convention was not held until 1854. Three factions developed within it, each representing the area of interest to its members as to emigration. Martin R. Delany led the party that favoured the Niger Valley in Africa. Notwithstanding his belief that white Protestants were the cruellest oppressors of the black race, he was a supporter of missionary Christianity. He believed that Protestant missions were the most important gift of Europe and America to Africa. He wished that they would bring a higher and purer civilization to its peoples. Yet, he believed the work had to be done by black missionaries.⁶³ The other one was James M. Whitfield from New York, who led the party seeking colonization in Central America, and Reverend James Theodore Holly headed the faction advocating a departure to Haiti. The Convention instructed each to go to his destination and negotiate with the respective authorities the emigration possibilities. The first man to go into action was Holly who visited Haiti in 1855 and secured the acceptance of its authorities then reported in the Convention of 1856 held at Chatham, Canada West. Delaney departed to the Niger Valley in 1858 and obtained the permission of the kings of the region to settle the area.⁶⁴ Whitfield went to San Francisco where he intended to head further to Central America, but he died there before reaching his destination.

The intense agitation for emigration in the decade preceding the Civil War raised apprehensions among Abolitionist leaders like Frederick Douglass, who opposed any emigration out of the USA. He declared:

I really fear that some whose presence in this country is necessary to the elevation of the Colored people will leave us — while the degraded and worthless will remain

behind — to help bind us to our present debasement.⁶⁵

To bring their opposition to action, conservative black leaders made use of a sort of Black Nationalism and founded the Negro National Council in 1853, which then supervised a set of Negro institutions. The leaders in favour of emigration commented on the programme by describing it as:

...an informal national organization of a denationalized people, whereby an organic, though premature and sickly birth was given to the idea of national independence.⁶⁶

Frederick Douglass and his supporters believed that emigration would turn away attention from the principal task of freeing slaves working on plantations.

Emigration to Canada, though beginning as a promising success, was not pursued as the Canadian authorities were unwilling to sell more land to Negroes. In 1861, the first shipload of the same free people left the USA for Haiti and soon two thousand resettled there. However, this venture, too, turned to be a failure. Two thirds of the emigrants returned as a result of the failure to make the colony profitable. They were not prepared intellectually, industrially, financially to make the emigrant labouring class useful and, thus, able to settle there permanently.⁶⁷

When the Civil War (1861 – 1865) between the Northern Free States and the Southern Slave States broke out over the issue of slavery emigration efforts waned dramatically, but did not cease.⁶⁸ President Abraham Lincoln commissioned Martin Delaney a major in the Union Army, which convinced him to leave aside emigrationist scheme. With the death of Whitfield, the scheme to emigrate to Central America ended.

The Civil War brought about important changes to the issue of slavery and free Negroes. With the Emancipation Proclamation⁶⁹ slavery was legally terminated and the former slaves, who found themselves free, started to deepen their feeling of belonging to their native country, America, and to realize that their future would be in it. The promises received from the government in receiving equal treatment as citizens of the USA made them believe they would certainly gain the civic rights concomitant with citizenship. The gains of the

Civil War weakened the interest of blacks in emigration as the indispensable solution to their plight. Hence, their new concern became that of achieving their total civic goals by the end of the war. This, on the other hand, pushed some to seek internal resettlement such as Pat Singleton, who planned to resettle blacks in free communities in the unused lands, especially in the state of Kansas.⁷⁰

However, after the war Reconstruction came and it failed to keep the promises of the war to treat blacks as equal citizens before the law. The Southern whites, filled with hatred of the former slaves for their new status as US citizens, who even benefited better than the punished wartime-white officials, reacted with hostility from 1865 onwards. The Southern state legislatures passed the Black Codes, which returned the Freedmen to an equal status of the former Slave Codes⁷¹. White Supremacists were determined to wrest the war gains from the Freedmen, whom they thought had become their equals overnight. To achieve this purpose, they formed secret armed societies like the Knights of the White Camelia and the Ku Klux Klan, who terrorised the Freedmen who dared claim their constitutional rights.⁷²

The blacks endured a long series of atrocities and lynchings, the fact that brought them to disillusionment of the white man's laws and promises. As a result, a new generation of black intellectuals revived Black Nationalism and with it the interest in emigration to Africa once again.⁷³

New men and movements came to the scene of struggle, and one of the most notable new personalities who represented Black Nationalism in the period immediately following the war was Bishop Henry McNeal Turner (1834 – 1915). He was a Black Nationalist, who called for emigration to Africa after he had discovered that his love for America had been unrequited. During the Civil War, he spent his energies for the cause of the Negroes, thinking that the war would reward them. He believed that the free black man should have the same status as that of the white man. However, the realities of the Reconstruction period and afterwards disappointed him. He felt the cause was lost and turned again to Black Nationalism and started to agitate for Africa until the First World War. Although he held a number of governmental posts, whites countered him.⁷⁴

Another Black Nationalist advocating emigration to Africa was Edward Wilmot Blyden, who agitated during the latter part of the 19th century for repatriation to Africa. Born in the West Indian Island of St. Thomas in 1832, he sympathized with his people who received inhuman treatment in the USA and reacted by migrating to Liberia in 1851.⁷⁵ He argued that the black man in the New World could not have respect and dignity unless he returned to the land of his forefathers in Africa and built progressive empires there. Blyden saw Liberia as the ideal place for his people to settle and build a new civilization by using the knowledge they had learnt in the New World while preserving African traditions. The fruit of his agitation and other black nationalists yielded to the translation of African consciousness to programmes of service to assist Africa. Black institutions such as the Church joined to help with their trained personnel to form ministers for the churches.

Despite the fact that the sort of Black Nationalism that developed with emigration in the 19th century possessed neither adequate financial resources to carry out its schemes nor large black support to back it, it provided an antecedent of black political thought. That thought would surface in the 20th century with the movement of Marcus Garvey.

V. The Moorish Science Temple of America, 1913 – 1929

Black Nationalism, which prepared the terrain for the Black Muslim movement, attained its culminating degree in the early part of the 20th century. The two most influential movements making great impact upon them were the MSTA established by Noble Drew Ali in 1913 and the Universal Negro UNIA, founded by Marcus Garvey in 1914. Both movements came into being as the Negro felt it necessary to solve his dilemma in white America, that is, his continued rejection by white society. Both rose at the same time but gained their following separately. The followers of the MSTA sought to solve the dilemma by resorting to religion, whereas the UNIA ones attempted a solution within a secular, politico-economic frame.⁷⁶ The uniting characteristics between both as well as all Black Nationalist movements were three, according to Charles Eric Lincoln. They were the disparagement of the white man and his culture, the repudiation of Negro identity and an appropriation of supposedly Asiatic cultural

symbols.⁷⁷ Varying creeds and organizations were shaped out of these three common characteristics. The smallest one was the less known United African Nationalist Movement, then the criminal Ras Tafarians associated with marijuana smoking and murder and, at last, the Nation of Islam. The Moors, as the followers of Ali were called, sought a psychic escape from being everyday Negroes in America, and this by changing their names, dress and cultural symbols and by forgetting they were Negroes. However, the results obtained were not encouraging since the white supremacists continued to see them as Negroes, not Asiatics. The UNIA, too, did not improve the black folks' situation.

Before establishing the MSTA in 1913 at age forty-seven, Noble Drew Ali was known as Timothy Drew.⁷⁸ He was born on January 8th, 1886, in an Indian Cherokee reservation in Simpsonbuck County, North Carolina. Little is known about his life prior to establishing his Black Nationalist organization called the Canaanite Temple in 1913. The original name of his movement was the Moorish National and Divine Movement.⁷⁹ Eventually, it changed the name to the Moorish Science Temple. His early life and that of his movement were mixed with legend. The little information about it is that he received little formal education or maybe none.⁸⁰ By sixteen, he travelled abroad as a circus magician and while studying magic in Egypt, he adhered to the freemasonic order called the Egyptian Mystic Shrine of African Masons.⁸¹ His name, Noble, was inspired from his Masonic title, as the members of the Masonic Shrine or Shriners refer to one another as "noble." As to his last name, Ali, it might be that it had also been inspired from the Masonic Order to which he belonged in 1913 after his return to the USA: the Grotto. The latter was an African American offshoot of the Egyptian Order. The name it took in America was the Ancient Egyptian Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine of North and South America (AEAONMS).⁸² This African American Order was founded by the thirty-three-degree Negro, Prince Hall, who expropriated texts and rituals from the already established Order of the whites and had denied access to Negroes. The white Order was known as the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine for North America. This organization claimed falsely to have been founded by Caliph Ali Ibnu Abi Talib, cousin of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), in the year 25 of the Hegira (A. D. 644) at Mecca, as a Vigilance Committee. Its

supposed mission was to dispense justice and execute punishment upon criminals, who allegedly escaped just punishment through tardiness of justice, and also to promote religious tolerance among cultured men from all nations.⁸³ Hence came the last name Ali, after Caliph Ali. Prior to that, he joined the Pullman Porters Union and worked as an expressman, in Newark, New Jersey, in 1910. When in Egypt, Drew Ali was exposed to Oriental Philosophies⁸⁴ and to Islam, which addressed all the races without exclusion. He noticed as well that Oriental Philosophies were racially unaware. Islam left a certain impact on him and he believed that the solution for the Negroes' problem in America lay in the adoption of this religion.⁸⁵ The influences of Freemasonry, however, appear to be of more importance on his thought and practice than true Islam. He first tried to found his own temple called the Canaanite Temple "for the uplifting of fallen humanity".⁸⁶ This appellation was of freemasonic origin as the lodges were called temples by the Shriners. To further illustrate his impression by Freemasonry, it is established that he clothed himself in their attire. He wore a red fez with the black tassel like the one worn by Elijah Muhammad who had been a Freemason himself seven years before he joined the Nation of Islam.⁸⁷ In every picture and in every meeting, he appeared in the Shriners' attire, i.e., a dark suit, dark shoes, collar, and necktie and sometimes a white robe and a sash. Like the Shriners who claim orders from a Grand *Sheik* in Mecca, the Moorish Science Temple's adherents used the red fezzes, the Star and the Crescent as an emblem of the movement.⁸⁸ Noble Drew Ali also used another title used by the Shriners, *Sheik*. The Shriners often had a good knowledge of the philosophies of the Egyptian⁸⁹, Eleusinian⁹⁰ and Pagan⁹¹ Mysteries, as well as those of Cabalism⁹², Gnosticism⁹³, Rosicrucianism⁹⁴, Theosophy⁹⁵ and Astrology. The Shriners believed that this philosophical background had been the hidden knowledge, which undergirded all religious thought, including that of Islam. With time and ignorance of true Islamic faith in the USA, Islam and Freemasonry became at times interchangeable terms.⁹⁶ This confusion of two totally different and contradicting things can be evidenced by the words of Elijah Muhammad, who defined the relationship between Freemasonry and Islam, by saying:

Before the coming of Allah⁹⁷, Islam was sold to the so-called Negroes in a secret order or society called the Masons. This order is made up of 33 degrees and it is sold by degrees. If a member is eligible and able to pay for all the degrees he may do so,

but only those who take the thirty-third are called Moslem Shriners.⁹⁸

From this quotation and Ali's belief in Freemasonry, the high degree of influence of this secret society upon the pseudo-Islamic movements such as the Moorish Science Temple, and eventually the Nation of Islam can be deducted.

As a result of the impressions of Oriental Philosophies left on his thinking, Ali superseded history in his claim and decreed that Negroes in America were thenceforth named Asiatics, or more specifically, Moors, or Moorish Americans.⁹⁹ He taught that their forefathers were Moors who inhabited Morocco before the whites brought them to North America where they enslaved them and stripped them of their identity, religion, language, power, God, authority and everything else that was worthwhile. He refused that the Negroes be called Negroes, for the word "Negro," according to him, means black, i.e., death, or 'colored' which signifies something painted. He preferred that they would be called olive-skinned or olive-hued persons.¹⁰⁰ The word 'Ethiopian' was refused, too, for he believed that it meant division. By defining blacks as such, he attempted to dissociate them from both the white European culture and their 'Negro-ness,' which reflected their subculture. He believed as well that the Moors should have a land and a name, "for a people to amount to anything, it is necessary to have a name (nation) and a land."¹⁰¹

He insisted that North America was the Negroes' land; it was only an extension of Africa. As to Christianity, he declared that it was the religion of the European white, whereas the religion of the Asiatics was Islam. As to his separatist beliefs, he stated that there could be no peace on earth until people had their particular religion. Later, as he was persecuted and forced to leave Newark, New Jersey, and go to Chicago, Illinois, with his followers¹⁰², he made attempts at establishing other temples in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Michigan.

It was not until 1925, when he came to the South side of Chicago that his organization took the name the Moorish Science Temple of America, and took its greatest force.¹⁰³ Here, the Temple membership reached the number of twenty

to thirty thousand¹⁰⁴ or twelve thousand in Chicago alone, according to another source.¹⁰⁵ Formally, his organization was registered as a religious corporation in Illinois in 1928.¹⁰⁶

Noble Drew Ali, who claimed prophethood¹⁰⁷, is reported to have sold what he called Old Moorish Healing Oil for 15 cents a bottle while doing Temple activities. This earned him \$ 36,000 a year when added to the one-dollar membership fee that his followers paid.¹⁰⁸ Marcus Garvey was skeptical about Ali and his motives. Although Ali praised him in his speeches and described him as John the Baptist who prepared the way for the coming of Jesus Christ, Garvey denied in 1927 having any knowledge about his being praised by Ali.¹⁰⁹ Lauding Garvey as his forerunner, he wrote in his doctrinal book entitled *Circle Seven Koran*:

The last Prophet in these days is Noble Drew Ali, who was prepared divinely in due time by Allah to redeem men from their sinful ways; and to warn them of the great wrath which is sure to come upon the earth.

John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus in those days...In these modern days there came a forerunner, who was divinely prepared by the great God-Allah and his name is Marcus Garvey, who did teach and warn the nations of the earth to prepare to meet the coming Prophet; who was to bring the true and divine Creed of Islam, and his name is Noble Drew Ali.¹¹⁰

Ali's insistence on his followers to contribute as much money as one was able to do for what he called "the uplifting of a nation" could be a subject of suspicion. In his *Questionnaires and Additional Laws* for the Moorish Americans¹¹¹, in Act 2, Ali wrote:

All members are to attend their adept meetings and their public meetings promptly. If any member is found standing around on their meeting period shall be fined 50c on the first case, and on the second, he will be fined one dollar, which will go on your emergency fund. If a member is working his monthly dues must be paid, and if he has money in the bank he must subscribe for as much as he is able, to the Moorish Uplifting Fund, because it takes finance to uplift a nation.

Such suspicious veiled orders, wrapped in a falsely divine text to contribute money to uplift a nation, which was not apparent on his followers and their pretended nation, can further be found in other texts. In the same questionnaire, Act 3, the following passage about inciting and even threatening members to finance reads:

It is lawful and divine duty of every good member if he is able in finance, to aid me in saving the nation and if he does not, he is an enemy to the cause of uplifting his own people and Justice must catch you. Let it be he or she according to Love, Truth,

Peace, Freedom and Justice as I have the power invested in my hands and I will have to enforce the law in order to save the nation.¹¹²

This insistence on finance makes Garvey's skepticism in its right place. The precarious situation of blacks in the era following the First World War made them a victim to many a self-claimed saviour. Knowing about the financial contributions of the Moorish members, a black politician called Claude Greene joined the movement and as an opportunist, he saw in the organization a source of quick revenue. However, according to FBI reports Ali refused, and Greene threw his furniture out of his office and proclaimed himself Grand *Sheik* during his absence¹¹³

By the time the MSTA gained strong foothold in Chicago, Ali aimed to reach with his teachings all the black community in the USA. Consequently, in the mid-1920s temples were erected in Detroit, Michigan, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York, and Chicago, which became the new headquarters of the movement.¹¹⁴ In the South, MSTA temples were established in a number of cities. Ali issued to his temples' members what he called Nationality and Identification Cards¹¹⁵ or passports at other times to converts of Celtic origins, whom he accepted as Persians¹¹⁶. To proclaim their new nationality and ethnicity, Moorish-Americans changed their names or signed their Moorish passport by adding titles such as Marshal, Contessa or Governor to their names.¹¹⁷

The card bore the star and crescent as a symbol of Islam, an image of clasped hands, and the number "7" inside a circle. Besides, it had on it the declaration that the bearer honoured the entire divine Prophets, Jesus, Mohammed, Budha, and Confucius. A blasphemous inscription on the card mentioned that the holder received "the blessings of our Father, Allah."¹¹⁸ Furthermore, it was written that the bearer was "a Moslem under the Divine Laws of the Holy Koran of Mecca, Love, Truth, Peace, Freedom, and Justice." As to his status vis-à-vis the USA, it bore the writing "I am a citizen of the United States." Finally, Ali signed it with the inscription "Noble Drew Ali, the Prophet."¹¹⁹

The members of this cult had their spirits high because of their new status as Asiatics or Moors and had also a sudden unrealistic feeling of security and superiority to whites or “Europeans” as they called them. In Chicago, where the movement was the strongest, the Moorish-Americans became a problem for the police. Wearing red fezzes or holding membership cards, they would intercede whites in the streets and flash their cards at them and start to sing their praises to the Noble Drew Ali, who, in their new belief, had freed them from white domination. They did so while showing open contempt for whites, believing that whites would soon be destroyed when a star within a crescent appeared in the sky.

As the aggressive behaviour of the Moorish-Americans became intolerable, Ali intervened to put an end to this disorder by warning them to restrain from this conduct, reminding them that he had come to uplift a nation, not to cause confusion. He ordered them to stop agitating speeches at their workplaces.¹²⁰ Ali had not ordered for such disorderly conduct.

Eventually, as better-educated blacks became interested in the MSTA and as Ali was aware of his limitations and anxious to extend his movement, he did not resist the temptation to recruit this new blood of well-educated solicitors to strengthen his ranks. However, the latter discovered that it was easier to exploit the rank-and-file members to make private financial gains. Soon, they started to dupe the followers into buying various so-called Moorish items like relics, magical potions, pictures and literature about their presumed Asiatic heritage. The new leadership grew wealthy off the credulous, rank-and-file followers who had not realized the suspicious aspect of this activity. When Ali discovered the matter, he tried to stop them from further exploitation. However, this entailed a power struggle within the MSTA. One of the suspects was a high ranking official in the position of Grand *Sheik*, called Claude Greene. The latter contested Ali to the leadership of the movement. However, Ali fired him and a violent struggle broke out between the supporters of both. The end came when *Sheik* Greene was found shot and stabbed to death in his offices at the Unity Club in Chicago, on March 15, 1929.¹²¹ Although Ali was not in Chicago at the time of the murder, police officers, so disturbed and weary of his followers,

arrested him and charged him with the crime. Shortly after his release on bond, he died in mysterious circumstances and the responsibility for his death was never officially placed.¹²² The cause of his death has been attributed to various assumptions; some historians blamed it on the severity of beatings he might have received at the hands of the police officers while in detention, whereas others speculated that his rivals for power administered him rough beating after his release.¹²³ Essien-Udosen stated also that the supporters of *Sheik* Greene might have killed him.¹²⁴

When in detention before his planned trial, he wrote a letter to his followers in which he reassured them of their redemption in the new faith:

I hereby, your prophet, ...Though I am now in custody for you and the cause, it is all right and it is well for all who still believe in me and my father, God. I have redeemed all of you and you shall be saved, all of you, even me. I go to bat Monday, May 20, before the Grand Jury...

Peace from
Your Prophet
Noble Drew Ali¹²⁵

However, his trial did not take place as he died before the assigned date. After his death, the movement split into several small groups. Their potent force among Negroes weakened, and his followers found in the rising Nation of Islam a substitute for their dying movement. Nonetheless, some Moorish –Americans still exist in small organizations in temples in the northeastern industrial cities of the USA. They believe that Ali was reincarnated in their present day leaders and they still use the *Circle Seven Koran* written by Noble Drew Ali. This book has nothing to do with the *Qur'an* of true Muslims; it is rather an outrage and a blatant blasphemy to Islam. The adherents continue to be “Asiatics,” that is, those who reject the implications of being coloured or Negro. The members attach to their names suffixes like ‘el’ or ‘bey’ to indicate their Asiatic status.¹²⁶

Although they consider themselves Muslims, they retain many Christian teachings and features. For example, Jesus remains the central figure in their worship. Their hymns retain the rhythmic chant forms of the Negro spirituals. They also teach love as the principal spirit for the universe.

In their worship services, the Moors sit quietly and subdued without the fervor generally associated with lower-class Negroes in churches. They pay particular attention [to the sermon] and the congregation's responses are very limited and hardly audible. Their meetings are held with great punctuality, with men and women members seated separately. Friday is their most important day in the week, but they also hold their meetings on Wednesday and Sunday evenings. As to prayer, they practice it three times a day, at sunrise, noon and then the last one at sunset. They face Mecca, the Muslim *Kibla*, raise their hands and pray.¹²⁷

The Moors stress personal morality and give it the utmost importance. Like future Black Muslims, they assign the husband the role of protector and provider of the family, while women are encouraged to be good homemakers and to obey their husbands. Concerning marriages, the ceremonies are performed by the Grand *Sheik* of the local temple and monogamy is the only form of marriage. The adherents of the MSTA disfavour divorce. The use of cosmetics, alcohol and tobacco, is forbidden, and the consumption of meat and eggs is strictly prohibited. Men have to be clean, but their beards are expected to be unshaved.

The Moorish Science movement did not consider itself radical, and the members rather thought they were the nucleus around which a world of love, freedom, justice, truth and peace could be built. They expressed their loyalty and obedience to the USA. They believed they had two homelands, Morocco which was offered by Noble Drew Ali as the seat of their nation and North America which was acquired by birth. Thus, as long as they were in North America, which was dominated by the white "Europeans," they did not have the choice but to obey them until their rule came to an end.¹²⁸

On the other hand, the MSTA had also a practical agenda to improve the Moorish Americans' living conditions. This consisted of enabling them to achieve economic independence and sense of self-worth necessary to overcome racist employment patterns. The Moors in Chicago set up business stores, restaurants, and variety stores. In 1928, the Moorish Manufacturing Cooperation was in full swing there and was organized for the explicit purpose of employing Moorish

Americans. This aspect would influence the Nation of Islam in establishing businesses for its members.¹²⁹

With the death of Noble Drew Ali, a charismatic leader, the movement waned and split into small factions. As mentioned before, many of the Moors joined the infant Black Nationalist movement, Nation of Islam, started by W. D. Fard. In this new organization, they felt at home. The NOI offered them a continuation of the “Asiatic” heritage.

VI. The Holy *Koran* of the MSTA

The Moors drew their doctrine from a book bearing the title of the *Holy Koran* or *Circle Seven Koran*, written by Noble Drew. The title, made analogous to that of the true *Qur’an* revealed by God Almighty to Prophet Muhammed Ibnu Abdellah (PBUH), is misleading. Americans, who, in general, had poor knowledge of true Islam and the *Qur’an*, were made to believe the one written by Noble Drew was the holy book of Muslims. However, when reading that of the MSTA, it becomes apparent that it has no relationship whatsoever with the true *Qur’an*. It does not contain a single verse from the *Qur’an*.¹³⁰ The assumption here is that Noble Drew might have used this title to lure ignorant followers that he drew his faith from the *Qur’an*, which they might have heard of. Besides, if Ali attempted an imitation of the *Qur’an*, he, then, was wrong. *Qur’an* is inimitable, for it is made up of God’s words as revealed to Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), and God says in *Surat El-Israa*, verse 88 what is rendered into English as:

Say: “If the whole of mankind and *Jinns* were to gather together to produce the like of this *Qur’an* they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support.”¹³¹

He also claimed to be a Prophet, which is totally contrary to Islamic teachings. In Islam, it is taught that Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) is the last Prophet, who sealed prophethood, i.e., no prophet would come after him. This is evidenced by a number of verses and *hadiths*¹³², among which verse number 40 of *Surat Al Ahzab*:¹³³

Muhammad is not the father of any of you men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things.

When reading the so-called Circle Seven *Koran* of the MSTA, other blasphemous claims are found in it. Noble Drew associates other gods with the oneness of Allah, which is considered an unpardonable blasphemy (*'shirk'*¹³⁴ in Arabic) to God. In chapter XI, entitled "Jesus and Barata: Together They Read the Sacred Books," in Act 37, the following can be read:

The thoughts of Allah change not; the manifests of life on every plane unfold into perfection of their kind; and as the thoughts of *Allah* can never die, there is no death of the seven ethers of the seven spirits of the Triune *Allah*.

Regardless of the numerous blasphemous claims associated with *Allah* such as 'thoughts of *Allah*', 'seven ethers' 'seven spirits' he describes *Allah* by saying 'Triune Allah,' an indication to the Christian belief of Trinity. Islam teaches that there is only one God, Allah. In *Surat al-Baqara*, verse No. 163, God says:¹³⁵

And your God is One God: there is no god but He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

Further, Noble Drew made another blasphemous claim as to the issue of Jesus Christ, claiming that he was the son of God. Islam teaches that this is a monstrous blasphemy, for God does not marry and does not father. He is one and was not born and did not father anyone. The *Qur'an* clearly indicates this in a number of verses. Before giving answers to the claims of the *Circle Seven Koran*, they are first presented in what follows. In Act 20, from chapter II entitled 'Education of Mary and Elizabeth in Zoan, Egypt,' it is written:

That naught can make them but Love; that Allah so loved the world that he has clothed his son in flesh that man may comprehend.

The claim that God fathered a son and then made him in flesh so that humans would understand him is an inadmissible idea in Islam. God says about this point in *Surat El-Ikhlās*¹³⁶:

Say: He is Allah, the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him.

The belief in Islam as to Jesus Christ is that he is a prophet, sent by God to the Israelites to call them to worship God, like all the previous prophets and messengers. The Israelites by his time had deviated from the religion of Moses and his preceding prophets and messengers. Their faith became corrupt, the

reason for which Allah sent Jesus to recall them to the right worship of God. His mother was *Maryam bint Imran* (in English Mary), but he had no father. His creation without a father could be no challenge for God, the Creator of the whole universe. God says of this subject in the *Qur'an*, in *Surat Maryam*¹³⁷:

Relate in the Book (the story of) Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place in the East (16) She placed a screen (to screen herself) from them; then We sent her Our angel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respects.(17) She said: "I seek refuge from thee to (Allah) Most Gracious: (come not near) if thou dost fear Allah." (18) He said: "Nay, I am only a messenger from Thy Lord, (to announce) to thee the gift of a holy son." (19) She said: "How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has touched me, and I am not unchaste? (20) He said: "So (it will be): Thy Lord saith, 'That is easy for Me: and (We wish) to appoint him as a sign unto men and a Mercy from Us': it is matter (so) decreed." (21) So she conceived him, and she retired with him to a remote place. (22)

In the *Circle Seven Koran* of the MSTTA, it is said that Joseph was the father of Jesus. In chapter V, Act 4, Mary, Joseph and a son of Zebedee set about looking for Jesus who had been lost after they had returned from a feast:

Then Joseph, Mary, and a son of Zebedee, returned and sought through all Jerusalem, but they could find him not.

And then the guards told them he was in the temple disputing with the doctors of law. When she found him there she blamed him:

And Mary said, Why Jesus, why do you treat your parents thus? Lo, we have sought two days for you. We feared that some great harm had overtaken you.

The following Act No. 9 is another blasphemy.

And Jesus said, "Do you not know that I must be about my Father's work?"

To indicate that the father meant here is Joseph the Carpenter, the title of this chapter No. V- in which the mentioned acts are found- is called: "After the feast. The homeward journey. The missing Jesus. The search for him. His parents find him in the temple. He goes with them to Nazareth. Symbolic meaning of carpenter's tools." He wrote:

After his promising the doctors of law that they would meet again, and then he went forth with his parents on their way to Nazareth; and when they reached their home he wrought with Joseph as a carpenter.

Jesus Christ was not the son of Joseph the Carpenter. *Maryam* accepted to be his fiancée only when she feared to be accused with adultery; and this took place after she had got pregnant when angel *Jibril* blew a breath into her pocket by order of Allah. When they got married, *Maryam* told Joseph about her pregnancy

and explained to him that it was the will of God to cause her pregnancy without a man. Joseph became suspicious and meant to disengage from his marriage. But when he slept he saw in his dreams an angel, who started to blame him for intending to leave *Maryam*. Besides, the angel also told him that she would bear a child who would be a prophet, and asked him not to serve the expected child any wine or unpure meat.¹³⁸ Then, when Joseph woke up in the morning, he thanked God and from that date onwards lived all his life with *Maryam* in a righteous way.

As to the reply of Jesus to his mother after they found him in the temple debating matters of law with the doctors, Noble Drew made another mistake by writing that Christ was after his ‘father’s’ work in the youth’s reply to his mother. In fact, he said, “Don’t you know that God’s service comes before that of the mother and father?”¹³⁹

Using the term ‘father’ by Jesus denoted neither God nor Joseph. He used it to mean father in general, without specification. In the true *Qur’an*, Allah says about the blasphemy certain people make when they claim that Jesus is God’s son, in *Surat Maryam*, verses 88 - 93:¹⁴⁰

They say: (Allah) Most Gracious has begotten a son! (88) Indeed ye have put forth a thing most monstrous ! (89) As if the skies are ready to burst, the earth to split asunder, and the mountains to fall down in utter ruin (90). That they should invoke a son for (Allah) Most Gracious (91). For it is not consonant with the majesty of (Allah) Most Gracious that He should beget a son (92). Not one of the beings in the heavens and the earth but must come to (Allah) Most Gracious as a servant (93).

Within the same Act, Noble Drew made another mistake when he said that Jesus and *Maryam* and her cousin Joseph were returning from a *Pash* feast and he was lost. The term feast is doctrinally inaccurate, for *Maryam* took her son to Jerusalem to perform certain Jewish prayers according to Prophet Moses’ teachings, not to feast.¹⁴¹

The other apparent mistake in Noble Drew’s *Holy Koran* is saying that Jesus travelled to India to visit Hindus’ temples and attend their feasts there. In chapter X, he wrote the following “acts”:

“Jesus Spake on the Unity of Allah and Man to the Hindus”

1. Benares is the sacred city of the Brahms, and in Benares Jesus taught; Udraka was his host.
2. Udraka made a feast in honour of his guest, and many high born Hindu priests and scribes were there.
3. And Jesus said to them, “With much delight I speak to you concerning life—the brotherhood of life.”
4. “The universal Allah is one, yet he is more than one; all things are one.”

Historically, there is no indication that Jesus had been to India, and logically he could not have made such statement as “Allah was one and yet more than one.” This was contrary to Jesus’ teachings and those of the previous prophets, who had all called to the oneness of God. All prophets and messengers throughout history called people to worship the only God, Allah. God says in the *Qur’an*¹⁴² in *Surat Ash-Shura*, verse 13:

The same religion has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah—that which We have sent by inspiration to thee—and that We enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: namely, that ye should remain steadfast in Religion, and make no divisions therein: to those who worship other things than Allah, hard is the (way) to which thou callest them. Allah chooses to Himself those whom He pleases, and guides to Himself those who turn (to Him).

The last mistake in the *Holy Koran* of the MSTA to comment on in this chapter, as still a great number of other mistakes are in this book, will be his stating that Egyptians, Japanese, Chinese, Columbians and Mexicans and others are Muslims. The following are his words:

“CHAPTER XLV”

“THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE ASIATIC NATIONS”

The fallen sons and daughters of the Asiatic Nation of North America need to learn to love instead of hate; and to know their higher self and lower self. This is the uniting of the *Holy Koran* of Mecca, for teaching and instructing all Moorish Americans, etc.

The key of civilization was and is in the hands of the Asiatic nations. The Moorish, who were ancient Moabites, and the founders of the Holy City of Mecca.

The Egyptians who were the Hamathites, and of a direct descendant of Mizraim, the Arabians, the seed of Hagar, Japanese and Chinese.

The Hindoos of India, the descendants of the ancient Canaanites, Hittites, and Moabites of the land of Canaan.

The Asiatic nations of North, South, and Central America: the Moorish Americans and Mexicans of North America, Brazilians, Argentinians and Chilians in South America.

Columbians, Nicaraguans, and the natives of San Salvador in Central America, etc.
All of these are Moslems.

The logical reasoning of Noble Drew Ali here in bestowing Islam on the widely diverse and different religions, pseudo-religious sects, races such as Budhists, pagans, Christians, Muslims and Hindus among others, is that all who are not “Caucasians” are necessarily Muslims. This is erroneous, as Islam is not the opposite word of “Caucasian.” Islam is a universal religion for all people of the world be they Arabs, “Caucasians” or others, regardless of nationality, sex, colour of skin or language or social stature. Consequently, those who do not pronounce the ‘*shahadaten*’ as will be indicated in the following *Hadith* and follow the Islamic fundamental teachings are not Muslims. To explain Islam briefly, the word ‘islam’ in the litteral Arabic meaning is *submission*, *surrender* and *obedience*. And as a religion, it stands for complete submission and obedience to Allah.¹⁴³ This has to be by abiding by the teachings of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) in what is known from religion by necessity, or is certainly proved.¹⁴⁴ Another explanation is that made by Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) when angel *Jibril* visited him in human appearance before other companions and started to ask him about Islam for the aim of illustrating to the audience the meaning of Islam and belief (‘*iman*’ in Arabic). He said (*Jibril*), “O, Mohammed, tell me about Islam.” The Prophet (PBUH) answered: “Islam is to bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that Mohammed (PBUH) is his messenger, and to perform prayer and offer the *zakat* (yearly due charity) and to fast during *Ramadhan* and to perform the *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) if possible...”¹⁴⁵

According to the previous definitions of Islam, the Japanese and Chinese (Bhudists in general), Venezuelans, Jamaicans, natives of San Salvador (Christians in general), Chileans and Hittites and Moabites, who had not pronounced the *shahadaten* and performed Muslim prayers and offered the *zakat*, etc., could not be Muslims.

This is a comment on a selected set of false claims related to the Islamic faith, which are doctrinally contrary to its teachings. The said *Holy Koran* of the MSTA contains a great number of falsities, which require more space to point

their irrelevance. Since the scope of this thesis is not an exhaustive examination of the MSTA, only the most salient points are considered in this subsection. The purpose of the exposition of this movement is to display the cumulative effects of Black Nationalist movements on the advent of the Nation of Islam. The other point is to illustrate the falsity of the doctrinal basis of the Moorish-American movement, which claimed principles totally contrary to the fundamentals of Islam. Consequently, the impact of the MSTA on the NOI as to the matters of creed is hence unhealthy. Elijah Muhammad, bearing the influences of Noble Drew's ideas and those of the Freemasons extended them in the doctrinal matters of his movement. Added to this is the fact that researchers dealing with the MSTA as a preparatory movement to the NOI did not criticise its doctrinal content, leaving the impression on readers that the MSTA was a real Muslim sect. This is as to the pseudo-religious Black Nationalism, which contributed considerably to the birth of the Nation of Islam. Still, at about the same time of the establishment of the MSTA, another Black Nationalist movement came into being, that is the Universal Negro Improvement Association established by Marcus Garvey. The latter movement belonged to political and economic Black Nationalism in its essence. It contributed to the making of the atmosphere convenient for the appearance of the Nation of Islam after its disbanding.

VII. The Universal Negro Improvement Association, 1914 - 1927

It was not an American Negro, who founded the UNIA in 1914 but, rather, Jamaican Marcus Josiah¹⁴⁶ Garvey, a Black Nationalist and Pan-Africanist. Born in St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica (British West Indies) on August 17, 1887, he was the youngest of 11 children. At age 14, he experienced the working conditions of blacks when he moved to Kingston and got work at a printshop. There, he discovered the less-than-desired living conditions of the labouring class.¹⁴⁷ He quickly involved himself in social reform and in 1907, he participated in the first Printers' Union strike in Jamaica and further in setting up the newspaper *The Watchman*. During the strike, he was a foreman and to prove to himself that he was a leader he joined the strikers and organized public meetings and demonstrated his talents, which later won him international fame.

The employers broke the strike by introducing the linotype machine and importing foreign operators. The result was that Garvey lost his job.¹⁴⁸ Consequently, he left Jamaica and travelled to Central and South America to collect money for his projects, and visited the Panama Canal Zone where he saw the miserable working conditions of black West Indians. To amass evidence that blacks were an object of discrimination worldwide, he visited working blacks in Ecuador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Colombia and Venezuela and found that the situation was the same.

He returned from Central and South America distressed at the situation there, and appealed to Jamaica's British colonial government to alleviate the black workers' plight in those parts. However, the latter did not respond. At this stage, Garvey started to prepare for the foundation of his organization: the Universal Negro Improvement Association, and later devoted his life to it. In 1912 he travelled to London, where he sought financial support for his plans to improve the living situation of Negroes. His other objective in England was to acquire extensive knowledge of the living conditions of Negroes in the rest of the British Empire. While there, he met Duse Mohammed Ali, an Egyptian author and publisher¹⁴⁹ of the *African Times and Oriental Review*. He worked for this publication and through it he studied the history of Africa and focused his study on the colonial powers' exploitation of its peoples. In addition, he began to be interested in the Negro's situation in the USA. During his stay in England, he also met with students from the West Indies, African Nationalists, sailors and dockworkers. This experience enriched his knowledge of the Negro's issue in the British Empire and the USA.¹⁵⁰

Among those he met, there were followers of Ghandi, Mustapha Kemal Pasha,¹⁵¹ Sun Yet Sen,¹⁵² Saad Zaghlul,¹⁵³ and Ibn Saud.¹⁵⁴ Also in England he heard slogans such as "India for Indians," and "Asia for Asiatics." It was here also that he became interested in the condition of the African Negro by discussing with the followers of Chilembwe of Nyssaland¹⁵⁵ and Kimbangu of the Congo.¹⁵⁶

During this period of time, he read Booker T. Washington's book *Up From Slavery*¹⁵⁷ and felt the necessity to establish an organization to help improve the conditions of blacks worldwide. The reason behind his project was that he came to believe now that the Negro problem was international and, hence, it called for an international solution. Although the book was an autobiography of its author in which he advocated compromise and accommodation of blacks and whites and called to stop agitation for the civil rights, it was the book that urged Garvey to be a race leader. Feeling that the black man had no government, no king, no kingdom, no president, no country, no ambassador, and no army, according to his words, he declared, 'I will help to make them.'¹⁵⁸

In the summer of 1914, Garvey returned to Jamaica with the plan of establishing a body for "uniting all the Negro peoples of the world into one great body to establish a country and government absolutely their own."¹⁵⁹ He conceived that there would be "a new world of black men, not peons, serfs, dogs and slaves, but a nation of sturdy men making their impress upon civilization and causing a new light to dawn upon the human race."¹⁶⁰

With the motto: "One God! One Aim! One Destiny" Garvey organized the UNIA and its coordinating body, the African Communities League, on August 1, 1914. Two years later, he travelled to the USA to meet with Booker T. Washington, who had agreed to confer with him. But on his arrival to Harlem, New York, Washington was already dead.¹⁶¹

In fact, what pushed him to leave Jamaica and come to the USA was his failure to gather around him adherents to his movement. They all fled him. The reason thereof could be found in his following complaint about his experience with them:

I really never knew there was so much color prejudice in Jamaica my own native land until I started the work of Universal Negro Improvement Association... Nobody wanted to be a Negro...Men and women as black as I and even more so, had believed themselves white under the west Indian society.¹⁶²

In 1917, he established a branch of the UNIA in Harlem, USA. The membership in this country reached around 1,500 within two months. In five years, the total membership reached from one to six million in the USA, the

West Indies, Latin America and Africa, according to the suggestion of a number of writers.¹⁶³

The hundreds of thousands or millions of Garvey's followers were his admirers from the lower-class Negroes, who put their money and enthusiasm for the support of his endeavour to redeem them and offer them a future worth to live. They found in his movement a new estimate of their worth. His followers were desperate of their situation as Negroes in a white society that reduced them to a subhuman status. His plans, though unrealistic, gave them hope and a purpose to live for.¹⁶⁴ The race chauvinism of the UNIA won the sympathy of its supporters and the opposers of its objectives alike. The reason thereof was that it fed the spirit of race consciousness and pride of the New Negro of the 1920s. The period witnessed cultural renaissance and racial militancy of the black intelligentsia. Under the stimulus of Garveyism, Negro Nationalism became creative, constructive, boastful, and more chauvinistic. It was during the high tide of Garvey's movement that the Negro Renaissance reached its full flowering. In literature, black writers and poets turned to Africa for the subject of their writing. In *The Weary Blues*, Langston Hughes chanted:

All the tom-toms of the jungle beat in my blood.
And all the wild hot moons of the jungles shine in my soul
I am afraid of this civilization—
So hard,
So strong,
So cold.¹⁶⁵

The UNIA movement could be better seen against the background of the time immediately succeeding the First World War. The blacks underwent a trying, crucial moment in the USA as they returned from a war, which they fought side by side with American whites in France. Once at home, they received a cold welcome and even worse, they were met with death. In the first year after the war, seventy were lynched while many of them were still in US military uniform. Besides, the whites burned fourteen blacks among which eleven were alive.¹⁶⁶ And in what became known as the 'Red Summer' of 1919, about twenty-five race riots across the nation took place and during it mob rule reigned uncontrolled. In Chicago alone, the riot lasted thirteen days, leading to the killing of thirty-eight blacks and the injury of 537 others.

In addition to the physical violence to which the blacks were an object, they received intimidation nationwide as well. The terrorist Ku Klux Klan, a white supremacist organization, was revived and spread its terrorist actions against blacks to Northern states hitherto unconquered such as New York, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and several New England states, including the traditional Southern states.¹⁶⁷ In the same period of the 1920s, housing and employment came to witness fierce competition between rival camps of blacks and whites. It was a time for despair of black veterans, who had fought in the First World War to make the 'world safe for democracy' only to be marginalized and crushed at home, as well as a time for militancy to acquire their rights of US citizenship.

It was against this background of black suffering and disillusionment in the USA that the Garvey movement gained momentum and amassed its large membership among blacks. Its agitation disturbed the authorities in the USA, which was used as a base for its activities and the black leadership alike, and also foreign powers like Britain later when Garvey started to send his followers to settle in Liberia.¹⁶⁸ In the USA, he endured black intellectuals and leadership's contempt just like Booker T. Washington. Garvey overshadowed the black leaders quickly and easily and was considered as embarrassing, dishonest and disruptive of the gradual progress blacks were making under their leadership.¹⁶⁹ For Washington, the scorn heaped upon him was due to his compromise-and- accommodation doctrine, whereas that addressed to Garvey was for his unrealistic aims of establishing an African Republic to serve as a model for Negroes worldwide and as protector. His unrealistic aim of uniting all the Negroes under one banner also brought him criticism. One more thing to say here is that in 1916 he made a tour of thirty-eight states in the United States to explore the blacks' life in this country, and when he returned a year later to New York he formulated opinions about the Negro leadership. To his amazement, he discovered that most of the black leadership was exercised by mulattoes, who were half-whites. They had:¹⁷⁰

...no program, but were opportunists who were living off their so-called leadership while the poor people were groping in the dark.

Furthermore, he realized - to his dismay- that those 'part-white Negroes' depended heavily on the white philanthropy. They could not be trusted as they

were under the mercy of white benefactors, who could deviate from their supposed mission when necessary.

As the UNIA gained popularity and a large membership, the New York division of the movement became an international headquarters for its activities. For its propaganda, Garvey published *The Negro World*, a weekly newspaper printed in French, Spanish, and English. Its pages were devoted to the recapitulation and reinterpretation of the Negro contribution to history. Slave rebellions such as those of Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey, Gabriel Prosser, John Brown and others were praised as heroic exploits for the defense of the blacks' dignity. Even the struggles of the Zulu warriors against European occupants, and the history of the Ethiopian and Moorish empires were recalled in order to bring them to the consciousness and pride of the blacks.¹⁷¹ Garvey aimed through it to fill the apparent void of the Negro's past by resurrecting and refurbishing ancient African civilizations. Negroes read about the glories of the Nubia and Ancient Egypt that had a Negroid population. Garvey personally delighted at the edition of articles showing the greatness of coloured civilizations at a time when Europeans were still leading a barbarous way of life:

When the great white race of today had no civilisation of its own, when white men lived in caves and were counted as savage, this race of ours boasted a wonderful civilisation on the banks of the Nile.

During the whole of August 1920, black delegates came from nearly twenty-five countries to attend the First International UNIA Convention. It was held in New York in the Liberty Hall. A lover of pomp and fanfare, Garvey began the month long convention with a giant parade, which saw the participation of the UNIA's various auxiliaries like the Universal African Legion, the Universal Black Cross Nurses, the Universal African Motor Corps, the Juvenile and the Black Flying Eagles.

The parade went from Harlem to Madison Square Garden. Here, the participants stopped to listen to Garvey's opening address before 25,000 blacks. In the address he said partly:

We are descendants of a suffering people; we are the descendants of a people determined to suffer no longer... We shall now organize the 400,000,000 Negroes of the world into a vast organization to plant the banner of freedom on the great continent of Africa. If Europe is for the Europeans, then Africa shall be for the black peoples of the world.¹⁷²

Besides, in the Convention, the delegates made a “Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World” and approved it on August 13, 1920. It spelled out the political, economic and juridical rights as well as self-determination and called for an independent Africa under a black government. The Declaration also announced that the League of Nations, recently established in Switzerland, was null and void, and accused it of depriving the Negroes of their rights. The reason for this opposition was the refusal the UNIA delegates got from the League of Nations, as they demanded from it to cede certain African territories that had been taken from Germany in the First World War to put under the control of the UNIA. This declaration came when Garvey attempted to save his colonization plans, which seemed to go to failure.¹⁷³ In what concerns the UNIA claim to the African continent Article 15 of the Declaration reads:

We strongly condemn the cupidity of those nations of the world who, by open aggression or secret schemes, have seized the territories and inexhaustible natural wealth of Africa, and we place on record our most solemn determination to reclaim the treasures and possession of the vast continent of our forefathers.¹⁷⁴

Article 45 of the Declaration shows the attitude of the UNIA from the League of Nations:

Be it further resolved, that we as a race of people declare the League of Nations null and void as far as the Negro is concerned, in that it seeks to deprive the Negroes of their liberty.¹⁷⁵

The Convention, among others, conceived a flag with three symbolic colours for the movement. The red stood for the blood of the race, the black as a symbol for the pride in the skin colour of the race; and lastly, the green represented the promise of a better future in Africa.¹⁷⁶

Further in the same convention, Garvey was elected President of Africa, with a honorarium of \$ 22,000 a year. This, of course, was on paper only, as would the rest of nominations made during this convention. He envisaged his title to be “His Highness, the Potentate”. A High Executive Council was instituted with eighteen members, and each one was to receive from \$3,000 to \$10,000 a year. After the Government of Africa had been formed and sworn in, Garvey bestowed on its members peerages and knighthoods.¹⁷⁷ The mayor of Monrovia, the capital of the African Republic of Liberia, Gabriel Johnson was appointed secretary of state in the Garvey provisional government at a salary of \$12,000 a

year. When he returned to his country from the Convention, he boasted that his position in the provisional Government of Africa gave him diplomatic precedence over the President of Liberia.¹⁷⁸

Garvey set up an ambitious economic programme, which included notably the establishment of a maritime transportation company, called the Black Star Line Steamship Company. Its aim was the linking of black peoples worldwide in commerce and in transporting them back to Africa. The company owned four ships¹⁷⁹ bought from the contributions of the members. In his writings, Garvey placed great hope on the Black Star Line Steamship Company to link up America with Africa and to enable the sons of this continent to come to succor her:

Let us buy and build new steamships. Let us float them on the bosom of the seven seas. Let us send them to the farthest ends of the world, carrying out commerce and trade. Let us link up, America, South and Central America, and the West Indies. Let us link America with the great continent of Africa...The untold wealth of Africa is still yet unexploited. Africa still awaits the Negro explorer. Africa still has her hands outstretched beckoning to her children scattered the world over to come to succor her, and to be the fellow citizens of the scattered sons and daughters of Africa.¹⁸⁰

The UNIA had also to its possession grocery stores, laundries, restaurants and hotels. This might have inspired the future Nation of Islam, which possessed businesses. In business venture, Garvey established the Negro Factory Corporation as well. To assist Liberia, Garvey sent fifteen commercial and industrial technicians; however, they failed in their mission because of incompetence, mismanagement and lack of managerial experience. The same could be said of his whole economic programme. It was a complete failure, due to incompetence, mismanagement and the monetary betrayal of his collaborators as Garvey ceaselessly complained.

In 1924, Garvey made his last adventure in the US domestic affairs by founding The Negro Political Union, which he meant to “consolidate the political union of the Negro through which the race would express its political opinion.”¹⁸¹ Through this organization he supported presidential elections’ candidate Calvin Coolidge, a Republican nominee. The latter won the elections with the help of the Negro votes.¹⁸²

According to Eric Lincoln, Garvey never made his political ambitions entirely explicit. It was not like what the Klansmen and other white supremacists rumoured that he aimed to send all blacks in America to Africa, and for this reason they supported him openly. However, he replied to this, “We do not want all the Negroes in Africa. Some are no good here, and naturally, will be no good there.”¹⁸³ His political dream seemed to be like that of the Zionists.¹⁸⁴ He planned to build a strong state in Africa to which Negroes worldwide would go with their wealth and technical and managerial skills and make of it a symbol of black achievement. It would also serve as a protector of blacks everywhere, for he believed that Negroes could never have peace and dignity in white societies. This separatism and this belief in the impossibility to live in white society a natural life is shared with that of the Black Muslims, as will be seen in the next chapters. His ambitions did not stop here. He thought of liberating all Africa from foreign occupants like France, Britain and Belgium once his “African state” became strong enough to do it. He said in one of his speeches of “Africa’s Redemption”: “It is coming. One day, like a storm, it will be here.”

His preferred African country was Liberia, which was founded by American freed slaves in 1847. Its government promised Garvey to help him by all means to carry out his movement’s industrial, agricultural and business projects, and had even specified settlements for a hundred thousand members to colonize. However, Liberia’s President Edwin Barclay warned Garvey about the French and British apprehensions as to his plans, for these colonial powers occupied the lands bordering Liberia. The UNIA’s colonizing schemes raised these powers’ apprehensions for the reason that will be given below. Any way, he comforted Garvey that he was evading them by telling them what they wanted to hear and that he always welcomed the UNIA future settlers in his country.

France and Britain were alarmed over Garvey’s project to resettle American Negroes in Liberia, for this might bear impact on the natives who were under control of these two colonial European powers, thus threatening their colonial schemes. Hence, they made extensive efforts to prevent his followers from coming to Africa. He sent missions to Africa and his last one was in June 1924 to prepare for colonization scheduled for October of the same year.

The French and British pressures over the Republic of Liberia reached their height in the summer of 1924 and its government began to yield. Soon it sent a diplomatic note to the government of the United States indicating its new position towards the UNIA. It became now “irrevocably opposed both in principle and in fact to the incendiary policy of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, headed by Marcus Garvey.”¹⁸⁵ As an immediate demonstration of the new position of the Liberian government, it leased the lands first earmarked for resettling Garvey’s followers to Firestone Rubber Corporation, the American company.¹⁸⁶ The land, thus, leased measured as Garvey said, “...one million acres of Liberian land for actually nothing, to be exploited for rubber and minerals.”¹⁸⁷ At first, during the meeting of the Convention of 1924 he could not believe the news that Liberia changed its mind and thought it was mere camouflage to evade European and American pressures, so he wrote in the editorial of his newspaper the *Negro World*:

Our enemies in America...used the general time fuse to explode on our tranquility and thereby destroy the purpose for which we were met...They had arranged among themselves to get certain individuals of the Liberian government along with Ernest Lyons, the Liberian Consul General, in Baltimore, himself a reactionary Negro politician of the old school to circulate through the Negro press and other agencies such unpleasant news purported to be from Liberia as to create consternation in our ranks and bring about the demoralization that they hoped and calculated for...¹⁸⁸

To the dismay of Garvey, what he thought was rival propaganda to discourage him proved to be true. As soon as the UNIA first mission of settlers arrived, the Liberian authorities arrested them for deportation. Thereupon, the Liberian authorities received French and British governmental laudation for “Courage and statesmanship”.¹⁸⁹ To top it up, the French government bestowed on the Liberian President the title of the Chevalier of the French Legion of Honour.

In addition to this international problem that came to put a halt to his dreams of an African Republic in accordance with his political agenda, the situation at home began to appear grim. The newly rising black bourgeoisie and black intellectuals had no use for him. They came to believe that his agitations had distorted the public image of the Negro, which they made efforts to depict as intelligent and sophisticated. His harangues and the frequent parading of his followers in the streets of New York in flamboyant uniforms irritated them. Though the black leadership ignored him at first, they cast their attention on him

later when his movement became more notorious. Leaders such as W.E.B. DuBois of the Pan-African Congress, Chandler Owen, and A. Philip Randolph criticized him. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Urban League, two organizations working for the obtention of the civil rights for Negroes in the USA did not spare his movement with criticism. Robert Bagnall, from the NAACP, suspected Garvey for exploiting black disillusionment for personal gain. He also objected to his advocacy of black separatism, that he accused him of madness in an article published in 1923.¹⁹⁰ In this article, Bagnall likened Garvey to historically notable, mad people such as Nero, Caligula and Don Quixote. He gave him the following pen picture:

A Jamaican Negro of unmixed stock, squat, stocky, fat and sleek, with protruding jaws, heavy jowls, small bright pig-like eyes and rather bull-dog-like face. Boastful, egotistic, tyrannical, intolerant, cunning, shifty, smooth and suave, avaricious...prolix to the 'nth degree in devising schemes to gain the money of poor ignorant Negroes...promising ever, but never fulfilling ...a bully with his own folk but servile with the Ku Klux Klan, etc.

Bagnall seriously accused Garvey of being a paranoiac. In the same article he wrote about him:

When Garvey was found guilty at a recent trial, [Superior Court] Judge [Jacob] Panken of New York excoriated him, ending with these words –“There is a form of paranoia, which manifests itself in believing oneself to be a greatman.

The judge inferred that he was suffering from this type of insanity. Further in the same article, Bagnall says about Garvey being an insane: “It is hard to understand many of the man’s actions except on the assumption that he is insane-that he is a paranoiac.”

He ended his article by extending the insanity from the leader to his movement:

If he is not insane, he is a demagogic charlatan, but the probability is that the man is insane. The movement is insane, whether Garvey is or not.

The campaign of criticism directed at Garvey and his movement did not pass without his counteroffensive. He characterized his offenders as weak-kneed and warned the ‘Uncle Tom’ Negroes, as he called them, to free the way for the ‘New Negro’ to make his place under the sun.

Around 1922 his troubles with Britain, France, the USA and his rivals from his own race began to close down upon him. He combined business with Black Nationalist agitation. And it was in connection with business that he got in trouble with the US government. His lack of business spirit and know-how put him deep in legal wrangles over the Black Star Line Steamship Company and other businesses. It was at this time that the *Messenger* magazine, edited by two integrationist Negroes from the NAACP: Chandler Owen and A. Philip Randolph, led the mediatic attack of conservative Negroes against Garvey. They wanted him out of the USA. He was no more tolerated there.

As to his maritime company, it seems it was a failure from the beginning. The fleet consisted of three ships that made no financial gains for the UNIA as a result of confusing business with Black Nationalist propaganda. Sometimes, they carried perishable cargo and made unnecessary stops at the West Indies' harbours for the sole purpose of impressing the blacks there, at the detriment of the perishable shipment. In an article by Garvey's opponent black leader DuBois, the latter criticized this venture and described its detailed collapse.¹⁹¹ As to the first ship the *Yarmouth*, DuBois wrote that no losses appeared in the UNIA newspaper *The Negro World* or in Garvey's speeches or in the company's financial report. Garvey put its full value at \$289,066 and claimed no accident had befallen it. However, the ship made only three trips to the West Indies in three years, and then docked for repair. As the bill was not paid, the U.S. Marshall sold it in December 1921 for \$1,625.¹⁹² Then the second ship came in the company, the steamer *Kanawha*, listed in the Black Star Line report as worth \$75,359. It was bought to carry small cargoes between the USA and the West Indian Islands. During the trial of Garvey for using the US mails to defraud in 1923 when selling shares of stock for the company, he made a testimony to the court. He said that the ship broke down between the Virginia Coast and Cuba and was towed back to New York and spent on her seventy or eighty thousand dollars. Meanwhile, the *Negro World* reported that this boat arrived in Cuba in a blaze of glory on April 16.

DuBois further indicated in his essay that the *New York Evening World* reported that the *Kanawha* had boiler troubles and was tied up in Santiago de

Cuba and the US Government brought back the crew. The boat never reappeared. The *Shadyside* was listed in the Black Star Line as worth \$35,000. After an excursion up the Hudson in summer, she ended in March 1921 on the beach beside North River in a condition beyond repair.

DuBois put the loss of at least \$630,000 of hard-earned savings of black people if the Garvey's figures were correct as he stated them. Still, as if the condition of the three ships were not catastrophically alarming, the *Negro World* of April 16, 1921, announced that the Black Star Line would float an additional ship, the *Phyllis Wheatley*. Its purpose was to "engage in transportation between this country and Africa...The ship was said to carry 4,500 tons of cargo and 2,000 passengers..." And in April and more than seven months later, advertisements announced "passengers and freight" for the West Indies and Africa aboard the *Phyllis Wheatley*. They promised to sail on or around April 25. However, no ship appeared around that time or later. When the UNIA convention met on August 1st, 1921, some delegates wanted to see the latter ship. A delegate, Noah Thompson, and others insisted on seeing it. He said that he stayed in New York thirty-five days persisting to be shown the ships, but was told daily that they could see them "tomorrow" or "later," but the promised time never came.¹⁹³

From the above, it becomes clear that the Black Star Line Steamship Corporation was a business failure that did not make any profits to its stock holders, and rather took all the money they put in it. As an excuse to his failures, Garvey made the following statement in the *Negro World* of January 21, 1922, as quoted by DuBois in his essay above mentioned:

All the troubles we have had on our ships have been caused because men were paid to make trouble by certain organizations calling themselves Negro Advancement Associations. They paid men to dismantle our machinery and otherwise damage it so as to bring about the downfall of the movement.

Furthermore, Garvey said that gigantic conspiracies were made to undermine his maritime company and, thence, his movement. DuBois quotes his statement appearing in the *Negro World* of May 13, 1922: "Millions of dollars were

expended in the shipping industries to boycott and put out of existence the Black Star Line.”

Always using DuBois’ quotation, Garvey said in the *Negro World* of January 28, 1922, the following:

The matter of my arrest last week for the alleged fraudulent use of mails is but a concoction decided upon by the unseen forces operating against us to find some criminal excuse by which the promoter of the greatest movement among Negroes could be held up to world scorn and ridicule, thereby exposing the movement to contempt. It is a mean, low-down, contemptible method of embarrassing any movement for human uplift.

The third reason for the failure of his maritime company was blamed on the dishonesty of associates and employees of this company. He accused a few so-called educated collaborators -as he called them- to have mounted a treacherous plot against him. Business transactions and financial arrangements which Garvey was too busy to conduct himself, were left to those trusted blacks, who robbed and cheated the company during his absence.¹⁹⁴

Finally, he gave his own lack of experience in the shipping business as another cause of failure. He stated that anyone accusing Marcus Garvey of failure for a ship of his company at sea was a fool, for he was neither a marine engineer nor a good sailor.¹⁹⁵ He also wrote in the *Negro World* of April 1, 1922, “We have suspended the activities of the Black Star Line.”¹⁹⁶ After that Garvey promised repayment, reorganization and a new Black Star Line, which never happened.

While W.E.B. DuBois took lightly and ironically the claim of Marcus Garvey that gigantic conspiracies had been woven against him to discredit him and undermine his movement of the UNIA, this was, however, true to a certain extent. When Garvey said that his arrest on the charge of using the US mails to defraud was but a concoction by unseen forces to find some criminal excuse to scorn and ridicule the leader of the UNIA worldwide, he was right. Recently, it has become known that FBI agents, under Hoover and Burns, played the role of the unseen forces in concocting to destroy Garvey, the Black Moses as he was called by his followers.

By the fall of 1919, the FBI started the surveillance programme of blacks. It recruited black informants and infiltrated them in all the Negro lodges and associations to report on ministers and anyone who preached social equality and equal rights. The informants hoped to detect ultra radical activities and even liberal activities among blacks and forward reports about them to the Justice Department's General Intelligence Division (GID) headed by Hoover, then twenty-four.¹⁹⁷ The latter came to believe that "the Reds have done a vast amount of evil damage by carrying doctrines of race revolt and the poison of Bolshevism to the Negroes." He concluded that the Negroes were "seeing Red" and that the race riots of whites against blacks that led to the murdering of a number of blacks were caused by "the numerous assaults committed by Negroes upon white women."¹⁹⁸

Most of the investigations of the Negro Question as termed by the FBI targeted Marcus Garvey and his movement. Thinking that he was "the foremost radical among his race," Hoover was determined "once and for all to put him where he can peruse his past activities behind the four walls of the Atlanta clime." That is to jail him. In search of a suitable crime to get him, Hoover hired four black agents and assigned one of them, James W. Jones (undercover agent 800) to infiltrate the UNIA and keep by Garvey's sides in Harlem. The GID attempted to find any crime for him and endeavoured to prove he was a British and Canadian agent. It also tried to pursue him for white slavery, that is transporting a woman across state line for immoral purposes. These attempts failed. Finally, in 1923, Hoover secured a charge of using the mails to defraud while raising money for his maritime company and cheating "many old Negroes" out of their hard-earned money, as William J. Burns then FBI director claimed. But the Government's case was weak and the Federal authorities did not prosecute.

Meanwhile, the hostility of the black race leaders was at its peak after the murder of an early admirer of Garvey, James W.H. Eason, who split with the movement and was rumoured to have decided to be a key prosecution witness in the mail-fraud case. Although his murder was proved to have no connection with the UNIA, the black leadership constituted a Committee of Eight and sent an

open letter to the U.S. Attorney General to condemn Garveyism which sought to arouse ill-feeling between the races. They further urged him to disband and extirpate the vicious movement, and to speedily push the case against Garvey for the mail defraud.¹⁹⁹

Garvey responded by denouncing the “good old darkies” bitterly and accused them of currying the white man’s favour treacherously at the expense of their people, whose only crime was to seek to improve their condition. In May, he was tried and convicted of the crime and was fined and sentenced to jail for a term of five years. He remained in liberty for seventeen months during which time his lawyers made unsuccessful appeals. In February 1925, he was imprisoned at the Federal Penitentiary at Atlanta, Georgia. There, he served nearly two years until President Calvin Coolidge pardoned him in 1927, because Garvey had played a role in securing him a considerable mass of black votes. The President also ordered his deportation as an undesirable alien. This was because Garvey was not a US citizen and had committed a felony, thus, the law stipulated that he was to deport to his country of origin.

The FBI, which was part of the conspiracy against the UNIA and its leader, did not attack him because Hoover considered him a communist or a White Slaver or a British or Canadian agent; nor even that he used the US mails to defraud. The cause was Garvey’s “pro-negroism,” and his “doctrine of the Negro for the Negro.” AS William J. Burns, the FBI director said that Garvey was, “the most prominent Negro agitator in the world today and we have been ‘on’ him.”²⁰⁰ It was because he rejected the integrationist ideas of the “conservative element,” that the FBI destroyed “the Negro Moses.”

When he returned to Jamaica he did not stay there for long. He turned his energies to internal issues in an attempt to improve the condition of the black workers in Jamaica. He campaigned on a platform of self-government and minimum wage laws, and land and judicial reform. Later, he participated in the elections, but received a sound defeat due to his followers’ lack of voting qualifications.²⁰¹ Then, he went to London in 1935, and from there he worked hard to revive his movement in the USA. However, his wish did not materialize

and his movement collapsed. It never again had the strength like that of 1925. He was then ignored by the American press that when he died in a cottage in West Kensington, England, on June 10, 1940, his death was scarcely noticed in the American press.²⁰²

Although he was deported from the USA and was dead, his movement collapsed but did not die. Garveyism continued to have a very limited number of followers in Harlem, Detroit, Chicago and a few other US cities. However, it continues as a symbol of the militant Negro nationalism, not as a movement. It inspired Elijah Muhammad, who would later lead the Nation of Islam as well as the father and mother of Malcolm X, who made great contribution to the growth and expansion of Muhammad's movement.

Although it lives on just symbolically, Garveyites still meet to discuss a variety of issues among which the "redemption of Africa."²⁰³ There are more than four factions claiming each one to represent the authentic teachings of Garvey. One of the said factions held a meeting with a few devotees in Chicago and the president thereof made the following declaration:

We are not a social club. We must press the issue of nationalism. We have the right to resolve the universal conflict of the Negro people of the world. We've got to redeem Africa. We are hungry for freedom and liberty. This is not a private club, a private society. It is a universal business. ..It is a nationalistic organization to stop everything that prevents black people from enjoying their freedom.²⁰⁴

The limited number of Garveyites today still regard Garvey as if he were sent by God and that now he is a 'saint' in 'His Kingdom.'

As a conclusion to this chapter, it can be said that before the birth of the Nation of Islam- itself a separatist, pseudo-religious and black nationalist organization- black nationalism made an essential impact on the creation of this movement and found its ultimate expression in it. When W. D. Fard established the NOI, many of his followers had a militant background. They were either followers of Marcus Garvey, whose version of Black Nationalism was social, economic and political or were followers of Noble Drew Ali, who built his movement on a pseudo-religious black nationalism. It claimed to be an Islamic movement; however, it was proven in this chapter that it was not so, but that Ali

copied the Aquarian Gospel and called it the *Circle Seven Koran*. As C. Eric Lincoln summed it up in an article published in 1983, Noble Drew Ali's movement was :

...essentially a *mélange* of black nationalism and Christian revivalism with an awkward, confused admixture of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. It was not Islam, but it was a significant recovery of the awareness of Islam.²⁰⁵

However, Black Nationalism, which meant the set of beliefs held by blacks in the USA in need for the separation of African Americans from the white society culturally, politically, and economically, and seeking to unite black people on the basis of race and black pride, had a long history. Its precursors go back to the establishment of the Black Church known as the African Methodist Episcopal Church by Richard Allen in 1786. It was the first body that enabled blacks in the USA to feel among themselves and to have place to worship independently from whites, who intimidated them even in churches. In addition to the Church, blacks formed their first Freemasonic African Lodge in 1775 as a reaction to the rejection of white Freemasons to associate with the free blacks. It came to consolidate group solidarity and promote the sense of belonging and develop mutual assistance among the members.

Black Nationalism in the 19th century found expression in the emigration movement begun by the American Colonization Society. It aimed to remove free blacks from the USA and send them to the land of their forefathers in Africa. Free blacks felt they were not safe in a society that enslaved blacks and saw their salvation in emigration either to Africa, Canada or South America. This endeavour was first sponsored by wealthy black, Paul Cuffee, who sent the first expedition to Africa in his ship in 1815. Then others followed this first attempt mainly after his death in 1817. But later in 1861, when the Civil War broke out between the free states in the North and the slave states in the South and the blacks saw that it was promising of a better situation, they almost stopped emigration. With the Emancipation Proclamation made by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863, the slaves were declared free and equal citizens to other Americans. However, when the war ended and Reconstruction was midway, the Southern white supremacists made all efforts to make their new status devoid of any value. With this new development, they lost hope in the American

Government and society and the emigration scheme was revived. Thus, Black Nationalism saw a revival and new men and movements joined forces to agitate for a return to Africa. Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, who believed at first in the promises of the US government during the Civil War, met severe opposition from his white co-citizens and he realized that he had been misled. Another important early black nationalist was Edward Wilmot Blyden, who agitated for Africa in the second part of the 19th century as a result of the maltreatment he underwent at the hand of whites. He concluded that the black man could not have respect and dignity in the New World, unless he returned to Africa. His reaction was emigration to Liberia in 1851. His agitation fruited in the translation of African consciousness to programmes of services to help Africa. So, black institutions in the USA joined in supplying services to Africa.

Although Black Nationalism associated with emigration in the 19th century had neither adequate financial resources nor enough black support to execute its schemes, it established the background for the black political thought. The latter surfaced in the 20th century with Marcus Garvey and Noble Drew Ali prior to the rise of the Nation of Islam.

The Moorish Science Temple of America established in 1913, was a pseudo-religious movement, which based its ideology on a wide range of beliefs. The latter were taken from different sources such as the Oriental Philosophies like Taoism, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Ancient Egyptian religion, mystery religions and others to pretend it was the Islamic faith. This was an outrageous pretence and offence to Islam. Its leader synthesized a text from the above-mentioned beliefs and wrote a book which he called "*Circle Seven Koran.*" Besides, he claimed that he was a prophet sent by God to uplift the "fallen humanity" and to redeem blacks in North America, whose origin was Morocco and they were Moors. He told them they were Asiatics not Negroes, and that this term was debasing, and that they should be called "persons with olive-hued skin." He created a psychological escape for his followers to regain self-pride and esteem, and can, thus, face the oppressive white society. He established temples and issued membership cards to his followers and provided them with a dress to distinguish them from other blacks and to make them feel they were

superior to the whites. However, his followers, feeling superior to the whites, started to provoke the latter which led to their harassment by the police. The movement also received new adherents, who were educated blacks. But these realized that the followers of the MSTA were of the lower social class of the Negroes and were ignorant and credulous. Their plan was to dupe them by selling them booklets on the movement, clothes, perfumes and other paraphernalia. Noble Ali rejected this approach and the conflict inside the movement started. One of those leaders who sought to exploit the rank-and-file followers was Claude Greene, who led a power struggle against Ali. In March 1929, Greene was stabbed to death in his office. Though Ali was on trip at the time of the murder, the police arrested him and beat him severely. He was released on bond but he died immediately after in mysterious circumstances. With his death his movement disbanded and when the NOI was established many of them joined it.

Around the same time of the establishment of the MSTA, another Black Nationalist organization came into being, the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Its founder was Jamaican Marcus Garvey and that was in 1914. This movement was a social and political one. Although it did not neglect religion, it gave it less importance than the MSTA and later the NOI. Garvey aimed at uniting all the black people in the world under one banner and creating a state for them in Africa that would receive blacks from America. The latter would enrich it with their technical and managerial skills and make of it a powerful state that would eventually be a model of black achievement and serve as a protector for blacks everywhere. He established a maritime company to transport goods and people from America and the West Indies to Africa. He also secured an agreement from the Liberian government to grant him land to resettle in it part of his followers. However, this represented a threat to Britain and France, which possessed most of Africa. Later, these powers pressured Liberia to discourage Garvey and so Liberia did. She refused to grant him the promised land and when his followers arrived to Liberia, they were arrested and deported to the USA and other parts where they had come from. Garvey became a threat to the USA as a result of his agitation for Black Nationalism. In 1923 he was

charged of using the US mails to cheat the black investors in the purchase of stocks of the Black Star Steamship Line. He was tried and convicted and sentenced to five years' prison in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1927 President Calvin Coolidge commuted his sentence and ordered his deportation to his homeland Jamaica. There, he campaigned for a minimum wage and the reform of the land law so as to enable blacks to improve their condition. However, he was soundly defeated in the polls. Then, he immigrated to England, where he died in near obscurity. His movement waned so that it became only symbolic.

Although his movement almost disbanded, his efforts contributed to the rise of the Nation of Islam. Many of his followers joined the NOI when it came into existence in the early 1930s. In the next chapter, the NOI birth and rise will be examined and its main leaders during the most important phases of its history will be highlighted.

¹ Erdmann Doane BEYNON, "The Voodoo Cult Among Negro Migrants in Detroit," *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLIII, No.6, July, 1937- May, 1938, pp. 894-896.

² The police called them Voodoo Cult because at the beginning they sacrificed humans as a ritual just like voodooists do in Haiti and other West Indian islands. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, in Voodoo ritual services a number of devotees congregate at a temple where a priest or priestess leads them in ceremonies involving song, drumming, dance, prayer, food preparation and the ritual sacrifice of animals. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Deluxe Edition, 2000, CDROM.)

³ According to an article in *The Los Angeles Herald -Examiner*, cult member Robert Harris convinced member John J. Smith on Nov 21, 1932, in Detroit, to volunteer to be a human sacrifice so that he might become "The Savior of the World." An altar was improvised and Harris plunged a knife into the heart of Smith. Ed Montgomery, "A Dope Peddler, Dodd Served Time in Quentin," *The Los Angeles Herald - Examiner*, Vol.No.CCC 6, Sunday, July28, 1963.

-See also BEYNON, op. cit., pp. 894, 899.

⁴ Cifton, E. MARSH, *The Lost -Found Nation of Islam in America*, 2nd Edition, Maryland, Scarecrow Press, 2000. p. 178. It was Mike Wallace, a TV program producer who called them Black Muslims in 1957.

⁵ LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p. iii.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 210-212.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁸ FBI CG 25-20607, 16 May 1957.

⁹ The Black Muslims used the term "caucasian" to refer to the white man in a pejorative way.

¹⁰ BEYNON, op. cit., p.897.

¹¹ See also, Sultana, RAHIM-BARAKZOY *Islam Is the Blackman's Religion : Syncretizing Islam with Black Nationalist Thought to Fulfill the Religio-Political Agenda of the Nation of Islam*, (Master of Arts thesis submitted to the Department of History of Eberly College of Arts and Sciences at West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia, 2005), p. 11.

¹² LINCOLN, "The Black Muslims as a Protest Movement," *Black History: A Reappraisal*, edited by Melvin Drimmer, Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, 1968.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Ku Klux Klan was post-Civil War secret society advocating white supremacy founded in 1866 by some young men from Pulaski, Tennessee. It was a social club with the costumes, secret ritual, and mumbo-jumbo common to fraternal groups. At first a group of pranksters, they soon began to intimidate blacks and white Republicans, and the KKK spread rapidly across the South in answer to the Union League. Klansmen rode about the countryside hiding under masks and robes, spreading horrendous rumours, harassing assertive Negroes, and occasionally running amok in violence and destruction. (George B. TINDALL and David, E. SHIA, *America: A Narrative History*, 2nd Ed., New York, Norton and Company, 1988, p. 456)

¹⁵ LINCOLN, "The Black Muslims as a Protest Movement," op. cit.

¹⁶ _____, *Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p. 457

¹⁷ BEYNON, op. cit., p. 899.

¹⁸ The Great Depression also called Depression Of 1929, or Slump Of 1929, was an economic slump in North America, Europe, and other industrialized areas of the world that began in 1929 and lasted until around 1939. It was the longest and most severe depression ever experienced by the industrialized Western world. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, op. cit.)

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² ESSIEN UDOSSEN, op. cit. , p. 55

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴BEYNON, op. cit., p. 895.

²⁵ LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p.10.

²⁶BEYNON, op. cit.

²⁷LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p. 10.

²⁸Methodism was a movement begun in the 18th century as a religious society that wished to reform the Church of England from within. By force of circumstance it became separate from its parent body and took on the characteristics of an autonomous church. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, op. cit.)

²⁹ A Baptist is a member of a group of Protestant Christians who share the basic beliefs of most Protestants, but who insist that only believers should be baptised and that it should be done by immersion rather than by the sprinkling or pouring of water. (*Ibid.*)

³⁰BEYNON, op. cit.

³¹*Ibid.* See also LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p.10. and FBI ONI Rating Report, 13 October 1942.

³²BEYNON, op. cit.

³³LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p.11.

³⁴BEYNON, op. cit.

³⁵ LINCOLN, "The Black Muslims as a Protest Movement," op. cit., p. 458.

³⁶*Ibid.*

³⁷BEYNON, op. cit., p. 896.

³⁸LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p 11.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p.13. See also FBI Office Memorandum No. 105-2000 from SAC, Richmond to SAC, Chicago No. 100- 33683, 18 November 1957.

⁴⁰Abdul Basit NAEEM, "The Teachings of Elijah Muhammad," *Moslem World and the USA*, Fall, 1956.

⁴¹Fruit of Islam was a paramilitary organization established by W. D. Fard from the beginning of the movement, allegedly for protecting it from the white man and for maintaining order. It was made up of all male members of the movement. (See Chapter Three)

⁴²American spelling in the original document.

⁴³ ESSIEN – UDOM, op. cit., p. 9.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ James Clyde SELLMAN, "Black Nationalism Beliefs"

http://afgen.com/nationalism_beliefs.html

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Andrew P. SMALLWOOD, "Black Nationalism and the Call for Power,"

<http://www.rcgd.isr.umich.edu/prba/perspectives/fall1999/asmallwood.pdf>.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* See also ESSIEN-UDOM, op. cit., pp. 38-39.

⁴⁹ ESSIEN-UDOM, op. cit., p. 38.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

⁵¹ "The Keetoowah Society and the Advocation of Religious Nationalism in the Cherokee Nation, 1855 - 1867" <http://www.tngenweb.org/tncolor/keetood2.htm>

⁵² ESSIEN-UDOM, op. cit., p. 38-39.

⁵³ SMALLWOOD, op. cit.

⁵⁴John Henrik, CLARKE, "The American Antecedents of Marcus Garvey,"

<http://www.nbufront.org/html/MastersMuseums/JHClark.../MarcusGarveyAntecedents.htm>

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ KLARKE, op. cit.

⁵⁷ ESSIEN-UDOM, op. cit., p. 32. However, Klarke sets the date of the first 38 emigrants to Africa in 1812.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Gayraud S. Wilmore & C. Eric Lincoln, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*, New York, Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1972, p. 151.

⁶⁰ KLARKE, op. cit.

⁶¹ The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was passed by the US Congress to mandate the return of the runaway slaves, regardless of where in the Union they might be situated at the time of their discovery or capture. Adapted from: "The Fugitive Slave Act," September 18, 1850, Modern History Sourcebook. <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1850fugitive.html>.

⁶² ESSIEN-UDOM, op. cit., p. 33.

⁶³ GAYRAUD & LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 151.

⁶⁴ KLARKE, op. cit.

⁶⁵ ESSIEN-UDOM, op. cit., p. 34.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ KLARKE, op. cit.

⁶⁹ The Emancipation Proclamation is the declaration made by US President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, to free all persons held as slaves in the states that were in a state of rebellion against the USA. Adapted from Leslie H. Fishel, Jr & Benjamin QUARLES, *The Black American: A Documentary History*, Glennview, Illinois, USA, Scott, Foresman and Company, 3rd Edition, 1976, p. 225.

⁷⁰ KLARKE, op. cit.

⁷¹ Slave Codes were the set of laws enacted by the legislatures of the British colonies in North America in order to control the lives of blacks imported from Africa and make them slaves by law. In 1705 the Virginia General Assembly was the first colonial legislature to pass such laws and the other Southern colonies followed it. The law stipulated that "All servants imported and brought into the country...who were not Christians in their native country...shall be accounted and be slaves..." Adapted from Virginia's Slave Codes.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1p268.html>

⁷² KKK is either of two distinct secret terrorist organizations in the USA, one founded immediately after the Civil War and lasting until the 1870s, the other beginning in 1915 and continuing to the present day. They derived the name from Greek *kyklos*, "circle," and "Klan" was added for alliteration. It started as a social club, then became a Southern white underground resistance to Radical Reconstruction. Klansmen sought restoration of white supremacy through intimidation and violence aimed at the newly enfranchised black freedmen. Adapted from the Encyclopaedia Britannica, op. cit.

⁷³ KLARKE, op. cit.

⁷⁴ Maisah, ROBINSON B., "Bishop Henry McNeal Turner," http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/harlem_renaissance/88695

⁷⁵ KLARKE, op. cit.

⁷⁶ LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op.cit, p. 50.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ ESSIEN-UDOM, op. cit. p. 46.

⁷⁹ "The Ancient Moors and the Moorish Science Temple of America,"

<http://www.immortalbirth.com/sneekpeek.html> See also Adam EDGERLY and Carl ELLIS, "Emergence of Islam in the African-American Community," <http://www.islamfortoday.com/africanamericans02.htm>

⁸⁰ Robert FAY, "Noble Drew Ali, "

http://www.2souls.com/main/Knowledge%20Warehouse/noble_al.htm

⁸¹ "Moorish Science"

http://www.sonnet.com/usr/wbishop/moorish_science.htm

See also Ernest Allen, "Religious Heterodoxy and Nationalist Tradition," *Black Scholar*, Fall/Winter 1996, Vol. 26 Issue ¾.

⁸² *Ibid*

⁸³ Ernest ALLEN, op. cit. The year 25 of the *Hegira* does not match with the caliphate of Ali Ibnu Abi

Talib, who ruled from 33 to 40 of the Hegira. See in Arabic

= محمد سعيد رمضان البوطي، *فقه السيرة النبوية مع موجز لتاريخ الخلافة الراشدة*، الجزائر، دار الفكر، 1992، ص 371.

⁸⁴ Oriental Philosophies comprise such religions as Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Shamanism, etc. from China, India, Korea and other Asiatic nations. Adapted from EUI-CHAI TJENG, "The Philosophy of Life in Oriental Philosophy and Thomas Aquinas : Immanence and Transcendence, "

http://www.crvp.org/book/Series03/III-17/chapter_xi.htm

⁸⁵ ESSIEN-UDOM, op. cit., p. 46.

⁸⁶ The Divine Constitution and By-Laws. FBI file, URL <http://foia.fbi.gov/moortemp.htm>

⁸⁷ ALLEN, op. cit.

⁸⁸ "The Ancient Moors and the Moorish Science Temple of America,"

<http://www.immortalbirth.com/sneekpeek.html>

⁸⁹ Egyptian mysteries are those Egyptian cults, notably the cult of Isis and of Sarapis, a god whose name derives from Osiris-Apis. With Isis went Osiris and Horus the child. Egypt was also a setting for other religious and philosophical developments of late antiquity such as Gnosticism, Manicheism, Hermetism, and Neoplatonism. Adapted from the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Deluxe Millenium Edition, CD-ROM.

⁹⁰ The most important sanctuary of Demeter (Ceres) and her daughter Kore was in the city of Eleusis in Attica, between Athens and Megara. Famous religious agricultural festivals –known as the greater and the Lesser Eleusianian Mysteries-celebrating the sowing, sprouting and reaping of the grain, were reenacted in this city. The cycle of the grain was thought to be parallel to the cycle of man. *Ibid*.

⁹¹ Belonging to a religion which worshipped many gods and which existed before the main world religions. Cambridge International Dictionary of English.

⁹² Jewish mysticism associated with the *Kabbala* , that is the doctrine of a secret, mystical interpretation of the Torah. Adapted from the Encyclopaedia Britannica, op. cit.

⁹³ Gnosticism was a philosophical and religious movement prominent in the Greco-Roman world in the 2nd century AD. While Gnosticism drew from and influenced in turn many traditional religions, its effect was most clearly felt on nascent Christianity, in which it led to the formation of the canon, creed, and episcopal organisation. Gnosticism derived from Greek *gnostikos* (one who has secret knowledge). Gnostic sects emphasised the redemptive power of esoteric knowledge, acquired not by learning or empirical observation but by divine revelation. *Ibid*.

⁹⁴ Rosicrucianism is a worldwide brotherhood claiming to possess esoteric wisdom handed down from ancient times. The name derives from the order's symbol, a combination of a rose and a cross. The teachings of Rosicrucianism combine elements of occultism reminiscent of a variety of religious beliefs and practices. *Ibid*.

⁹⁵Theosophy is a religious philosophy with mystical concerns that can be traced to the ancient world but that has been of catalytic significance in religious thought in the 19th and 20th centuries. The term *theosophy* is derived from the Greek *theos*, “ God,” and *sophia* “wisdom,” and is generally translated as “divine wisdom.” All theosophical speculation has its foundation the mystical premise that God must be experienced directly in order to be known at all. *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ ALLEN, op. cit.

⁹⁷ W. D. Fard as he called himself and as Elijah Muhammad deified him.

⁹⁸ ALLEN, op. cit.

⁹⁹ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 51.

¹⁰⁰ ESSIEN-UDOM, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Moorish Science, op. cit.

¹⁰³ Barbara BAIR, Online Forum : “Marcus Garvey and Noble Drew Ali”

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey/sfeature/sf_forum_2.html

¹⁰⁴ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 51.

¹⁰⁵ Moorish Science, op. cit.

¹⁰⁶ Yvonne Y. Haddad and Jane I. Smith, *Mission to America*, Florida, University Press of Florida, 1993, p. 87.

¹⁰⁷ “*The Holy Koran of the Moorish Science Temple of America*,” written by Noble Drew Ali.

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/2705/koran.html>

¹⁰⁸ Moorish Science, op. cit.

¹⁰⁹ BAIR, op. cit.

¹¹⁰ Noble Drew ALI, “*Circle Seven Koran : The End of Time and the Fulfilling of the Prophecies, Chapter XLVIII.*”

¹¹¹ “*The Divine Constitution and By-Laws*,” op. cit.

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/woods/4623/moordocs.htm>

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ FBI file CG-100-2520607, dated May 16, 1957. (caption of letter erased by FBI)

¹¹⁴ FAY, op. cit.

¹¹⁵ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 51.

¹¹⁶ “Wandering Bishops,” Moorish Science,

http://www.sonnet.com/usr/moorish_science.htm

¹¹⁷ “Moorish Science,” op. cit.

¹¹⁸ LINCOLN, op. cit., p.51-52.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ ESSIEN-UDOM, op. cit., p. 47.

¹²² LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 53.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ ESSIEN-UDOM, op. cit., p. 48.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

¹²⁷ LINCOLN, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹²⁹ HADDAD & SMITH, op. cit., p. 88.

¹³⁰ See the Koran of the Moorish Science Temple of America either on the FBI archives online,

<http://foia.fbi.gov/moortemp.htm>

Or the htm version at : <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/2705/koran.html>

¹³¹ يقول الله تعالى: (قل لنن اجتماعت الإنس والجن على أن يأتوا بمثل هذا القرآن لا يأتون بمثله ولو كان بعضهم لبعض ظهيرا) سورة الإسراء، الآية 88.

¹³² *Hadith* is an Arabic word which means the Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) sayings, deeds and deeds of other Muslims approved by him, or his moral characteristics. See in Arabic محمد عجاج الخطيب، *الوجيز في علوم الحديث ونصوصه*، البلبيدة (الجزائر)، قصر الكتاب، 1978، ص 7.

¹³³ يقول الله تعالى: (ما كان محمد أبا أحد من رجالكم ولكن رسول الله وخاتم النبيين وكان الله بكل شيء عليما) سورة الأحزاب، الآية 40.

¹³⁴ الشرك.

¹³⁵ يقول الله تعالى: (والهكم إله واحد لا إله إلا هو الرحمان الرحيم) سورة البقرة، الآية 163.

¹³⁶ يقول الله عز وجل: (قل هو الله أحد (1) الله الصمد (2) لم يلد ولم يولد (3) ولم يكن له كفوا أحد (4)) سورة الإخلاص.

¹³⁷ يقول الله تبارك وتعالى: (واذكر في الكتاب مريم إذ انتبذت من أهلها مكانا شرقيا. فاتخذت منهم حجابا فأرسلنا إليها روحنا فتمثل لها بشرا سويا. قالت إني أعوذ بالرحمان منك إن كنت تقيا. قال إنما أنا رسول ربك لأهب لك غلاما زكيا. قالت أنا يكون لي غلام ولم يمسسني بشر ولم أك بغيا. قال كذلك قال ربك هو علي هين ولنجعله آية للناس ورحمة منا وكان أمرا مقضيا. فحملته فانتبذت به مكانا قصيا.) سورة مريم، الآيات من 16-22.

¹³⁸ عبد الرحمن حسن حنيفة الميداني، *العقيدة الإسلامية وأسسها*، ط6، دمشق، دار القلم، 1994، ص 431-432.

¹³⁹ المرجع نفسه، ص 435-436.

¹⁴⁰ يقول الله عز وجل: (وقالوا اتخذ الرحمان ولدا. لقد جنتم شيئا إذا. يكاد السماوات يتفطرن منه وتنشق الأرض وتخر الجبال هدا. أن دعوا للرحمان ولدا. وما ينبغي أن يتخذ الرحمان ولدا. إن كل من في السماوات والأرض إلا آتي الرحمان

عبدا) سورة مريم، الآيات 88-93.

¹⁴¹ الميداني، المرجع السابق، ص 435.

¹⁴² يقول الله جل جلاله: (شرع لكم من الدين ما وصى به نوحا والذي أوحينا إليك وما وصينا به إبراهيم وموسى وعيسى أن أقيموا الدين ولا تتفرقوا فيه كبر على المشركين ما تدعوهم إليه الله يجتبي إليه من يشاء ويهدي إليه من ينيب) سورة الشورى، الآية 13.

¹⁴³ Abu-al-Aala AL-MAUDUDI, *Towards Understanding Islam*, 6th ed., Lahore, Islamic Publications, 1960, p.2

¹⁴⁴ مصطفى سعيد الخن و محي الدين ديب متو، *العقيدة الإسلامية: أركانها، حقائقها، مفسداتها*، بيروت، دار الكلم الطيب، ط1، 1996، ص 15.

¹⁴⁵ صحيح مسلم، كتاب الإيمان، الحديث رقم 8.

¹⁴⁶ Marcus Aurelius Garvey according to Hughes BRISBANE, JR., in his article "Some New Light on the Garvey Movement. "

<http://www.nathanielturner.com/newlightongarvey.htm>

Marcus Mosiah Garvey according to RAHIM-BARAKZOY. For more details see Sultana RAHIM-BARAKZOY, p. 11.

¹⁴⁷ Tilia PARKS, "Marcus Garvey, Spokesman," *Black History*, Special Issue, February 22, 2002.

http://www.msuspokesman.com/global_user_ele.../printpage.cfm?storyid=18989

¹⁴⁸ BRISBANE, Jr., op. cit.

¹⁴⁹ ESSIEN-UDOM, op. cit., p. 48.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

¹⁵¹ Kemal Mustapha Pasha also called Atatürk (father of the Turks, 1881 – 1938) was a Turkish general and statesman, President (1923 –1938). He was elected the first President of the Turkish Republic. He abolished the caliphate and introduced other policies designed to make Turkey a modern secular state. (New Oxford Dictionary of English, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003)

¹⁵² Sun Yet Sen also Yat-sen (1886 – 1925), Chinese Kuomintang statesman, provisional president of the Republic of China 1911-12 and President of the Southern Chinese Republic 1923-5. He organized the Kuomintang force and played a vital part in the revolution of 1911 which overthrew the Manchu dynasty. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, op. cit.)

¹⁵³Saad Zaghlul (1857 – 1927) was an Egyptian statesman and patriot, leader of the Wafd Party and the nationalist movement of 1918-19, which led Britain to give Egypt national independence in 1922. He was briefly prime minister in 1924. (*Ibid.*)

¹⁵⁴Abd Al-Aziz ibn Muhammad Al-Sa'ud (1880 – 1953) was a tribal and Muslim religious leader who formed the modern state of Saudi Arabia and initiated the exploitation of its oil. (*Ibid.*)

¹⁵⁵John Chilembwe of Nyasaland [now Malawi] born c. 1860, -71 – d. 1915 was a Western-educated Nyasaland missionary who led an abortive, largely symbolic, uprising against British rule in 1915 and seen as a forerunner and martyr of Malawi nationalism. He was one of the first Africans to speak of Nyasaland at a time when the vast majority of his fellow subjects cared only for tribal identification. (*Ibid.*)

¹⁵⁶BRISBANE, Jr., op. cit. As to Simon Kimbangu (1889 ? – 1951), he was a Congolese religious leader who founded a separatist church known as the kimbanguist church. (Encyclopaedia Britannica)

¹⁵⁷ Booker Taliaferro Washington (1856-1915) was a black race man, born in Franklin County, Virginia, and was the son of a slave. He was mainly an educator who urged blacks to attempt to uplift themselves through educational attainments and economic advancement. He called blacks to stop agitating for their civil rights for the time being and pacify whites, and improve their economic conditions by making themselves useful to the whites in crafts. His policy was known as the compromise -and - accomodation doctrine, which earned him scorn of Negro activists. (WEXLER, op. cit., p.7.)

¹⁵⁸LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 57.

¹⁵⁹ Quoted in BRISBANE, Jr., op. cit.

¹⁶⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ ESSIEN-UDOM, op. cit., p. 49.

¹⁶²BRISBANE, op. cit.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.* This number is exaggerated according to Sultana Brahim-Barakzoy. It is estimated at about half a million. BRAHIM-BARAKZOY, op. cit., p. 5.

¹⁶⁴ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 56.

¹⁶⁵BRISBANE, Jr., op. cit.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 63.

¹⁶⁹BRISBANE, Jr., op. cit.

¹⁷⁰ Quoted in LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 58.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*

¹⁷² Quoted in LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 59.

¹⁷³ “Marcus Garvey (1887 – 1940), Black Nationalist, Pan-Africanist; the Father of Contemporary Black Nationalism.”

<http://www.swagga.com/marcus.htm>

¹⁷⁴ Declaration of Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World, Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League, 13 August, 1920.

<http://www.swagga.com/marcus.htm>

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 59.

¹⁷⁷ ESSIEN-UDOM, op. cit., p. 51.

¹⁷⁸ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 59.

¹⁷⁹ Four ships according to Lincoln and three according to Garvey himself and his political opponent Robert Bagnall from the NAACP, in "The Madness of Marcus Garvey, 1923."
<http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5120/>

¹⁸⁰ Marcus Garvey, New York City, February 22, 1921. Excerpt from *The Negro World*, Vol. X, No.2, February 26, 1921.

¹⁸¹ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 51.

¹⁸² Kenneth O'Reilly, "**Racial Matters** " *The FBI's Secret File on Black America, 1960-1972*, New York, The Free Press, 1989, pp. 12-13

¹⁸³ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 60.

¹⁸⁴ Zionism is the Jewish nationalist movement that has had as its goal the creation and support of a Jewish national state in Palestine. Though Zionism originated in eastern and central Europe in the latter part of the 19th century, it is known in many ways as a continuation of the ancient nationalist attachment of the Jews and of the Jewish religion to the historical region of Palestine, where one of the hills of ancient Jerusalem was called Zion. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, op. cit.)

¹⁸⁵ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 63.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ Editorial by Marcus Garvey in the *Negro World*, New York City, September 2, 1924.
<http://www.isop.ucla.edu/mgpp/sample06.htm>

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 63.

¹⁹⁰ Robert BAGNALL, "The Madness of Marcus Garvey," *Messenger*, March 1923.
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5120/>

¹⁹¹ DuBOIS, "The Black Star Line," *Crisis*, September 1922, 210-214.
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5121/>

¹⁹² DuBOIS, op. cit.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *The Negro World*, December 24, 1921 as quoted by DuBois in his essay in the "The Black Star Line," *Crisis*, September 1922.

¹⁹⁵ *Negro World*, July 8, 1922 as quoted by DuBois in *Crisis*, September 1922.

¹⁹⁶ *Negro World* of April 1, 1922 as quoted by DuBois in *Crisis*, September 1922.

¹⁹⁷ O' REILLY, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁹⁹ LINCOLN, op. cit., pp. 64-65.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ PARKS, op. cit.

²⁰² LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 65.

²⁰³ ESSIEN-UDOM, op. cit., p. 54.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ LINCOLN, "The American Muslim Mission in the Context of American Social History," in *The Muslim Community in North America*, edited by Earl H. VAUGH, et.al., Alberta, the University of Alberta Press, 1983, p. 221.

CHAPTER TWO

BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE BLACK MUSLIMS' MOVEMENT AND ITS BELIEF SYSTEM, 1930 – 1951

In this chapter, one asks the following questions and attempts to answer them. What was the true identity of the enigmatic founder of the movement? Was he the same person arrested by the police and jailed in Los Angeles, California? How could this criminal fool thousands of poor blacks and make them believe in a false Islam? Could such a person be the propagator of true Islam among embittered blacks in the USA? What happened after his disappearance? Who led the movement then and what were his contributions to the improvement of the social and political conditions of his followers? Who were the other leaders and what were their contributions to the uplifting of their people? Did the Black Muslims have a belief system? What was it like? Who devised it? Did it fit with true Islam? What are the Islamic refutes of the ideological tenets of the NOI from its institution till the death of Elijah Muhammad?

To begin with, an attempt will be made to shed some light on the enigmatic identity of the founder in the goal of showing that such a person could not be expected to introduce true Islam to blacks. Next, a thorough examination of the ideology of the NOI will be made and criticized from an Islamic point of view.

Although Fard founded the NOI and made it work, still his followers knew little about his identity, especially that he disappeared in unclear circumstances just like the way in which he had appeared the first time. In the subsection below, an attempt will be made to find out about his identity and reconstruct his biography.

I. The Founder's Enigmatic Identity

It is confirmed that Wallace Dodd Fard was the founder of the movement known as the Lost- Found Nation of Islam, but little is known about his true identity, origin, and disappearance. One of his earliest followers, who heard his first addresses, reported that Fard himself stated, "My name is W. D. Fard and I came from the Holy City of Mecca..."¹ However, he called himself by many names and aliases. In a report by the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the United States of America,² the following names and aliases were listed.³

In addition to that, he was mentioned as Fareed Muhammad.⁴ In a recent study, Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad presumed he had been of either Turkish or Iranian origin.⁵

Moreover, even his race was not determined either as black or white definitely. According to his former common-law wife, as called by FBI agents, Hazel Evelsizer, he was white.⁶ This was repeated in all his declarations, as it was the police and people's observations in the period preceding his appearance in 1930 in Detroit, Michigan, where he started the Nation of Islam.

Besides, the prison records of San Quentin⁷ reflected the following description:

Race:	White
Complexion:	Dark
Eyes:	Maroon
Hair:	Black

Even after he had presented himself to the Negroes of Detroit as a Negro, and had started his movement and lived among them as such, he was not described as black. The information obtained from the Detroit Police Department, which arrested him on May 25, 1933, for investigation on a charge of being a con man, under the name Wallace Farad No. 45138⁸ read as follows:

Race:	White
Hair:	Black
Eyes:	Maroon

Nationality: Arabian, Turkish, Algerian, Syrian, New Zealander, Another FBI record contained a statement that he was Algerian.⁹

The same remark as to his colour being white could be found on his fingerprint card taken

by the Detroit Police Department during the same arrest.¹⁰

As to the documents and observations that he was black, the criminal complaint No. 3227492 of September 26, 1933, issued against him in Detroit, Michigan indicated that he was a Negro.¹¹

On the other hand, Elijah Muhammad described him as being black and white at the same time to be able to go unnoticed in either camp.¹²

The same thing can be said about his date and place of birth. Although he stated to his followers that he came from Mecca, the Records Section at the San Quentin State Prison, California, where he served time for the sale of narcotics, indicated something different. It can be read that the subject under the name of Willie D. Ford, bearing number 42314 was born at Portland, Oregon, on February 25, 1891, his father being Zared Ford, mother Beatrice Ford. Both of them were born in Hawaii.¹³ It is to be noted that the information obtained by the San Quentin Prison authorities were made upon his declarations.

On the same FBI document, entitled Correlation Summary,¹⁴ it is reported that his dates and places of birth were 1873, 1900; February 26, 1877, Mecca, Saudi Arabia; 1894, New Zealand.

In an article published by Eric Pement in *Cornerstone*, he cited a recent author maintaining that he was really Arnold Josiah Ford, a black rabbi from a *kabbalistic* black Hebrew group in New York.¹⁵

FBI investigations, however, failed to confirm neither his place nor his date of birth. Another investigation was started to determine his parents' identity as he stated it to the police. Nevertheless, investigations in Honolulu, Hawaii, could not reach any information as to his parents. In one of his declarations to the police, he stated that his father operated the Ford Bottling Works in Hawaii, but the authorities in Honolulu listed no such company. Besides, the people working in the bottling business in that town declared that they had no

knowledge of such a plant.¹⁶

Fard's common-law wife from 1919 to 1922, Hazel Evelsizer, declared to the FBI agents that while living with Fard, he told her that prior to his coming to Los Angeles, he had been married in Oregon around 1914. She furthermore stated that he lived in Salem, Oregon, by the name Fred Dodd.¹⁷

Hazel Evelsizer's deduction, as she declared, was based on an old letter, which she had found in Fard's belongings, addressed to a Fred Dodd in Salem, Oregon. He also told her that this marriage had been followed by a bitter separation after which he had been unable to obtain an official divorce. This might have been the reason for which he changed his name to Wallace Ford when he moved to Los Angeles.

It is to be noted that the Portland police located a marriage between a Fred Dodd and a Pearl Allen dated May 9, 1914, in Multnomal County, Oregon. Dodd's residence was listed in the record as Salem, Marion County, Oregon.¹⁸ From this, the possibility presented itself to the FBI that Ford was actually born Fred Dodd and changed his name to Wallace Ford due to marital difficulties.

The above-mentioned marriage record was the oldest official record of W. D. Fard that FBI agents could spot. It indicated that his documented presence in the USA dated back to 1914 in Oregon. No older record, including that of his birth, could be located even after long and minutious investigations by FBI agents.

To check out that W.D. Fard, who started the Black Muslim movement in Detroit was the same Wallie D. Ford, who served time in the San Quentin State Prison, the fingerprints examination which the FBI conducted proved they were identical.¹⁹

The Herald- Examiner wrote:

To the FBI he is No. 56062 - and a man of many aliases. The California Bureau of Identification and investigation lists him as Wallace Ford, No. 1797924. At San Quentin, as Ford, he was number 42314.²⁰

With the Michigan State Police he is Wallace Farad, No. 98076. Although the names and numbers vary, the fingerprints are always the same, be it Los Angeles, San Quentin, or Detroit, birthplace of the Black Muslim movement.

According to the same newspaper, his father was a British, who arrived in New Zealand via Australia on a schooner, and his mother was a native of Polynesia. His common-law wife, Hazel Evelsizer, shared this view as to the country of origin. She declared to the police that when she last saw him it was in Los Angeles around 1932 or 1933. On this occasion, he told her he was going back to New Zealand.²¹ The former wife also stated that a girl, who was employed by him in his café in Los Angeles, had told her that she used to help Fard write his letters to New Zealand, because he had very little education.²² She consolidated this view by the country of origin stated in the birth certificate of their child born on September 1st, 1920, in Los Angeles, California.

II. Towards a Better Reconstruction of Fard's Biography

An attempt to reconstitute W. D. Fard's biography will be made in this subsection. FBI reports, newspaper articles, the teachings of the NOI and his former common-law wife's statements will serve as a basis. Who was really W. D. Fard?

Although Black Muslims believed that W. D. Fard was their Prophet and God, born on February 26, 1877, in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, who arrived in the USA on July 4, 1930, this was not right.²³ According to an article in the same issue of the *Los Angeles Herald – Examiner*, Fard's true name was Wallace Dodd. He was born in New Zealand, on February 26, 1891, from a British father and a Polynesian native mother. His physical traits as listed by the police as well as his picture support this hypothesis. He arrived in the USA in 1913 and settled in Portland, Oregon. There he married Pearl Allen on May 9, 1914, in Multnomal County. However, after a short time, he walked out on his wife and infant son without being able to obtain an official divorce. As he told his former common-law wife, Hazel Evelsizer, later in Los Angeles, the separation was a bitter one. The consequence was that it prevented him from having the official divorce certificate. This could be true, since the FBI searches of the divorce records could not locate any by his name. In this marriage he used the name Fred Dodd. From there he went to Seattle, Washington, where he lingered for a few months

before travelling to Los Angeles, California. In this city, he used the name Wallace D. Ford and started a restaurant at 803 West Third St. under the name of Wallace Ford. His criminal record began with an arrest for an attack with a deadly weapon on November 17, 1918, under the name of Wallie Ford, number 16448, in this restaurant.²⁴ He was soon released without conviction, because the other party did not prosecute. FBI arrest report²⁵ states that witnesses, R. A. Benkery and Gillibrand, went into Ford's restaurant and ordered for a steak and the cook (Ford) told them that they would have to put a \$2 deposit in advance. As they refused, an argument was started and Ford pulled a gun on them. He then put the gun away and came out of the counter and started a fight with Gillibrand, who ran away from him but Ford followed him and knocked his head on the ground. The police arrested the attacker later but released him as the complaining witness would not prosecute.

At the same café and restaurant, Ford met Hazel Barton in 1919 and employed her as a waitress. He lived with her in an apartment above the restaurant. On September 1, 1920, she gave birth to a child at the McDonald Sanitarium. Hazel named the boy Wallace Dodd Ford, after its father.²⁶

When she eventually became aware of the identity of W. D. Fard and his role as the founder of the Black Muslim movement, she caused the name of her son to be changed to Wallace Max Ford in 1940, before a notary public.²⁷ The son worked for the US Coast Guard during the Second World War and drowned in Linhaven Roads, Virginia, on August 3, 1942, during service.²⁸ She walked out on Ford in 1922 and she later married Osborne, who died after six months. Then she married a Mr. Clifford Evelsizer.

Fard continued to work in his café until his arrest by the Los Angeles Police Department on January 20, 1926. His criminal record by this authority bears No. 16447. The charge for his arrest was the violation of the Woolwine Act, the California prohibition law, possession and sale.

On March 4, 1926, he was sentenced to a one dollar fine or one day in jail on count one, and to a four hundred dollar fine or 180 days in jail on count 2. His third arrest by the same

police department happened on February 15, 1926, for violation of the State Poison Act.²⁹ As to this arrest, it took place at his café where he was associated with a half-Chinese by the name of Edward Donaldson. According to District Attorney Keyes of Los Angeles County, without knowing their identity, the latter offered to sell drugs to two police officers for \$ 225. When the two suspects caught sight of the inspectors' handcuffs, they became suspicious and changed their mind.

Three hours later, the policemen returned to the place and searched it and found the drugs in the rear of the café.³⁰ On June 12, 1926, Ford was received at San Quentin State Prison, California, from Los Angeles County, where a jury had convicted him for a violation of the State Poison Act on May 14, 1926. The State Board of Prison Directors set the sentence at four years. However, his release took place on May 27, 1929.³¹ The San Quentin Prison records reflect that while he was incarcerated, the prison authorities received three letters attesting to his good character.

A letter was from Mrs. Hazel E. Osborne, his former common-law wife, who stated that Ford did not drink, smoke, or gamble. According to her, he was morally a good man. It was just because he was temperamental that their marriage ended by divorce. The other letter came from Mrs. Mary Brown of Los Angeles, who stated that Ford had been "like one of our family for ten years." Another letter by Mrs. Pearl Morton of Los Angeles dated May 23, 1927, read, "I have known him for 11 years; my mother and I have always been very fond of him...always treated him as one of the family."

The period extending from his release on May 27, 1929 to his appearance in Detroit in the midsummer of 1930 as a silk peddler is still unclear and undocumented. According to the *Herald-Examiner*,³² after his release from San Quentin Prison, he stayed for a short time in Los Angeles, where he visited his former common-law wife, Hazel Evelsizer, and son before leaving for Chicago, Illinois, then for Detroit, Michigan. The latter stated to the FBI agents, while interviewed on this subject, that Dodd had told her that he had been selling doctors' supplies during the whole period of his absence from Los Angeles until his return to it around September 1933.³³ During his visit to her, he gave her a small box containing self-

threading needles. This box was postmarked April 28, 1930, from the Marcellene Chemical Company, 1900 West Road Street, Richmond, Virginia. It was addressed to W. D. Ford, General Delivery, Chicago, Illinois. This proves that he had been to Chicago before April 1930, for he was likely to have ordered for it prior to this date. As to the possibility of his journeying in Virginia, FBI investigations there proved negative.

In addition to that, Hazel advised FBI agents in 1957 that she had corresponded with Ford from 1929 to 1932. Her letters were entirely addressed to him in the same way: "Care of General Delivery" in either Chicago, Illinois or Detroit, Michigan. The average of her correspondence was once or twice a year, and was for the purpose of getting money for the support of their son. From this, it can safely be said that his residence was limited to Illinois and Michigan.

It is most probable that he went directly from Los Angeles to Chicago, Illinois, and then to Detroit, Michigan, where he appeared as a silk peddler among the Negroes of Paradise Valley. This assumption is backed by the fact that no trace of his existence could be found beyond these two states after his departure from Los Angeles. There he posed as a Negro and claimed to be versed in the Biblical knowledge. Finding the opportunity that Negroes as hit fully by the Depression of 1929 had given up all hope in improving their conditions through the white man's institutions, he started to preach that he had come from Mecca to save them from the "Cave Man."³⁴ His mission included also bringing freedom, equality, and justice to the "so-called Black Man," as he called him, in North America. He claimed that he was a Negro, an Arab descended from the line of Prophet Muhammed (PBUH), and originating from the tribe of *Koreish* and that his parents were wealthy and resided in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.³⁵ Although he knew nothing about true Islam, he took advantage of the blacks' ignorance of this religion and history and told them they were descendants of the "Original Man," that is the "Black Man," and that they were Muslims of origin and their language was Arabic.³⁶

In addition, he preached that they were Asiatics, whom the “Caucasian man” had brought to the “wilderness of North America” more than four centuries ago. He hired a hall and transformed it into a temple, where he could address his Negro followers.

The adherents of the Nation of Islam, as he called it, contributed money to pay the rent of the hall and its upkeep as well as to support Fard and some of his ministers.

During this time, he met a certain Elijah Poole, an autoworker from Georgia. Fard renamed him Elijah Muhammad and taught him, for three and a half years, a heterogeneous doctrine that was made up of Masonic ideas, Christianity, Judaism, Oriental Philosophies, Buddhism, etc. but nothing of Islam. He called this mixture Islam and inculcated it to his ignorant poor black followers. As the latter won his confidence and showed an excessive zeal for the tenets of the movement, Fard appointed him Minister of Islam. He then proved to be a most devoted follower. Fard used to appear to his followers in the early years of the establishment of the Temple of Islam No. 1, but he later started gradually to retreat, leaving the management to Elijah Muhammad. During this time, he sent sizeable sums of money to Hazel in Los Angeles.³⁷ When one of his overzealous followers induced his roommate to sacrifice himself to become the “saviour of the world” in Detroit in 1932, his activities came immediately to the attention of the Police Department in Detroit. On May 25, 1933, he was arrested for investigation, and admitted that his teachings “were strictly a racket” and that he was “getting all the money out of it he could.” After that, the Detroit Police ordered him to leave the city.³⁸

The assumption that he was a fake doing a racket, who masqueraded as a black and used his teachings of his version of Islam for the purpose of enriching over the impoverished blacks is plausible. To check out this, his former common-law wife, Hazel Evelsizer, stated to the police that Fard used to send her sizeable sums of money for the support of their son.³⁹

While managing the Temple in Detroit, he required his followers to pay for their registration and to contribute money whenever possible. Moreover, he asked them to pay \$10 when filing their letters to have their slave names dropped and their original names

restored. He also sold to his followers what he called official paper. By 1933, he had about 8,000 adherents. This number could have contributed thousands of dollars.

Other writers went even further in incriminating Fard by assuming that he was a drug dealer. His recruiting of his followers among the ghetto Negroes, and ex-convicts and also having the prison as a suitable ground for the recruitment pushed some analysts to suppose he was selling drugs to either his followers or through them to others. The establishment of the Fruit of Islam, a paramilitary black male organization, which provided his personal security as well as that of his successive leader, Elijah Muhammad, appeared to some analysts as a means of securing the transportation of narcotics from place to place. Fard could have reverted to the sale of narcotics, which he did when operating his café in Los Angeles, California, in association with Donaldson. Both were arrested and jailed, though the other was paroled and released. This assumption appears implausible, because the NOI was infiltrated by FBI agents well placed to spy over all activities of the Nation and such an activity was never reported. It could have been noticed if it had only existed in any period of the history of the NOI.

Because of the potential dangerousness of some of his followers like Robert Harrison, who had killed his roommate John J. Smith for sacrifice and for fear of the infiltration of Japanese agents to seek allegiance of blacks to Japan, the Detroit Police Department tightened control of his movements and activities.⁴⁰

On May 25, 1933, he was arrested for investigation. During this arrest, he told the police that he was the “supreme ruler of the universe,” and also admitted that all his movement was purely a racket. At the end of the arrest, he was asked to leave Detroit.⁴¹

According to the statements made by Elijah Muhammad to FBI agents, Fard left Detroit and moved to Chicago, Michigan, where he taught “Islam” until the summer of 1934, then returned to Mecca.⁴² However, there is no document indicating he taught “Islam” in the Temple of Chicago. The only document showing his presence there was a record of the

Chicago Police Department reflecting his arrest on September 26, 1933, for disorderly conduct. This appears to be the last recorded appearance of Fard.⁴³

It is believed that after this last arrest, he departed from Chicago and made his way through the Midwest until he arrived at Los Angeles, where he visited Hazel, his son Wallace Dodd Ford and her husband Clifford Evelsizer. Hazel stated to FBI agents that she last saw him either in the summer of 1932 or 1933.

It is believed it was likely in 1933, after his departure from Chicago, for his former wife might have forgotten the exact date due to the time lapse until her interview in 1957. She stated that he was driving a 1929 Model A Ford *coupé* with California license plates. His car seats were covered with white sheets, which he soon left with Hazel, telling her he would not need them as he was going back to New Zealand. On this visit, he told her and her husband that his new way of life consisted of taking one meal per day only.⁴⁴ She also advised that his hair was long and full in the back contrary to his previous way when he always had a short conventional hair cut.⁴⁵

According to the *Los Angeles Herald- Examiner* on July 28, 1963, Ed Montgomery, the reporter, indicated that he had contacted Hazel Evelsizer, and she advised him that Dodd went to Chicago after leaving Detroit and became a travelling suit salesman for a mail order tailor. In this position he moved through the Midwest until he ultimately arrived in Los Angeles in a new car, wearing flowery robes. He stayed there for two weeks then he sold his car and boarded a ship for New Zealand, where he said he had relatives. He mentioned that he would visit his uncle, who paid his ship fare to travel to the USA in 1913.

Furthermore, Ed Montgomery wrote a rehash of his former article cited in this thesis and published it in the *Los Angeles Herald - Examiner* on Sunday, July 28, 1965.

In it he said that Black Muslims claimed that police and San Quentin Prison records dating back to the early 1920s had been altered, and that fingerprints identifying Farad as Dodd had been doctored. Elijah Muhammad, the leader of the NOI at that time, made a

reward of \$100,000 for any person who could prove that Farad and Dodd were one and the same person. But ten days later, Fard's common-law wife and a blood relative came to his office and were ready to establish the truth of Fard's identity. Elijah Muhammad did not pay her the promised sum and the matter was dropped forthwith. At the end of his second article, Ed Montgomery said about the disappearance of Dodd: "Farad, reverting to his true name of Dodd, sailed for Australia."

Whether Fard returned to New Zealand or Australia, or to Mecca as Elijah Muhammad declared, and was waiting the proper time to deliver speeches, he left behind him an effective organization. It was able to survive his disappearance and be one of the strongest black movement organizations in the 20th century. During his three-years' stay in Detroit, he founded the Temple and devised its ritual and worship, as well as the establishment of the University of Islam. The latter was actually a combination of an elementary and a secondary school. Besides, Fard provided young following women with Muslim Girls' Training Class, which taught them home economics and how to be a successful wife and mother. Finally, he established the Fruit of Islam, a sort of military organization for his personal protection, as well as the officials of the movement and its property.

For the management of the entire Movement, he trained Elijah Muhammad and appointed him Minister of Islam with the assistance of other ministers, who were all selected and trained personally by Fard.⁴⁶

III. Elijah Muhammad, Successor

When Fard disappeared from Detroit, Michigan, in 1933, his successor, Elijah Muhammad, was able to run the organization effectively to the degree that the withdrawal of the founder did not impede its survival. Elijah Muhammad was born in Sandersville, Georgia, in 1897, stating that he did not know his day and month of birth because his mother could not remember them. The other reason for the omission was that authorities in rural Georgia gave less importance to keeping the records of descendants of former slaves.⁴⁷ His father was William, later named Wali, a Baptist minister, and his mother was Marie. Both of them had been sharecroppers⁴⁸ on a cotton plantation.⁴⁹ They had thirteen children. His

grandparents worked as slaves for a white family by the name of Poole, near Sandersville. Hence they got the family name from this white family.

In his early life, he was known as Elijah Poole. He attended school at Cordelle, Georgia, but went only through the fourth grade. Since life in the rural South by the end of the 19th century was hard due to poverty, he left school and worked on his father's farm to provide his family with food. He used to collect firewood and sell it in Cordele. And it was there when he was still ten around 1907 that he received his first horrific racist shock which haunted him to his last days. As he once carried firewood to Cordele, he saw a group of white people gathering around a tree. When he approached to see what was there, he saw a black teenager hanging from a tree with his body riddled with bullets. The youth was accused of raping a white woman and lynched without trial while the black adults watched without daring to intervene. This led him to avoid Cordele, and when he was sixteen he was able to move to Macon, Georgia.⁵⁰ In 1919 he was married to Clara Evans. The result of this marriage was eight children: Emmanuel, Ethel, Lottie, Nathaniel, Herbert, Elijah, Jr., Wallace and Akbar. Then he worked from 1919 to 1923 for the Georgia and Southern Railroad Company at Macon, Georgia.

In 1923 he moved with his wife and two children to Detroit. At that time, black families left the South for the North in search of better economic and social conditions. Detroit was a bustling mobile city with its burgeoning auto industry. Its population numbered 1.5 million, including 250,000 blacks.⁵¹ There he started to work from that year on to 1929 for a number of companies in the same city. This included Detroit Copper Company, Briggs Body, the American Nut Company, and the Chevrolet Axle Company. Due to the stock market crash of 1929 and the ensuing Great Depression of the early 1930s, he was out of work for the late part of that year. In 1930 he heard of a religion called Islam that was taught by a man called Wallace Fard Mohammad, whom Elijah Poole believed was *Allah* in person in their first meeting.⁵²

Fard conducted meetings in a number of halls in Detroit from 1930 to May 1933. About 700 or 800 people attended the meetings. They were split into two groups to be able to

attend, for the hall capacity was of 400 people. The last hall was located at 3408 Hastings Street. Around 1931 he attended a meeting in a hall, where Fard was present and taught what he called Islam. From the first lecture, Elijah Poole became overwhelmed by the message and accepted Fard's version of "Islam" on the spot. In an article entitled "History" in the *Year Book* of "Muhammad University of Islam-No. 2 – 1973,"⁵³ the following could be read:

... When shaking the man's hand after the meeting, Mr. Elijah Poole said, "I know who you are, you're God Himself." The certain man whispered to him, "That's right, but don't tell it now." "It is not yet time for it to be known."

Soon thereafter, Elijah invited all his family to convert to what he called the religion of Islam, which they did. Afterwards, Fard started to go almost daily to Elijah Muhammad's home and teach him there. He continued to go to his home less frequently for 15 months until May 26, 1933 when the Detroit Police Department forced him to leave the city.⁵⁴ From the onset they became fast friends and Poole became a sort of an errand boy for Fard and he also helped him publish a newspaper.

The key fact in their relationship was that Poole joined the movement at a critical point, that is, when the police were persecuting Fard. Fearful from trouble with the police and those who disagreed with his teachings, Fard organized the Fruit of Islam and his temple in such a manner as not to risk public appearance but at a rare frequency.

However, when Elijah Poole was initiated into the movement, Fard made an error when renaming him and his brothers. The movement had the policy of requiring the members to drop what it called slave names. They were a reminder of their fathers' slavery and a sign of shame. Accordingly, each proselyte had to write a letter to the NOI asking for his original or Islamic name, as Fard called it, to be restored; then the slave name, as it was called, that had been given by the white man to his ancestors would be discarded. As three Poole brothers applied for their original names at the same time, they did not mention they were blood brothers. The Prophet, as he called himself, gave them three different family names of Sharrieff, Karriem, and Muhammad. Immediately, the error became apparent, and Fard who claimed to have omniscient knowledge had to make the explanation that he had divine knowledge of the proper names of the three brothers.⁵⁵ Poole seemed unaffected by the error and commented on his new name by saying:

The name 'Poole' was never my name nor was it my father's name. It was the name [of] the white slave-master of my grandfather after the so-called freedom of my fathers."⁵⁶

Elijah Poole devoted himself wholeheartedly to Fard and his movement, and became his most trusted lieutenant. Fard gave him at first the surname of Karriem, but when he showed his total devotion to the movement, he recognized his higher status and soon renamed him Muhammad.⁵⁷

Elijah Muhammad stated that he remained in Detroit from 1933 to September 1934, teaching his false version of Islam, as will be seen later, to black people. Nevertheless, other sources indicated that Elijah Muhammad moved to Chicago in 1932 and founded Temple No. 2.⁵⁸ After that, he returned to Detroit to help Fard who had been jailed.⁵⁹ Then the Detroit Police pressed him to leave the city. Later, he came to Chicago, Illinois. In 1934, he saw for the last time the man whom he falsely called "*Allah*," that is W. D. Fard, but he did not have any knowledge as to his whereabouts.⁶⁰ As to the deification of Fard, Elijah was almost the only one responsible for it and for its propagation after the disappearance of Fard.⁶¹

He declared the following to the FBI agents:

When *Allah* first came to my home in 1931 he said that he was *Mahadiah* and that he was *Allah* who everyone expected to come two thousand years after Christ who was crucified at Jerusalem. At this time *Allah* gave me the name Mohammed, which I have used ever since.⁶²

Before the disappearance of Fard in about June 1934, the latter appointed Elijah Muhammad Chief Minister of Islam to preside over the organization. The choice proved to be a wise one, despite the opposition of moderate officers within the movement. Since Mohammad's rise to power coincided with the disappearance of Fard, some of his critics hinted that he might be responsible for it. There was no evidence, however, to support this hypothesis. Although certain rumours persist that Poole induced Fard to offer himself up as a human sacrifice, there is no proof of it. Yet, Eric Lincoln indicated that, "It is interesting to note that Fard is honoured by [Black] Muslims everywhere as the 'Saviour' and is celebrated as such every year on his birthday, February 26."⁶³

For his defence, it is to note that his rise was a result of devotion and hard work not that of a sudden action. Still, his rivals in the same fold challenged him. After the disappearance of Fard, Black Muslims became less aggressive and their movement began to decline in size and power.

There were internal power quarrels among the members, and the moderates (who did not believe Fard was “*Allah* in person”) forced Muhammad to leave Detroit to Temple No. 2 in Chicago. There, he set up new headquarters and started to reshape the movement under his highly militant leadership. During this period, Fard was deified and Elijah Muhammad naturally assumed prophet-hood. From that time on, it was referred to him as the “Prophet”, or more often the “Messenger of *Allah*.”⁶⁴

While in Chicago, Temple No. 2 became the most important centre of the movement. There, he published a newspaper called *Muhammad Speaks*, established a University of Islam (later the programmes will be highlighted), and acquired for the movement apartment houses, grocery stores, and restaurants. He also opened temples in other cities and purchased farms to produce “ritually pure food” for the members. More important than that, he gave them a new sense of dignity and convinced them that they were more than equals to the whites, and that they were a superior race destined to rule the earth.⁶⁵ He declared to the FBI agents as to his subsistence, that from 1929 to 1942, the time of his interviewing, he had no regular job. He occasionally did odd jobs, but that for the most part of the last eleven years, the Muslims of the Chicago Temple took care of him and his family financially.

He also declared that he travelled extensively for the aim of teaching what he called “Islam,” and during his travels, he did only strictly religious activities.⁶⁶

Elijah Muhammad helped establish schools for his children and the community of his adherents. They felt that the educational system of the State of Michigan was wholly inadequate for their children. In 1934, he had his children go to the University of Islam. However, The Michigan State Board of Education disagreed with the Black Muslims’ right to pursue their educational agenda, because the programmes were different from those of

other public schools. Since the latter refused to obey, a number of them as well as the Muslim Teachers, as they were called, and the Temple Secretary were charged with contributing to the delinquency of minors and were jailed.⁶⁷ Muhammad said he committed himself to jail after learning what had happened. Ultimately, the charges were dropped, and the officials were freed. Muhammad was put on a six months' probation to take his children out of what was called the "Islamic school" and put them in another accredited public school, at the care of white Christian teachers. He did not do that and he rather moved to Chicago in September 1934.⁶⁸

Fard, his teacher, was harassed by the police in Detroit and was asked to leave the city, which he did, leaving Elijah Muhammad with the mission of "resurrecting the blacks in North America." His departure, according to the NOI literature was on February 26, 1934.

In 1935, Elijah Muhammad faced new challenges. Prior to his departure, Fard instructed him to go to the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C., to research 104 books on "Islam" and other subjects. In addition, when he assumed leadership of the Temple of Islam, some of the moderate members threatened to assassinate him. All this pushed him to go to Washington, D. C., for research and building what he called a "mosque." There, he used many names, " Mr. Evans," his wife's maiden name, "Ghulam Bogans," "Muhammad Rassoull, " Elijah Karriem" and "Muhammad of 'U' Street." He used these aliases to escape his enemies in the Chicago Temple of Islam and the police as well.

Consequently, on May 8, 1942, he was arrested in Washington, D.C, by the police and was convicted of refusing to register for the military draft and, in addition, to encouraging his members to do likewise, thus violating the Selective Service Act.⁶⁹ He was also charged for sedition and conspiracy and was thus, sentenced to four years in the Federal Prison at Milan, Michigan. The indictment stated that Muhammad convinced the Negroes that it was in their interest that the Japanese win victory over the USA in the Second World War. The argument that he gave to his followers was that the Japanese were a non-white race, like them, and that the whites had oppressed all nonwhites. Logically, they were allies in the face of the arrogant white man. Moreover, he preached that Black Muslims were registered in

Mecca, and had, thus, no allegiance to the USA. This is what the system of belief of the NOI contained.

Muhammad's pro-Japanese sentiments were probably due to the influence of the preachings of the Japanese veteran, Major Satakata Takahashi, who belonged to the Black Dragon Society.⁷⁰ Takahashi tried to infiltrate the Black Nationalist organizations and exploit their hostile sentiments to the US government for the end of creating a fifth column among them.⁷¹ Major Takahashi was in Chicago about 1938, making contacts with the Negroes. Muhammad later wrote in *Message to the Blackman in America*:⁷²

When the call was made for all males between 18 and 44, I refused not evaded on the grounds that, first, I was a Muslim and would not take part in war and especially on the side with the infidels, second, I was 45 years of age and was not, according to the law, required to register.⁷³

Like Muhammad, a number of Black Muslims did not register for the draft and were consequently imprisoned for being conscientious objectors to the Second World War.

While in prison, Muhammad was able to direct the organization and after his release in 1946, he returned to Chicago, the central point of the Nation of Islam to be amid his supporters. The prison made him bold, so he started to criticize the white man and his government vehemently. He preached that the white man was a snake and a devil by nature, evil and incapable of doing right.

In Chicago, he addressed the Black Muslims telling them it made no sense in America to have fought against the Japanese, who were victims of the same blue-eyed devil who had victimized the American Negro. He went even further by saying that the American Negro had no stake in the Second World War:

Rather the American Negro should be saving his energy and ammunition for 'the Battle of Armageddon,' which will be waged in the wilderness of North America. This battle will be for freedom, justice, and equality. It will be waged to success or under death.⁷⁴

In the NOI system of belief, as will be seen below, Black Muslims expected a final battle to take place between themselves and the whites of the USA. It would be a battle over justice, freedom and the right of the Black Muslims to live in peace and dignity after

defeating the whites. Whites would be defeated and the Black Muslims would rule the USA and impose peace and serenity.

Despite his boldness after his release, the movement stagnated under his leadership in the early forties. However, he continued assiduously to recruit disfavoured Negroes for his movement until Malcolm X joined in 1952. In the next chapter, it will be dealt with the national expansion and international recognition of the movement under the latter, who became a national spokesman for Elijah Muhammad. In the following subsections, an examination of the belief system of the old Nation of Islam will be made and seen and refuted from an Islamic point of view.

To understand the belief system of the movement during this period (1930 – 1951) and even later, it is useful to make brief refreshment of the circumstances surrounding the time of the birth of this movement. As already indicated in the previous chapter, in the late 1920s the MSTA and the UNIA, the two major Black Nationalist movements, started a rapid downfall and disintegration following the death of Noble Drew Ali and the deportation of Marcus Garvey from the USA. This end did not resolve the blacks' complicated problems in the USA, as the government wished to calm them by ending the activities of Garvey and getting rid of Noble Ali. The conditions that had brought about the dying movements remained the same. The blacks were still considered as second class citizens with the civil rights deprivations this entailed. Their plight was even worse since the Black Nationalists had reminded them of their human dignity and made them proud of their racial heritage. Nothing from the white majority and their representative government came to satisfy the blacks or to ease their oppression. Worse, this was soon aggravated by the new burdens of the Depression. The black lower class fell in to a constrained silence overloaded with protest against racial injustice. The solution to this situation was to be provided either by the government and the white majority by democratizing life for all the citizens, or by the coming of a new Black Nationalist movement to fill the vacuum. It was rather the second alternative that occurred, as the oppressor was unable to make a democratic move.

It was just at this time that W. D. Fard came and announced himself to the disinherited blacks in the ghetto of Detroit, in the summer of 1930. His first followers were either the former followers of the MSTA and the UNIA or had been under their influence and conditioning. Of course, Fard was not the only one seeking to attract the black masses to his movement. Others with less charisma tried, but were not successful in winning over the masses. Among the other movements were, for example, the National Movement for the Establishment of a Forty-Ninth State.⁷⁵ However, only Fard had charisma and ability to win over the blacks to his movement and make of them a vanguard of Black Nationalism and to transform the Garveyite and Moorish MSTA passions into a new force combining political and religious energies. To win over the black masses, Fard made out of their lower-class despair and hatred of the white man a black faith. To back up this faith, he devised a complete system of belief or doctrine. He was not unique in doing so, for all mass movements of every kind from capitalism, to socialism, to fascism, to white supremacy, to Pan-Arabism had a doctrine.

Like any other mass movement, religious or secular, the NOI created its own doctrine and mythology as principles upon which to organise its followers. Although these were not important in the practical daily life and activities of the Black Muslims, they were stressed in their publications and lectures.

These subsections attempt to answer questions as to the tenets of the system of belief devised by the NOI. What was this system comprised of? What origin did it have and what was it devised for? Why did the Black Muslims reject to be labeled Negroes? What did “God” mean in their mythology? Why? What did they mean by “Original Man?” What was their attitude towards Christianity? Did they devise a moral code? What did it look like? What kind of Islam was Elijah Muhammad teaching to the Black Muslims? What was it from an Islamic point of view? Was there an Afterlife in the NOI eschatology? Why? To begin with, the following subsection discusses the refusal of the label “Negro” in the Nation of Islam.

IV. Rejection of the Label “Negro”

Black Muslims rejected the appellation “Negro” like all Black Nationalists before them. They considered it a label placed on them by the white man to degrade them and to justify his discrimination and white supremacy. Therefore, they always used this term with the qualifier “so-called” and said “the so-called Negro” in order to indicate their resentment as well as its arbitrariness. Their preference went for the word “Black Men.” As Malcolm X later explained, the term does not indicate a nationality. He said:⁷⁶

If you call yourself “white,” why should I not call myself “black”? Because you have told me that I am a “Negro”!...if you ask a man his nationality and he says he is German, that means he comes from a nation called Germany. ..The term he uses to identify himself connects him with a nation, a language, a culture, and a flag. Now if he says his nationality is “Negro” he has told you nothing—except possibly that he is not good to be “American.”...If Frenchmen are of France and Germans are of Germany, where is “Negroland”? I’ll tell you: it’s in the mind of the white man!

According to the Black Muslims, the slave-masters had kept the so-called Negroes in mental slavery, though they had obtained physical emancipation. They had been induced into estrangement from their heritage and themselves and from the knowledge of their history, religion, language, and true names.

The slave-masters reduced them into helplessness and shackled them with their slave names. Now the blacks are seeking to love their enemy, the white man and all what he represents. In the view of Black Muslims, this was a most unforgivable offence. The Black Muslims argued that the white majority in America had manipulated and exploited “blackness” for centuries through the mass media and in fact, and presented it as an attribute of inferiority deserving only contempt and hate. As a result, this manipulated image of blackness both in America and in Africa became, to a great extent, the “objective reality” of the Negro personality.⁷⁷ The Negro ended by identifying himself with this stereotyped image. Nonetheless, he was subjectively forced to reject and to hate his “objective self” as presented to him by the whites. This practice caused him to be alienated from himself.

The eschatology or the system of belief of the Black Muslims reflected the desire of the Black Nationalists to free the Negroes from their exploited image of blackness. This was expected to free them from the profound self-rejection feeling, social estrangement, and cultural alienation, which corrupt the personalities of the Negro masses and push them to

despair. The Black Nationalists sought to attach themselves to something worthy and esteemed, to a centre of power, a tradition, or a central ideal capable of giving their life a meaning and a purpose. To escape the haunting manipulated image of “Negroness,” they looked for a system of belief capable of ridding them from this image and of providing a future, where blackness would be respected. This would enable blacks to live a normal, creative life.

Black Muslims believed that the plight of the so-called Negro had been forced upon him by the white man, his slave-master, and that it was still going on because the Negro wanted to stay in a land dominated and governed by the whites. Separation, in the view of Muhammad, was the only solution to this dilemma.⁷⁸ He thought that as long as Negroes lived amid whites, they could only be subjected to abuse of power politically and economically.

Yet, Black Muslims rejected the idea of leaving America as Garvey called for to leave it for the white man. They insisted that the white man’s land was Europe, not America. Hence, justice required that they obtain land in it to build the Black Nation on the soil which their fathers and mothers had paid for in 300 years of slavery.

V. The Nature of God

The teachings of the eschatology of the NOI went on that the so-called Negroes had been rendered ignorant and servile and that they lived with a shameful behaviour copied from the whites. Nonetheless, “*Allah*” held for them a sacred position and he promised to rescue them from their oppressor. Yet, “*Allah*” according to the teachings of Elijah Muhammad had nothing to do with *Allah* as known to true Muslims. In true Islam, *Allah* or God is the creator and the sustainer of the universe and all that is in it, and the humans do not know Him physically and there is nothing like Him.

This is evidenced in the *Qur’an*. In verse 11 from *Surat ES-Shoura Allah* says:

(He is) the Creator of the heavens and the earth: He has made for you pairs from among yourselves, and pairs among cattle: by this means does He multiply you: there is nothing whatever like unto Him, and He is the One that hears and sees (all things) (11) To Him belongs the keys of the heavens and the earth: He enlarges and restricts the sustenance to whom He will: for he knows all things (12)⁷⁹

There are numerous *Quranic* verses, where *Allah* tells about Himself, and as another example, He says in verses 58-59 from *Surat Al –Forqane*:

And put they trust in Him Who lives in and dies not; and celebrate His praise; and enough is He to be acquainted with faults of His servants; He Who created the heavens and the earth and all that is between, in six days, and is firmly established on the Throne (of authority): *Allah*, Most Gracious: ask thou, then, about Him of any acquainted (with such things).⁸⁰

But the image that Fard made of *Allah* and so did his successor Elijah Muhammad, is considered in the true religion of Islam as known universally, the utmost blasphemy. First, it was W. D. Fard, the con man and former drug dealer, who bestowed on himself the quality of God. As mentioned previously in this chapter, he declared to the Detroit Police when arrested for investigation on May 25, 1933, that he was “the Supreme Ruler of the Universe.” This clearly indicates that he claimed divinity for himself. At first, when he was on the job of establishing what he called a temple of Islam, he claimed to be a prophet which was in itself a blasphemy and an outrage to the true religion of Islam. It is evident in Islam that Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) is the last prophet and messenger, and that anyone who pretended prophet-hood after him was an outright impostor⁸¹. And it is undermining to one’s Islam to believe any claim of prophet-hood after Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), the Seal of prophets. The following *hadith* testifies to it.

In My *Ummah*, there shall be born Thirty Grand Liars (*Dajjals*), each of whom will claim to be a prophet, But I am the Last Prophet; there is No Prophet after Me. (Abu Dawood, at-Tirmidhi)

In addition, this *hadith* shows that the Prophet expected the appearance of grand liars or impostors, who would claim prophethood to fool Muslims. This could apply to W. D. Fard, Elijah Muhammad, and others. In the *Qur’an*, *Allah* confirms that Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) is the Seal of prophets, which means he would not be succeeded by any prophet. Verse 40 from *Surat Al-Ahzab* shows this :

Muhammed is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Seal of the prophets: and *Allah* has full knowledge of all things.⁸²

There is no recorded evidence that Fard had told his followers that he was God. However, among the names he held was *Allah*. This is enough proof that he pretended divine status. Most historians put the responsibility of the deification of Fard on Elijah Muhammad, who appeared to have believed everything that Fard had taught him. This credulity and the great devotion he proved towards his mentor could have been at the origin of propagating the idea

that Fard was God in person, or God incarnate.⁸³ He said in a radio broadcast that the so-called Negroes in the USA

...have been lost from our own kind and from our country, for the past 400 years until the coming of Almighty God, in the Person of Master Fard Muhammad in 1930, July the 4th.⁸⁴

Nonetheless, mentioning the pretended divinity of Fard did effectively take place between the mentor and his disciple secretly. When FBI agents interviewed Elijah Muhammad, he declared the following:

When *Allah* first came to my home in 1931 he said that he was *Mahadiah* and that he was *Allah* who everyone expected to come two thousand years after Christ who was crucified at Jerusalem. At this time, *Allah* gave me the name Mohammed, which I have used ever since.⁸⁵

The other time of claiming divinity happened when Elijah Muhammad approached him early at the beginning of Temple of Islam meetings and addressed him by saying:

“I know who you are, you’re God Himself.” The certain man whispered to him, “That’s right, but don’t tell it now.” “It is not yet time for it to be known.”⁸⁶

Later in 1956, Elijah Muhammad wrote in *The Pittsburgh Courier* about Fard and mentioned the following conversation in which he claimed to be both God and the *Mahdi*:

I asked him, “Who are you and what is your real name?” He said, “I am the one that the world has been expecting for the past 2,000 years.” I said to him again, “What is your name?” He said, “My name is *Mahdi*; I am God, I came to guide you into the right path that you may be successful and see the hereafter.” He described the destruction of the world with bombs, poison gas, and finally fire that would consume and destroy everything of the present world.⁸⁷

After the mysterious disappearance of Fard in 1934, the idea that he was God in person appearing among blacks in Detroit to save them from the white devils spread among his followers. Elijah Muhammad’s talks and writings abound with reference to Fard as God. This idea was not accepted by all adherents, which caused the Temple of Islam to split into two factions, one believing and the other disbelieving. The consequence of this was the move of Muhammad to Chicago to build another temple that would eventually become greater and more organized than the original one. The quotation below illustrates the point:

Allah came to us from the Holy City Mecca, Arabia, in 1930. He used the name Wallace D. Fard often signing it W.D. Fard. In the third year (1933). He signed his name W.F. Muhammad which stands for Wallace Fard Muhammad. He came alone.⁸⁸

Moreover, Elijah Muhammad said later about Fard on the Savior’s Day celebration of 1973:

He (Mr. W.F. Muhammad, God in person) chose to suffer 3-1/2 years to show his love for his people, who have suffered over 300 years at the hands of a people who by nature are evil and wicked and have no good in them. He was persecuted, sent to jail in 1932, and ordered out of Detroit, on May 26, 1933. He came to Chicago in the same year and was arrested almost immediately on his arrival and placed behind prison bars.⁸⁹

According to Elijah Muhammad, who considered himself as a messenger sent by Fard, the latter had a black father who had married a white woman, a devil, in order to give birth to a child with a light colour. When the child would become a man, he would go to America and go among whites unnoticed to fulfil the mission of redeeming his people: the lost Nation of Islam in North America. His coming was predicted six thousand years,⁹⁰ when a rebellious black scientist, called Yakub, made the white man. In this context, Muhammad said:

He says to me, beginning His History ... that His father was a black man, very much so. And His mother was a white woman. He said that His father knew he could not be successful in coming to a solid white country, and he being a solid black man. So, He says to me, or rather He taught me, that His father said, "I will go and make me a son. And I will send my son among them, looking like them." Think over that!

"And my son, they will think he is one of them. And He will find our lost people."⁹¹

Muhammad had intimacy with Fard whom he called *Allah*. He once said "I know *Allah* and I am with him."⁹² He thought that he was the only one who deserved to be worshipped. So, he declared that *Allah* alone was the "author of Islam" and that "it is a perfect insult to *Allah*" to worship anyone other than him.⁹³ Obviously, in Islam this is *Kufr*. Yet, Elijah Muhammad claimed that he was preaching the religion of Islam.

Elijah Muhammad had some correspondence with Fard after the mysterious disappearance as well. On the website of the present day Nation of Islam as run by Louis Farrakhan, Black Muslims posted a letter written by Fard to Elijah Muhammad dated December 18, 1933, in which he kindly criticized him and gave him brotherly advice. The following are excerpts from this letter:

Dear Brother:

Here is a few line to let you know that I have received both of your letters one return mail and the other regular, also one from Kallatt; I have been just getting over the terrible mistake and unofficial movements that you been taken not only one that you went to Birmingham but different time you have done minus things with out saying any thing before. I have numbers of records of charges against you; but I not brought them to enforce knowing you have taken these steps with good attentions.⁹⁴

The low level of English command in this letter shows Fard's poor education. The letter is full of discrepancies, the least being that although he considered himself "God" and Elijah his "messenger," he still addressed Elijah with the expression 'Dear brother.'

The system of belief of the NOI went on teaching that by the coming of Fard to Detroit, "Allah" would have found his people and would punish the white devils for the evil they had done to them. This signals the end of civilization of the "Caveman" and of slavery and the preparation of hell to receive the "blue-eyed devils." To further illustrate this point, the following quotation is made from his Savior's Day speech later in 1973. Elijah Muhammad further spoke about the qualities and the circumstances of the coming of Fard. He said:

So His father had to prepare this man to come find us and then take us from our captors. We have to be taken. This is why that He, Himself, had to come. "Even I...", says Elijah Muhammad, "...I will go after them. I will search the earth until I find them." A great lover with all power and with the eye to search the earth to locate that lost one. We are a very beloved people, for God, Himself, to come and search the Earth and the Nations to find we that was lost. We are greatly beloved for God, Himself, to search the Earth for us. That's a beloved people.⁹⁵

Yet, the concept of "Allah" in the doctrine of the Nation of Islam presented him as a multiple anthropomorphic, "black" person. All blacks were said to belong to a divine nation, which represented God. Fard and later Elijah Muhammad presented God as a human, the Son of Man, as against the "spook" or "mystery" God of Christians, their slave-masters. They used the term spook for the purpose of mocking Christians. The other purpose was that Fard came at an age when science made considerable progress that led by the end of the 19th century to numerous conflicts with literal interpretations of the Bible.⁹⁶ Besides, the Christian dichotomization of the universe into the natural and the supernatural, contributed largely to make the idea that God does not interfere in the daily life of people, mainly the problems of the urban industrial society.

Not wishing to appear unscientific in the age of science as the many appellations attest to it such as *Christian Science Monitor*, Moorish Science Temple of America, Fard embraced the coattails of the prevailing scientific point of view. He sought to appear scientific to bestow credibility on his movement. He mocked at the God of Christians as being a "spook" or a "ghost" to show that Christianity was unscientific and, thus, not suitable as a religion.

This also implied that its God was not worth worshipping as he is far removed from the daily sufferings of his worshippers. Fard denied the existence of spirit, be it God or life in the Hereafter. He also attacked the Christian teachings of paradise after the bleak material life of African Americans.

According to the teachings of Fard, God was a “Black Man.” This is another anathema to Islamic belief. Still, Black Muslims pretended to be following the religion of Islam. God was presented as the “Supreme Black Man” among a mighty nation of divine “Black Men.”⁹⁷ Later in a television interview in 1959-the first one made with the NOI- Elijah Muhammad made this blasphemous concept of God clear.

Mr. Lomax: Now if I have understood your teachings correctly, you teach that all of the members of Islam are God, and that one among you is supreme, and that that one is *Allah*. Now have I understood you correctly?

Mr. Elijah Muhammad: That’s right.

Mr. Lomax: Now, you have on the other hand said that the devil is the white man-that the white man is a doomed race.

Mr. Elijah Muhammad: Yes.⁹⁸

Numerous statements by Elijah Muhammad consolidate this concept. Later, on the Saviour’s Day celebration of 1973, while explaining to the gathering followers the nature of the “Saviour” and his story he said:

... I want you to love Black because you are the universal God of all life. Regardless to what color it may be, originally it was made by Black man. There is no argument coming to you and me from the scientists of white people that you are not the original man of the Earth.⁹⁹

To Black Muslims, “Pure Black” meant “Absolute Perfection.”¹⁰⁰ They insisted on the thesis that *black* was the primogenitor of all existence. In this logic, the rest of colours were only shades of black. This led them to consider white as devoid of colour, and consequently imperfect and incomplete. They believed that only the Black Man was truly wise and creative. Besides the apparent inconsistencies in their doctrine, Fard who was considered as their God was not black. His only photo and the FBI descriptions of this person as well as the descriptions of many Black Muslims like Warith Deen Muhammad confirmed his image of being a white man.

According to the NOI teachings, Fard or the *Mahdi* or “God in Person” was the one who exposed the white man as being the white devil with the incapability of doing good. He told

his black followers of the exact date of birth of the white race and the name of the God, Yakub, who had made them six thousand years ago. He also told them the truth about the white devil that enslaved their forefathers in America. He instructed them as to which food to eat and which not like pork, the filthiest animal, and corn bread, the slave food. Fard also instructed them in science and astronomy, mathematics, the civilizations on other planets, and the knowledge of self. The Black Muslims' "God" had as best teaching the advice "Be Yourself."¹⁰¹

He also came to expose the great enemy of justice and righteousness before the entire world. His coming signalled the beginning of justice for the "Black Man." Since the "Caucasians" persisted in their injustice towards blacks, "God" had not come to bring about peace and love between the blacks and the devils, but rather to separate them. Moreover, he came to bring the right religion to the right state.¹⁰²

When Fard or "God in Person" disappeared mysteriously, Elijah Muhammad declared that he had returned to Mecca. He further indicated that he would return on the appropriate day to deliver his people from the yoke of the white man. Although Elijah Muhammad preached for decades that the "Savior" would return in person as he had promised him in the letter sent to him on December 19, 1933, he later changed his view and declared that the "Savior" was not going to come in person:

After He had given to me what He wanted to give to me in the Teachings and the work of preparing me for our people, then it was not necessary for Him to remain here among us. So He taken His leave, as it is said in Qur'an that the people are not worthy that God remain among them, but He makes a Messenger of that people that through that Messenger... And the Bible verifies such. .. He left and He gave me hints about His return. But now there is just as much prophecy that He will not return as there is of His returning. The Bible says He will send His angels and they will take care of the gathering of His people. **I don't expect Him to return in Person.** .. It is not really necessary, if He's going to send His own people, we refer to as angels, to gather the Believers of my people. **It's not necessary.**¹⁰³

VI. The Original Man

Another of the major themes in the eschatology of the Nation of Islam that is worth studying was the concept of the "Original Man." In his book on the doctrine of Black Muslims,¹⁰⁴ Elijah Muhammad declared that the so-called Negroes in America were blood-

descendants of the “Original Man.” Who was this? Was it Adam? Contrary to expectation, the answer is negative. Who then preceded Adam in creation? Elijah Muhammad said:

The original man, *Allah* has declared, is none other than the black man. The black man is the first and the last, maker and owner of the universe. From him came all brown, yellow, red and white people. By using a special method of birth control law the black man was able to produce the white race.¹⁰⁵

In this perspective, the “Black Man” was the first one created on this planet earth, and he was the first, the last, and the owner of the universe. To explain this pretension, light should be cast on the culture prevailing during the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. In his study of religious heterodoxy of the NOI,¹⁰⁶ Ernest Allen wrote that the biblical tradition taught that Mesopotamia had witnessed the beginning of humanity and civilization. Added to this, the world histories of the same period considered Western Asia or the Near Orient-Mesopotamia and Egypt- the veritable seed of universal culture. Moreover, the disembowelling of Egypt from Africa’s geographical mappings as well as the ignorance of any culture south of the *Sahel* banished Africa as the most backward and even savage continent in Western imagination. Thus, peoples inhabiting Africa were savages. Fard found in the prevailing culture in the USA pro-Asiatic and anti-African sentiments, which he elaborated to avoid. Hence, he developed a fictive Asiatic identity just as Noble Drew Ali had done before him. To escape the confusion of the stereotyped image of the “African savages,” he taught his followers in his catechism entitled *Lost Found Moslem Lesson No. 1* about their new identity in this way:

Question: Why does the devil call our people Africans? Answer: To make people of North America believe that the people on that continent are the only people they have and are all savage.¹⁰⁷

The avoidance of African identity here is clear. Now as concerns the “originality” or “precedence” of the “Black Man” over Adam, this was not devoid of a scientific basis. In its challenges to the biblical version of Adam and Eve’s creation, “scientific” findings affirmed the existence of a pre Adamite, Negroid race of an inferior stamp.¹⁰⁸ The “scientific” story went on that Adam, the “White,” was not the first man of creation, but rather the most perfect. Aware of this view, Fard embraced it in its generality while reversing the inferior values assigned to it and elevated the American blacks to the position of the first created men in the planet. For this “original people,” he found the name of the “Lost Tribe of Shabazz.” An example of this lost-found identity was the new name that Malcolm X would

adopt after his conversion to true Islam in 1964: *El Hajj* Malik Shabazz. Hence, the NOI taught that “all black men are Gods.”

In Islam, this is another outrage to the tenets of its faith and to the numerous affirmations in the *Qur'an* that God had created Adam from clay and endowed him with life. He then created Eve from Adam and enabled both of them to give birth to children who, in turn, bore more children to populate the earth. As a result, Adam (Peace Be on Him) became the father of all humanity. As to the creatures preceding him, there were angels and Satan. When God created Adam from clay, He ordered the angles to bow to Adam in recognition of *Allah's* perfect creation and all the angels did, except for Satan. When God asked the latter about the reason why he had objected to, he replied that he was better than Adam. For Satan, Adam was made of clay and Satan of fire, and fire being superior to clay, he could not bring himself down to bow to a creature inferior to him. This act is mentioned in *Surat Al Aaraf*, verses 11 and 12:

It is We Who created you and gave you shape; then We bade the angels bow down to Adam, and they bowed down; not so *Iblis*; he refused to be of those who bow down. (*Allah*) said: “What prevented thee from bowing down when I commanded thee?” He said: “I am better than he: Thou didst create me from fire and him from clay.”¹⁰⁹

Satan disobeyed God and became the vowed enemy of man to the last one on earth. *Allah* created Adam and made him his vicegerent (خليفة) on earth for the purpose of worshipping God and populating the earth. The following verse from *Surat Al Baqara* relates part of the story of the creation of Adam and the reaction of the angels and Satan to it:

Behold, they Lord said to the angels: “I will create a vicegerent on earth.” They said: “Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood whilst we do celebrate They praise and glorify Thy holy (name)?” He said: “I know what ye know not.”¹¹⁰

In the eschatology of the Nation of Islam, the blacks in America are blood-descendants of the “Original Man.” All other races are also descendants from him: brown, red, yellow and in the last line came the whites. But the most perfect is the black one and the blacker you are the better. The white man, therefore, is the more imperfect human, and he is incapable of doing good. He is even the “devil,” whom a mentally deranged black scientist, Yakub, “grafted” from a gene taken from a black man. This grafting experiment took 600 years and occurred after the great explosion that had happened on the moon. According to the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, the “Black Man” originally inhabited the moon. People at

that time were called “people of the moon.”¹¹¹ He even claimed that some tribes in Africa still called themselves people of the moon.

The story of their descent from the moon is that an explosion on the moon occurred sixty-six trillion years ago. At the origin of this catastrophe, there was a black scientist whose identity had never been revealed. He filled the moon with huge quantities of dynamites and caused the great conflagration leading to the separation of the earth from the moon. Minister James 3X¹¹² relates:

At one time this *earth* and the *moon* were one planet, but one of our greatest scientists became dissatisfied because he could not make the people speak the same language and so he decided to destroy all the people and caused a great explosion on the moon. The moon was blasted out, twelve thousand miles from the original orbit. The earth fell thirty-six thousand miles from the original orbit...The part that was called the moon capsized and the life on that part was destroyed. The other part –the earth–was able to retain its water and life.¹¹³

The “descent” of the “people of the moon” accompanied the fall of the earth. The name of that tribe was *Shabazz*, which upon stabilization of the earth started to explore it for suitable places to live in. Among these were the Nile Valley and the area that later became the Holy City of Mecca in Arabia.¹¹⁴

It is clear in this unscientific and un-Islamic claim that Fard was aware of the scientific formulations of his day that the explosion called Big Bang was the origin of creation. Regardless of scientific accuracy, he sought to make his doctrine look scientific and hence wrap his movement with acceptability to an audience losing credibility in Christianity.

Black Muslims insisted that black people did not originate in Africa and that it was the latter who founded the City of Mecca “after re-importation from the moon.” Elijah Muhammad told them that they travelled fifty thousand years ago into “what is now known as Africa. Then it was known as “South Asia.” The original people were pigmies who descended from the first people who had gone there.

In the true Islamic faith, there is no such story of people being in the moon then descending with the planet earth and then grafting the white man at the hands of a mad scientist. In the *Qur’an*, *Allah* tells that he created the heavens and the *earth* in six days, but

not the moon to blast the earth away from it later. Verse 7 of *Surat Houd* says in this translation:

He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six days-and His Throne was over the Waters-that He might try you, which of you is best in conduct. But if thou wert to say to them, "Ye shall indeed be raised up after death," the Unbelievers would be sure to say, "This is nothing but obvious sorcery!"¹¹⁵

Besides, in the *Qur'an* there is no mention of an explosion on the planet moon. Mecca was not built by black people either. All these claims are not logical and are inconsistent and irrelevant. However, the Black Muslims did not question their relevance. All they needed from these strange teachings were their regaining confidence, pride, and self-respect from them so as to be able to hew a way among whites. Fard and Elijah Muhammad succeeded with these teachings to make Black Muslims in America believe they were superior to whites. It was a reversal of the long-standing tradition of white supremacy. To topple white supremacy down, Fard simply created the myth of the "Original Man."

Their doctrine taught that all so-called Negroes were Muslims by nature whether they were aware of it or not. The task of advising and teaching blacks that they were "Original" lay at the responsibility of "Messenger Elijah Muhammad," who had been "sent from the face of God"¹¹⁶ for this mission in the "Wilderness of North America" as well as that of his followers. When they come to understand that they are Muslims they will embrace this religion heart and soul. Furthermore, according to Elijah Muhammad, Christ himself was a Muslim and some of his parables refer to the so-called Negroes such as the Lost Sheep, the Prodigal Son and the Raising of Lazarus.¹¹⁷ The "Black Man" is good, religious, and "by nature divine."

In Islam, supposing that the "Black Man" is good and religious is acceptable, because all people are created equal, regardless of colour, and the best ones are those who are the most pious Muslims. The *Qur'an* proves this in verse 13 from *Surat Al-Hujurat*:

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of *Allah* is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And *Allah* has full knowledge and is well-acquainted (with all things).¹¹⁸

From a true Islamic angle, the statement that Christ (PUH) was a Muslim is right, but not in the sense Elijah Muhammad meant it. He was a prophet, who like all prophets and

messengers without exception, called to the Unity of God. All of them taught that God was One and called people to worship Him alone. In verse 6 from *Surat As-Saf*, *Allah* says:

And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: "O children of Israel! I am the Messenger of *Allah* (sent) to you, confirming the law (which came) before me, and giving Glad Tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad. "But when he came to them with clear signs they said, "This is evident sorcery!"¹¹⁹

Jesus had nothing to do with the "Black Muslims" of Elijah Muhammad who were anathema to Islam and were damaging its image and distorting its reality in America. Later, during the late 1950s and the 1970s, Americans came to associate Islam with the one pretended by the "Nation of Islam." This was misleading to people who ignored Islam in North America.

Furthermore, Elijah Muhammad taught that when the whole world knew the true identity and importance of the "Original Man," the wars would stop worldwide. By that time, the world would have understood that the earth belonged to the "Black Man," the first, last, and the creator of the universe and its owner as well. When people knew to whom the world belonged, they would recognize this right and would no longer make pretensions to it.¹²⁰ "God," in the person of W. D. Fard, would destroy the white man in America, and the "Black Man" would become the ruler of the earth.

This is inadmissible in the true Islamic faith. The universe belongs to God the Almighty, who created it and will inherit it. God says in *Surat Al Maeda*, verse 120:

To *Allah* doth belong the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is therein, and it is He Who hath power over all things.¹²¹

The Black Man did not create the earth and did not "make" the white man. The white man is not a devil, but rather a man like all other human beings. *Allah* created them all from one soul and no human is able to create another one. The *Qur'an* is clear on this point. Verse 1 of *Surat E-Nissaa* reads:

O mankind ! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single Person, created, of like nature, his mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women...¹²²

In the true Islamic belief, to say that the black man created the white man or any other race is sheer blasphemy to God. What the Black Muslims said on this subject is considered

setting partners (*shirk*¹²³ in Arabic) with God the Almighty. The *Qur'an* says that *Allah* shall not pardon those who set partners with Him. In *Surat E-Nissaa*, verse 48, God says:

Allah forgiveth not that partners be set up with Him; but He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth; to set up partners with *Allah* is to devise a sin most heinous indeed.¹²⁴

Allah, once more, confirms in the *Qur'an* that all human beings belonged originally to one single nation and only later did they become different. In *Surat Younus*, verse 19 the following can be read:

Mankind was but one nation, but differed (later). Had it not been for a Word that went forth before from thy Lord, their differences would have been settled between them.¹²⁵

God the Almighty will not bombard America for the sake of the followers of Elijah Muhammad and those of Louis Farrakhan after him. All these “prophecies” were dangerous pretensions and medleys of faith made by the NOI.

VII. The NOI Attitude towards Christianity¹²⁶

The attitude of the followers of Elijah Muhammad was hostile to Christianity for which they blamed the long-sufferings they had undergone since white Christians brought them in chains to the shores of the American continent. They associated it with the white man and slavery, and seemed unwilling to separate them or accept an association of the “Black Man” with the Christian faith. The relationship, then, was tinged with racist colours. According to Elijah Muhammad “Christianity is a religion organized and backed by the devils for the purpose of making slaves of black mankind.”¹²⁷ He then said about the Bible “The Bible is the graveyard of my poor people.” Such declarations showed the degree of rejection of Christianity. Any reunion with the latter faith was unexpected. They believed that the “Black Man” was Muslim by nature which totally contradicted Christianity that was a white man’s religion, and the latter being a devil. How could a Muslim and a devil meet?

The central myth of the NOI doctrine was that the “Black Man” was original, i.e., perfect, while the Christian white man was grafted from the brown germ of the “Black Man.” This meant he was imperfect and weak. On this dichotomy, the Black Muslims came to rest the fundamental premise on which they built their theory of black supremacy and white degradation. This can be found in the declarations of Elijah Muhammad like the one below:

Who are the white race...? Why are they white-skinned? Answer: *Allah* (God) said this is being due to grafting from the Original Black Nation, as the Black Man has two germs (two people in him) One

is black and the other brown. The brown germ is weaker than the black germ. The brown germ can be grafted into its last stage, and the last stage is white. A scientist by the name of Yakub discovered this knowledge...6,645 years ago, and was successful in doing this job of grafting after 600 years of following a strict and rigid birth control law.¹²⁸

He saw this experiment as a brilliant scientific accomplishment that had, however, a nefarious side effect: the peopling of the world with “blue-eyed devils.” The “made” whites were of low physical and moral stamina. As athletes, blacks generally surpassed whites in performance. And as to morals, the white men were the only race that led millions of their kind to gas chambers in the Second World War, exploded atomic bombs on other people, and transported thousands in trains to lynch them. At the same time, they served women and children cokes and ice cream on the way to their slaughter. It was the white Christians who almost exterminated the Indians in America. Elijah Muhammad further vilified the white race by describing it as:

The human beast-the serpent, the dragon, the devil, and Satan-all mean one and the same; the people or race known as the white or Caucasian race, sometimes called the European race.¹²⁹

Moreover, on this point in the eschatology of Black Muslims, the white devils were given six thousand years to rule the planet earth. This period expired in the start of the First World War. Their period of grace would long only about time to allow the chosen people (blacks) to resurrect from mental death caused by the white man. Elijah Muhammad, the “Messenger of *Allah*” and spiritual Leader of the Lost-Found Nation of Islam in the West, whose duty was to resurrect the mentally- dead blacks, set the period of grace at seventy years.¹³⁰

During their long reign, the white devils deceived the black nations of the earth, killed them, set one against another and corrupted them. In brief, they did every evil thing to them. Yet, they forced the blacks to confess that they loved them, which was not true. When the white Christians stole the blacks from their home in Africa, they enslaved them and consolidated this bondage by erasing their names to eradicate their identity. They nullified their language, Arabic, to destroy their cultural continuity and omitted their religion in order to deprive them of God’s protection. They changed their names to hide them from their own kind. The result of this process was a total alienation of blacks from their cultural heritage, which was necessary for them to know themselves to win back their freedom and dignity.

Elijah Muhammad taught that the Christian religion remained the most important stratagem for the white man to maintain blacks in slavery. He gave the slaves the “poison book” and forced them to join the “slave religion,” which instructed them to love their oppressors and persecutors. Christianity instructed them that it was the will of God to be a slave for the white man and to obey him.¹³¹ As Malcolm X explained before his conversion to true Islam, the black man was introduced to Christianity while a slave, and it was Christianity that taught him about Jesus.

Malcolm X went on in his reasoning that “...Christianity is the white man’s religion.”¹³² And that “it is the most segregated institution in America.” He attacked the practitioners of this faith on the grounds of their immorality by supplying a list of criminals and pointing out that they were “all Christians.” During the Birmingham crisis¹³³, Minister James X made a devastating indictment on Christianity by showing pictures of white churchgoers stopping black Christians from getting into churches. He also presented a picture showing blacks praying on the steps of the church while whites stood near them with fists balled up.¹³⁴ Minister James X of the NOI even confessed that “all of us were once in the church and we did everything evil.” Malcolm X in one of his sermons confessed the same thing while his audience acquiesced:

Malcolm X : This white devil is responsible for all the dope and prostitution you see here among us.

Audience : That’s right.

Malcolm X : He has filled us with immorality.

Audience : All praise due to *Allah*.

Malcolm X : He has so confused us that our community is filled with addicts, thieves, and prostitutes.

Audience : That’s right.

Malcolm X : And you will notice that these are Christians who are dealing in dope and prostitution. And you and I know this is true because when we were Christians we used dope.

Audience : Yes .

Malcolm X : We lied.

Audience : Yes.

Malcolm X : We stole.

Audience : Yes.

Malcolm X : We were unfaithful to our wives.

Audience : Yes.

Malcolm X : We did everything antisocial and immoral.

Audience : That’s right.

Malcolm X : But now that we know who God is, now that we have found *Allah*-our original true God... We have cleaned ourselves up.

Audience: All praises due to *Allah*.¹³⁵

The Black Muslims used Christian ethics to make judgment on the validity of Christianity. On the other hand, they suspected the Bible that they said was dedicated to a white man, King James, not to God.¹³⁶ More daringly, Elijah Muhammad said about it that:

...it makes God guilty of an act of adultery by charging Him with being the father of Mary's baby; again it charges Noah and Lot with drunkenness and Lot begetting children by his daughter. What a poison book!¹³⁷

Elijah Muhammad further charged Christianity that "it has caused more bloodshed than any other combination of religions. Its sword is never sheathed."¹³⁸

As to the white man and Islam, the former leader of the NOI indicated that Islam sent a number of prophets among whom, there were Moses and Jesus to call whites to the brotherhood of Islam. Nonetheless, they refused it because their very nature was evil and could not love nonwhites. They felt ashamed to call them brother or sister even in their religion, Christianity.

The black Christian priest was not spared the anger upon white Christians. He was used by the whites to keep the so-called Negroes under control by lying to them about enduring the hardships and misery of this life under the foot of whites for paradise in the Hereafter. The black priest was accused of teaching his people meekness and turning the other cheek to the slave-master, not to protect themselves as all creatures do instinctively. He urged them to fight the white man's overseas enemies, but upon returning home, they were deprived of manhood. Worse, they were made to wait patiently for their murder at the hands of the white Christian devil. Thus, the black clergy were considered as a wholesale deliverer of their black fellows in their fervent search of ingratiating with whites. The black clergy were also a greatest hindrance to the progress of their people.

Moreover, Black Muslims accused black clergy south and north that they prostituted themselves to whites in return for personal recognition above their followers. A revealing event was the "heroic deeds" of the black clergy, which pushed the students to sit in lunch counters in the South, exposing them to the brutality of the white man while they kept away. When the sit-ins ended, they rushed in to take the lead of the movement and proclaim it. To substantiate this stand, the NOI cited an article in a Negro newspaper that reported that

certain members of the local clergy displayed a shameful cowardice and ingratitude towards the students who effectively sat in lunch counters. They took credit for desegregating five lunch counters, though they did not participate in the sit-ins. When the hard work of the brave students was done, “the ministers, on top secret invitation from the store managers, crept downtown to “negotiate.” In this way, they helped the store managers ignore the students. Now, after all the hard, dangerous work [had] been done, the ministers have stolen credit for the students’ successful work.”¹³⁹

Black Muslims thought that black priests developed their reprehensible character from their desire to win acceptance by the white churches and other religious organizations. Hence, they were more zealous to preach what they had been told they were Christian principles than their white counterparts. Black Muslims accused the white man of not believing in perfecting himself morally when all the while he required the so-called Negro to be “past-perfect.”

VIII. The Moral Code

Black Muslims’ daily activities were organized around an exhaustive and strict moral code. Contrary to expectation, they did not associate this behaviour privately or socially with any religious principle. The reason thereof was that their eschatology did not recognize any life in the Hereafter.¹⁴⁰ Nothing was expected to be obtained from their moral behaviour in terms of gaining God’s favour for accessing to paradise as are things in the true Islamic belief. In Islam, for example, if you fulfil charity or save someone from danger or you refrain from drinking alcohol, you expect God to reward you in the Hereafter with paradise. But in the false Islam of the Nation of Islam, there was no such a belief. The conduct was aimed to itself for the realization of the daily private and social concerns. It was the lifestyle of the “Black Man” in his quality as the creator and ruler of the universe. Even the daily rituals that Black Muslims performed were associated with their moral code, not with God’s rewarding. As to prayer, for instance, they performed a sort of ablution which looked in a way or another like the true Islamic ablution (*Wudu*) then faced the *Kibla* in Mecca and performed. Yet, it was not a true Islamic prayer, for it was only a *Dua* (imploration).¹⁴¹ They

prayed five times a day, at sunrise, noon, mid-afternoon, sundown, and before retiring, and a sixth time if they rose at night.¹⁴²

This moral code also applied to their diet. Pork and corn bread were forbidden. Food that slaves used to eat in the South was not allowed, for the NOI believed this was slave food, and in Islam there were no slaves. All Black Muslims were free and equal. The food had to be very fresh and hog was considered as a filthy and poison food that was not to be eaten by any race, except the white one.

As to the hog, a Black Muslim minister exposed the reasons why it was forbidden in the Nation of Islam. He argued that it was a dirty, brutal, quarrelsome, greedy, ugly, foul, a scavenger that thrived only on filth. It even kills its young ones and eats them. Then, the minister explained the analogy with the white man by indicating that the white slave-masters fathered a million of half-blacks during slavery and sold them off in the market.¹⁴³ In addition, tobacco was not allowed and so was overeating. Black Muslims who gained overweight got fined and they continued paying it until they reduced it. They were also enjoined to get one meal per day in order to escape physical and mental sluggishness associated with overeating.

The activities held in temples such as the meetings of Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday were also viewed as part of their morality. Members were required to attend at least two meetings a week, but if they failed to attend they got punished. If a member secured permission in advance, he was allowed to be absent, but this was valid only in extreme cases. Moreover, in temple activity, the members were enjoined to “fish for the dead,” that is to call other blacks in the streets to join the movement. The “dead” here means blacks, who had not been converted to the pseudo-Islam of the NOI. Those who failed to contribute to the converting process got punished.

Black Muslims observed a puritanical sexual relationship, which could be exercised only with the spouse, and any violation was met with punishment from the Fruit of Islam (FOI). Marriage had to be among the group, and any relationship outside it was discouraged. If a

member wished to divorce his spouse he was frowned at, but he ended any way by getting the permission to do so. Muslim women were strictly forbidden from staying with another man if he were not the husband. Women were punished if they wore revealing dress or provocative cosmetics. The NOI drew clear lines of behaviour and social role for the two sexes. Males had to be alert to protect black women from any courtship of white men.

Another moral duty of the group was their devotion to regenerate criminals and other fallen people of the black race. In this, they had been successful. Elijah Muhammad boasted that his movement was able to “clean up the so-called Negroes” more than what all churches and social agencies could do. As Minister Malcolm X would declare, any one who joined the NOI would undergo a considerable positive change in behaviour whatever his past criminal record might have been. Dope addicts, alcoholics, thieves, gamblers, hustlers, and law breakers-in brief, all sorts of criminals stopped their habits when they joined the NOI and took on a good behaviour. Even hardened criminals were reformed. At prison, those black inmates who heard the teachings of Elijah Muhammad and joined him changed their criminal behaviour and became model prisoners far better than Christians at prison, be they white or black.

Black Muslims were supposed to behave in a way to benefit society. Men had to live with sobriety and dignity and to work hard and be honest with all. They were required to obey all authority even that of the corrupt white man until the Black Nation triumphed and returned to the domination of the earth. Women were asked to keep away from the bad habits of white women. They were taught to be modest, thrifty and also to obey their husbands.

Black Muslims were recommended to be self-reliant and mutually responsible. Hence, they were invited to think for themselves, to work for themselves and to stop begging the white man.

IX. Attitude towards the Afterlife

In true Islam, all Muslims have the belief that there is a heavenly life after this worldly one. This is evidenced in verse 56 from *Surat Al-Bakara*:

Then We raised you up after your death; ye had the chance to be grateful.¹⁴⁴

It is one of bliss in paradise for those who did good, pious deeds in this life according to the injunctions of God and Prophet Mohammed Ibn Abdellah (PBUH). If not, it is then one of punishment and torture for those who did not follow Islam or disobeyed God and his Prophet and went on committing sin in this life. The *Qur'an* says in verse 122 from *Surat An-Nissaa* as to those Muslims who do good deeds in this life:

But those who believe and do deeds of righteousness, We shall soon admit them to Gardens – with rivers flowing beneath –to dwell therein forever. *Allah's* promise is the truth, and whose word can be truer than *Allah's* ?¹⁴⁵

Again verse 4 from *Surat Younes* tells about the reward of every person in the Hereafter:

To Him will be your return, of all of you. The Promise of *Allah* is true and sure. It is He Who beginneth the process of creation, and repeateth it, that He may reward with justice those who believe and work righteousness; but those who reject Him will have draughts of boiling fluids, and a penalty grievous, because they did reject Him.¹⁴⁶

Belief in the Hereafter is a pillar of the Islamic faith (*Iman*) along with the belief in the existence of God, the angels, the books revealed to other prophets like Abraham, David, Moses, Jesus, and Prophet Muhammed Ibn Abdellah (PBUH). Another pillar of faith is the belief in destiny¹⁴⁷, good or bad, i.e., many of the events such as accidents, wealth, poverty, illnesses, etc. are predestined for man, who cannot prevent them. But this was not the case with the Nation of Islam under Elijah Muhammad.

Though claiming to follow Islam, the Black Muslims did not believe in such pillars. To deny any of these fundamentals of the Islamic faith entails disbelief (*Kufr* in Arabic) and puts the person out of the religion of Islam. The *Qur'an* warns against those who deny these fundamental tenets of the Islamic faith. In *Surat An-Nissaa*, verse 136 the following is said:

O ye who believe! Believe in *Allah* and His Messenger and the scripture which He hath sent to His Messenger and the scripture which He sent to those before (him). Any who denieth *Allah*, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Day of Judgment, hath gone far, far astray.¹⁴⁸

The NOI denied them all, a fact that put it automatically out of the religion of Islam. In this religion, all the dead arise on the Resurrection Day¹⁴⁹ to be judged by God for all their beliefs and deeds in the earthly life and then they are rewarded either Paradise or hell. None will be excluded. *Allah* says in verse 56 from *Surat Al-Baqara* as to resurrection:

Then We raised you up after your death ; ye had the chance to be grateful.¹⁵⁰

And again *Allah* says in the *Qur'an* as to resurrection and judgment, reward, and punishment in verse 5 from *Surat Ar-Raad*:

If thou dost marvel (at their want of faith), strange is their saying: "When we are (actually) dust, shall we indeed then be in a creation renewed?" They are those who deny their Lord! They are those round whose necks will be yokes (of servitude): they will be Companions of the fire, to dwell therein (for aye!).¹⁵¹

Unlike the Islamic conception of the resurrection and life in the Hereafter, Elijah Muhammad claimed the non-existence of any form of life after death:¹⁵²

Christianity speaks of Heaven, which it can neither define nor prove to exist. That there is life after death is disagreeable to human nature...¹⁵³

To begin with, this statement contradicts one made previously in which he claimed that W. D. Fard had told him about his identity and his mission, and that part of it was to show his followers the Hereafter:

I asked him, "Who are you, and what is your real name?" He said, "I am the one that the world has been expecting for the past 2,000 years. "I said to him again, "What is your name?" He said, "My name is *Mahdi*; I am God, I came to guide you into the right path that you may be successful and see the hereafter." He described the destruction of the world with bombs, poison gas, and finally fire that would consume and destroy everything of the present world.¹⁵⁴

In this quotation, the mention of the word "hereafter" is clear. How come that Elijah Muhammad, claiming to be the Messenger of Fard "God in Person," would ignore it? This is a clear contradiction to his own dogma. God says in the *Qur'an* as to those who take this life lightly and limit it to this world in verse 115 from *Surat Al-Mo'minoun*:

Did ye then think that We have created you in jest, and that ye would not be brought back to Us (for account)?¹⁵⁵

Elijah Muhammad claimed that Resurrection had already started and God was among people in this world.¹⁵⁶ He stated that this event meant that *Allah* was the only Eternal Being, and man could not be immortal like *Allah*. To him, it did not mean the arising of the dead from the grave for judgment. It rather meant that time had come for the Negro to get justice, and for those who had lived in ignorance of themselves, their history, culture, language, religion, God, and nation to know themselves and all these things.

This teaching is contrary to true Islam. Consequently, the "Nation of Islam" found itself out of the fold of Islam and not a part of the true Islamic nation that includes all Muslims worldwide.

The Hereafter was, they maintained, the end of the present “spook” civilization. This would happen after God destroyed this world along with the authority of the white man. Black Muslims looked forward to “living under a ruler and government of righteousness after the destruction of the unrighteous.”¹⁵⁷ By the unrighteous they meant whites.

In the eschatology of Black Muslims, the latter begin to live in the Hereafter and Resurrection as soon as they receive God’s teachings and know themselves. Once this is done, their lives get a moral and spiritual transformation accompanied with an improvement of their health and material condition.

Allah tells such ignorant and unbelieving people that the resurrection is possible and will take place when *Allah* wants to. The coming verse No.49 from *Surat Al-Israa* about the likes of these people who wondered in disbelief:

They say: “What! When we are reduced to bones and dust, should we really be raised up (to be) a new creation?”¹⁵⁸

In another place in the *Qur’an*, *Allah* depicts those who deny the Resurrection and portrays what will happen to them on the Day of Judgment in verses 29-31 from *Surat Al-Anaam*:

And they (sometimes) say: “There is nothing except our life on this earth, and never shall we be raised up again.” If thou couldst but see when they are confronted with their Lord! He will say: “Is not this the truth?” They will say: “Yea, by our Lord!” He will say: “Taste ye then the Penalty, because ye rejected Faith.” Lost indeed they are who treat it as falsehood that they must meet *Allah*, until on a sudden the Hour is on them, and then say: “Ah! Woe into us that we took no thought of it;” for they bear their burdens on their backs, and evil indeed are the burdens that they bear.¹⁵⁹

Allah contradicts in the *Qur’an* what people like Elijah Muhammad pretended that there was no paradise and no hell. Those believers who believe in God and live a life in conformity with the teachings of Prophet Mohammed, the Seal of the prophets (PBUH), *Allah* promises them paradise in verse 122 from *Surat E-Nissaa*:

But those who believe and do deeds of righteousness, We shall soon admit them to Gardens-with rivers flowing beneath-to dwell therein forever. *Allah’s* promise is the truth, and whose word can be truer than *Allah’s*?¹⁶⁰

What Elijah Muhammad said about paradise and hell being here on earth as only two conditions according to which the Black Muslims would live after the Day of Judgment is anathema to the tenets of the true Islamic faith. Besides, his denial of the afterlife is not in

compliance with Islamic teachings. This was a reaction to the miserable conditions that blacks lived in the USA without receiving help from the Church.

The Church encouraged them to obey their slave-masters and be patient, promising them enjoyment of a blissful life in the Hereafter. As a reaction, Elijah Muhammad wanted his heaven to be here “sweet here not sweet by-and-by” as he used to repeat during his lifetime. Furthermore, the culture of his age portrayed God in the Christian belief as being aloof from his creation, and not interfering in their daily life to lessen their plight.

In addition to these un-Islamic beliefs, the NOI did not recognize any of the basic fundamentals of the true Islamic religion. The *Hadith* of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), illustrates them:

Islam is built on five (pillars): testifying that there is no God but *Allah* and that Mohammed is His Prophet, performing prayer, offering *zakat* (charity), fasting (the month of) *Ramadhan* and doing the *Hajj* (pilgrimage) for those who are able to do it¹⁶¹.

By ignoring the basis of Islam, the NOI was out of it, a fact that deprived it of any claim to this religion, let alone to speak in its name as Elijah Muhammad used to do. At a certain time, he claimed that he was the representative of Islam in North America.

As to the authenticity of the “Islam” of the NOI, the Italian Muslim Association would later rule that members of the Nation of Islam under the leadership of Louis Farrakhan were to be excommunicated, as a consequence of their unorthodox beliefs. Although the study of the NOI up to now examines this movement under the leadership of Fard then Elijah Muhammad from 1930 to 1951, the *fetwa* (ruling) by The Board of the *Ulema* of the Italian Muslim Association concerns the new NOI as revived by Louis Farrakhan in 1978. However, passages from the *fetwa* are here applied to both NOIs, since they hold the same beliefs. For notice, Louis Farrakhan, as will be seen later, did only revive the (old) Nation of Islam. The Board of the *Ulema* of the Italian Muslim Association under the presidency of *Sheikh* Ali Moallim Hussein would issue a *fetwa* on March 7, 1998 against the NOI. The board would rule that rejecting an Islamic ruling was like rejecting them all, and that missing an element of faith was like missing them all. This means, in other words, that if the NOI rejected a single pillar of Islam, it was to be considered out of Islam:

...During the past few months a group active in the United States that calls itself the “Nation of Islam” has received world wide press coverage. Its leader, Louis Farrakhan, met Islamic scholars and heads of state, introducing himself as a representative of American Muslims. Some brothers of ours asked this Board: “Can Mr. Farrakhan and his followers be accepted as ‘Muslim’ in the sense that this word is defined by the *Shari’a* (Islamic Law?) After due examination of the matter, this Board answers: ... The consensus of Islamic jurists is that rejecting a single *‘hukm’* (ruling) is like rejecting them all, and that missing an element of faith is like missing them all.¹⁶²

This is as regards people who deny consciously certain pillars of Islam such as prayer, fasting *Ramadhan*, etc. Since the NOI taught that “God in person” was incarnated in a certain Fareed Muhammad¹⁶³ and that the latter chose Elijah Muhammad as his “messenger,” this was a contradiction to the teaching of Islam that there was only one God, who did not manifest Himself in a human form. This contradicted the teaching of the *Qur’an* that Mohammed (PBUH) was the last Prophet as well. Any one who followed these teachings of the NOI was an unbeliever. The Board said:

Regarding the “Nation of Islam,” their official doctrine is that *Allah* appeared in the form of a human being named Fareed Muhammad, and that this “incarnation of God” chose another man, called Elijah Muhammad, as his prophet. This is a clear contradiction of the Monotheistic faith (*tawhid*), and of the *Qur’anic* teaching according to which Muhammad (Blessings and Peace upon him) is the Seal of the Prophets. That is enough to say that everyone who belongs to the “Nation of Islam” is not, ipso facto, a Muslim, but an unbeliever.”¹⁶⁴

The Board would then advise that Muslims must declare this truth, and that each Muslim who keeps silent while Louis Farrakhan declares that he was a “Muslim leader” is sinning. Accordingly, all Islamic acts performed by members of the NOI were null and void, and had to be redone after repentance from the untrue faith of the Black Muslims. The Board said:

...Listening to Farrakhan being called a “Muslim leader” is sinning...Every marriage between a Muslim and a member of the “Nation of Islam” is null and void, and whoever, after becoming a member of this organization wants to return to Islam, must repent and be re-converted. In case he was married, he must re-celebrate his wedding; in case he performed the pilgrimage, he must perform it again...¹⁶⁵

This *fetwa* clearly indicates that the pretended “Islamic doctrine” of the NOI was wrong. This was not the only unorthodoxy in its system of belief. Elijah Muhammad still made numerous statements that were anathema to Islam, while still calling himself a “Muslim leader.” This could be found in the next subsection when he was “teaching” his followers about the Day of Judgment.

X. The Day of Judgment

In his book *Message to the Black Man in America*, under the above heading, Elijah Muhammad indicated that “Today is the day in which the God of Justice (*Allah*) is judging between man and man and nation and nation.”¹⁶⁶ The Day of Judgment had already been announced and was supposed to occur with the destruction of the world some time before the year 2000. Elijah Muhammad suggested the year 1970 for the “destruction of the world” but indicated, on the other hand, that only God knew the exact day. The prophesied destruction was partial. Only the “Caucasian” race and their religion, Christianity, were supposed to be destroyed. Although the year is 2007, the “white devils” and their religion are still doing well. No fires, no poison, and no bombing befell the white Americans, except the those of Septemebr 11, 2001. These have nothing to do with the “prophecy”. “The Mother Plane,” as the Black Muslims interpreted the biblical vision of the Ezekiel Wheel, did not appear in the sky to shell the white men and protect the “Black Men” in the War of Armageddon as mentioned in the Book of Revelation. Rather, a crucial turning point in the history of the Nation of Islam would take place. On February 25, 1975, Elijah Muhammad passed away and his most doctrinally opposing son, Warith Deen Muhammad, took the lead of the movement. What he did was generally radical to his father’s teachings. He taught his followers that the “Islam” his father had been teaching them was wrong. W. D. Fard was not “god-in-person” but rather a suspicious human, and Elijah Muhammad was “not a messenger of *Allah*” for the last messenger was Mohammed Ibn Abdellah of Arabia (PBUH). His followers were asked to correct their entire system of belief. As a result, tens of thousands converted to true Islam and became *Sunni* Muslims. The latter were not demanding separation from the white man or claiming Black Supremacy. They did not seek to destroy the whites or erect their state on the soil of the USA, but rather integrate with their community and lead a normal life. Eventually, they disbanded and became simply Muslims at large. No organization do they have now. The *Bilalians*¹⁶⁷, as they were called at a time, became part of the Muslim community worldwide, made of blacks, whites, red people, yellow people-in short- all colours. In true Islam, there is no consideration of race or colour and all Muslims are brothers. This is evidenced by the *Qur’an* and the *Sunnah*. In *Surat Al Hujurat*, *Allah* says in verse No. 13:

O Mankind! Most certainly, it is We (God almighty) who have Created you all from a single (pair) of a male and a female, And it is We who have made you into nations and tribes, that ye may

recognize each other. Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of *Allah* is (he who is) the most righteous of you.¹⁶⁸

Thus, the noblest or the best in the sight of *Allah* is not some one who is black, white, red, rich, powerful and the like, but rather one who is a Muslim and most righteous. This is the sole measuring device by which *Allah* evaluates his human creatures.

Furthermore, in Elijah Muhammad's conception of Resurrection, people would be gathered under the crescent, sun, moon and the stars- the banner of the NOI. The "man of sin" would be exposed. Not all the people would be caught in this holocaust with the white devils. Only 144,000 of the so-called Negroes among the followers of Elijah Muhammad would be saved.¹⁶⁹ However, his ministers, himself, and followers were doing their best to propagate the "message of Islam" to the biggest number of blacks possible. The eschatology of Black Muslims went on that it was not until 1914 that the "twelve religious leaders of the East" knew about the locating of the lost-found brothers in the "wilderness of North America." Then, they decided to bring them back to their own. This decision, nonetheless, was not easy to execute, as one of the religious leaders made a condition to this. This "religious leader" insisted on their conversion to "Islam" first and being taught the knowledge of their own. This condition delayed their return and gave the world a respite so that the so-called Negroes in America would be able to know "Islam" and convert to it. As a consequence, the Judgment Day originally set for 1914 was postponed.¹⁷⁰

Minister James 3X explained that the judgment of the world would be in two stages. First, the spiritual sounding of the trumpet would come and that was what Elijah Muhammad was doing; second, the Day of the Apocalypse would follow. This would be gradual in order to be fair and to allow the righteous to escape destruction. People would be given ten days' advance notice to decide which side to take. Once this period was over, "the last trumpet will be a siren coming from a plane in the sky." It would shake the earth and everybody would hear it. "The plane will drop pamphlets written in Arabic and English," offering people ten days' respite to make their choice to get out of hell. A number of people would be put at strategic points to ask the so-called Negroes which direction they wanted to take. Then, they

would be directed to the destination of their choice. Nobody would worry about taking his property with him; all would be left behind.

Elijah Muhammad did not neglect in his lectures to point out the identity of the white Americans' judge on the Day of Judgment. He said that it was the "son of man" who was no other than the "Almighty God to Whom Praise is Due Forever, in the Person of Master Fard Muhammad"¹⁷¹ before whom all nations of the earth would be gathered:

Here we have, that before Him shall be gathered all Nations. All the Nations of the earth, today... We bear witness that all the Nations today is now gathered before God, Almighty. Who shall judge us? The Son of Man. Who is the Son of Man? He's not a spirit. HE IS A MAN, HIMSELF! ... I want you who has been taught that the Son of Man is some kind of spook or the coming of the Son of Man is spooky and not flesh and blood, or matter, that we can see and feel, you have been made to believe other-than the real truth. Almighty God to Whom Praise is Due Forever, in the Person of Master Fard Muhammad. .. He's part of the two. He's part of the people, Whom He comes to judge and to destroy. And He's part of the people that He comes to save. This gives Him that particular good and merciful love for that people, the Aboriginal people of Whom He is part of. It gives Him that anger and that warlike spirit and that merciful like spirit of the enemy, whom He's part of.¹⁷²

The above quotation of Elijah Muhammad's lecture shows the deviation of the creed of the "Nation of Islam" from true Islamic beliefs. Firstly, *Allah* Almighty will judge humans in the Hereafter, not in this life and not now as the NOI claimed. *Allah* is the creator and ruler of the universe, the first and the last and not a human being as Elijah Muhammad pretended. No human is able to see God physically and He cannot be grasped or seen. In the Holy *Qur'an*, verse 103 from *Surat Al-Anaam*, *Allah* says:

No vision can grasp Him. But His grasp is over all vision: He is above all comprehension, yet is acquainted with all things.¹⁷³

What Black Muslims taught about this subject was anathema to true Islam. It was a blasphemy that God does not forgive. It is association of other God's creatures with the Almighty God. If a true Muslim conforms to the true Islamic teachings that God enjoined Muslims to do to escape hell and enter paradise, then this Muslim still associates other creatures with God the Almighty, He does not forgive him this association. He will have to repent from this *shirk* and ask God for pardon.

Black Muslims attempted to prove this improper, apocalyptic approach by advancing evidence from the Scriptures, history, and the recent events. They would cite the decline of the European imperial power in Africa and Asia in the 1950s as well as the Bandung

Conference¹⁷⁴ and, the Accra Conference of Independent African States as proofs that changes were taking place for the benefit of the “Black Nation.” They took the unity process of black mankind that was taking place and the rapid propagation of Islam in Africa in the first half of the 20th century as well as the corruption of the Caucasian civilization as other proofs.¹⁷⁵ The Black Muslims took all these events as signs that this era is approaching its end.

The United States would be the region mostly exposed to destruction, for “*Allah*” had found his “Sacred Vessels” (the So-Called Negroes) there, and he wanted to make himself felt there most powerfully. America took them from their native lands to slavery, torture and drinking wine and whiskey. It went to the extreme in evil doing to blacks, a fact that made America deserve a doom like that of old Babylon¹⁷⁶, i.e., destruction. Those “Caucasians” in Europe would live longer than their counterparts in America. They would be judged in a later time.

As to the destruction of the world, Elijah Muhammad gave more details by saying that bombs, poison gas, and fire that would leave nothing of the white man’s civilization would effectuate it. *Allah* would send the “Mother Plane” to do the destroying job. According to him, its blueprint was in Mecca centuries ago and a copy was given to the Japanese from there. He described it by saying:

...I won’t go into the details here, but it is up there and can be seen twice a week; it is no secret. Ezekiel saw it a long time ago. It was built for the purpose of destroying the present world. *Allah* has hinted at plaguing the present world. *Allah* has also hinted at plaguing the present world with rain, snow, hail, and earthquakes.¹⁷⁷

This is how the Day of Judgement was taught in the Nation of Islam’s eschatology. It would end up by the destruction of the civilization of the white man of which the rule would come to a definite end, leaving the place for the “Black Man” to restore his property of the universe to run it with justice. The “Black Men” would feel glad and happy and would live their paradise here on earth, for they did not believe in an Afterlife.

After the final judgment, the redemption of the “Black Nation” would come, which would include all the races, except the white one. The day would dawn on a New World, here on

earth, under the government of the chosen righteous blacks, who had been members of the Nation of Islam. History would culminate with the advent of the New World and it would be an unprecedented glory for the “Black Nation.” The black men would have an “eternal rule” over the world with the guidance of “*Allah*.” There would be eternal peace and happiness.¹⁷⁸ The Day of Judgment in Islam is not as described by the Black Muslims as happening in the USA for the destruction of the white Americans and the redemption of 144,000 followers of Elijah Muhammad. In Islam, it signifies the end of this world and the beginning of another one in the Hereafter. *Allah* will gather all human beings since the creation of the world, after they are all dead, and judge them. Then, they will either be rewarded with paradise or punished with hell. A few characteristics of the Day of Judgment (*Kiama*, in Arabic)¹⁷⁹ are illustrated from the Holy *Qur’an*. *Allah* says in *Surat Ibrahim*, verse 48:

One day the Earth will be changed into a different Earth, and so will be the Heavens, and (men) will be marshalled forth, before *Allah*-, the One, the Irresistible.¹⁸⁰

It is clear from this *Qur’anic* verse that there is no mention of the USA or the white or black men. Besides, in the following verse 99 from *Surat Al-Kahf* *Allah* says:

On that day We shall leave them to surge like waves on one another; the trumpet will be blown, and We shall collect them all together.¹⁸¹

Furthermore, the *Qur’an* describes the horrors of that day in many verses and what happens to those who do not believe in it. *Allah* says in verse 30 from *Surat Al-Anaam* the following:

If thou couldst only see when they are confronted with their Lord! He will say: “Is not this the truth?” They will say: “Yea, by our Lord!” He will say: “Taste ye then the Penalty, because ye rejected Faith.”¹⁸²

In brief, what the NOI taught about the Day of Judgment was different from that of Islam. In the latter, there is no mention of the Wheel of Ezekiel or using poison gas, or bombing. In addition, the *Qur’an* does not teach that the blacks would be the only ones to redeem and that they would rule the earth with peace and happiness.

XI. Message to the Black Man in America

The NOI system of belief did not end with the previous heterodoxy about the Day of Judgment. More of the sort could be found in *Message to the Black Man in America*, authored by Elijah Muhammad to explain issues of faith. This book sums up the NOI system of belief. In it, he exposed matters of “Islamic faith,” which, when examined from an Islamic point of view, are not in accordance with it. This subsection attempts to prove the falsity of those “teachings,” since the three preceding theses written on this subject in the USA did not examine them from this angle.

Although Elijah Muhammad began his teachings with the definition, meaning, and principles of Islam in accordance with the right teachings of Islam, he then undermined them all by “interpreting” them to suit the NOI racist philosophy. For example, he taught that Islam was a “universal message of brotherhood and peace,” but later in his same lecture, he claimed that it was destined to liberate the “Black Man” in the “Wilderness of North America” from his oppressor, the “white devil.” In fact, Islam is not for the blacks in America alone. He also claimed that Islam was not destined to the white man, as this one was a devil, incapable of embracing this religion of peace, love, and brotherhood. The white man, he taught, was by nature too proud to accept equality and brotherhood with the “Black Nation.” It is the nation which included all non-white races such as blacks, Arabs, Indians, Chinese, and so on. In his book *Message to the Black Man in America*, under the heading *What is Islam?* Elijah Muhammad gave the following definition:

Briefly, “Islam” means entire submission to the Will of *Allah* (God). It is, moreover, a significant name. Its primary significance is the making of peace, and the idea of “Peace” is the dominant idea in Islam.¹⁸³

In the above definition, he limited himself to the lexical definition of the Arabic term “Islam,” which means *submission, surrender, and obedience* to *Allah* and His will. Elijah Muhammad did not go beyond this incomplete defining of this religion.

Elijah Muhammad once more reverted to his black racist allegations when he wrote that the whole creation of *Allah* was of peace, except for the whites. According to his belief, they

were excluded from creation, as they were devils “made” by a mad black scientist, Yakub, who rebelled against *Allah* and did such an act to revenge from Him:

The entire creation of *Allah* (God) is of peace, not including the devils who are not the creation of *Allah* (God) but a race created by an enemy (Yakub) of *Allah*. Yakub rebelled against *Allah* and the righteous people and was cast out of the homes of the righteous into the worst part of our planet to live their way of life until the fixed day of their doom.¹⁸⁴

This black racist theory does not conform to Islam, for *Allah* told in the *Qur’an* that He created all humans from one soul and from it He caused the birth of the rest of the entire creation. White men were not cast out of the homes of righteous people. Islam is for all people on earth without regard to race, colour, property, birth, social status, or whatever other considerations. A Muslim is simply a Muslim, a worshipper of God and a brother to the entire Muslim community in the world. Thus, the teaching of Elijah Muhammad in this context was anathema to Islam. He wrote:

These enemies of *Allah* (God) are known at the present as the white race or European race, who are the sole people responsible for misleading nine-tenths of the total population of the black nation.¹⁸⁵

Elijah Muhammad accused the white race or the European race of being the enemies of *Allah* and blamed them for misleading nine-tenths of the non-white population of the world. In Islam, this allegation is incorrect, as there is no specific race that *Allah* considers His enemies. All those who worshipped God according to the teachings of their prophets like the Israelite of Old or the Christians who followed the original teachings of Jesus Christ (PUH) were good believers to be judged by *Allah* and rewarded according to their deeds in their earthly life.

Within the same text mentioned above, Elijah Muhammad further made another mistake. He explained the meaning of Islam to his followers and the public at large, which, gave a wrong image of Islam in the United States, as many Americans viewed it through the “model” of the NOI, be it the former or the latter (that of Louis Farrakhan). He said in the same book:

The followers or believers of Islam are over one-half billion people. Even among the infidels you will find many who confess Islam, although by nature they are against Islam.

He committed the error of assuming that even among the infidels there were those who confessed Islam, but were “by nature against” it. This is not Islamic. To consider white

Muslims as infidels just because they were white was racial prejudice on the part of Elijah Muhammad.

Following his reasoning about Islam, Elijah Muhammad ended with a conclusion about the nature of Islam that does not conform to this religion. In his central organ “*Muhammad Speaks*” newspaper, he wrote the following:

Islam has many significances to it. Islam is wisdom. Islam is guidance of God for Man. Islam is the only way of God. Islam is called a religion, although Islam is not a religion. Islam is referred to as a religion due to the many hundreds of various kinds of religions practiced today.¹⁸⁶

Thus, he concluded that Islam “is not a religion” and that it was referred to so, just because “many hundreds of various kinds of religions are practiced today.” He dismissed Islam as something that is not religion. Not to be forgotten, he claimed to be a “messenger” of Islam sent personally from “the face of God” by which he meant Wallace Dodd Fard, the ex-convict at the prison of San Quentin.

Although he claimed to be explaining Islam both to his followers as well as to the public at large, his lecturing drew rather on racism. He spent most of the teaching on vilifying and degrading the white man and weeping over the misery that the black man suffered in the USA at the hands of slave-masters than on “explaining Islam” as he pretended. The quotation below from *Muhammad Speaks* of July 17, 1970, shows that it is not the kind of religious teaching that Muslims are familiar with when their Islamic scholars dealt with any Islamic topic:

The Black Man has the right religion as there is no other religion that you can believe in, or read of, or know of, that has the truth of that religion backed by the universal order of things. Only Islam is backed by the universal order of things. This is why it takes much tricking and tempting of you, by the Devil to pull you away from Islam, once you began to believe in Islam. Once you begin to believe in Islam, it is very hard to change you. Many times, the weak Muslim will try to practice the evil of the devil, but he will not make a good actor as long as he knows Islam and is one of the believers of Islam.

The fact from an Islamic point of view is that Fard and Elijah Muhammad introduced a heretic system of belief and made their followers believe that it was Islam. Now that tens of thousands still adhere to this erroneous system of belief as the Nation of Islam of Louis Farrakhan and other splinter groups by the same name, *Sunni* Muslims will find it hard to eradicate this additional burden. It is difficult to convince those “Black Muslims,” who still

stick very tightly to the beliefs of the “Old Nation,” that what they believe and practise is not Islam. Even though they “blend” their beliefs with some of the real Islamic teachings, this is not acceptable. They have to choose either to be totally Muslims by forgetting what they learnt in the temples of the NOI and starting a correct Islamic education from the beginning- or to be non-Muslims. For blending the NOI pseudo-Islam with some of the *Sunni* Islam is still un-Islamic. To illustrate this point, that is the NOI of Farrakhan still adheres to beliefs anathema to Islam, a look at their website at www.noi.org/ illustrates the point. As an example, A. I. Palmer from the Society for Adherence to the *Sunnah*¹⁸⁷ quotes from the *Washington Post* (Sep. 18, 1995) that when Louis Farrakhan planned to organize his Million Man March of 1994, he claimed a “vision of being swept into a UFO that took him to a larger mothership.” While in the UFO, he claimed that he spoke to the late Elijah Muhammad and then was beamed back to earth. Genuine Islam does not believe in such visions of UFOs and the “mother plane or wheel” and talking to the dead and then returning to the earth and taking such a “vision” as a basis for organizing a march. Advancing the vision of the “mother wheel” demonstrates that Farrakhan still maintains the old NOI belief that the blacks are “people of the moon” and that the wheel was piloted by thirteen youths, who perpetually orbited the earth, waiting to unleash total destruction on white people, while rescuing blacks.

To conclude this chapter, one says that Fard and Elijah Muhammad devised a complicated system of belief to equip Black Muslims with a philosophy to enable them to escape their miserable psychological, social, and cultural reality of Negroes in the USA. The system of belief attempted to correct the image of blackness by rejecting the label “Negro,” which the whites stuck to them and accompanied it with a degrading stereotype. The latter tended by this making blacks hate themselves and feel inferior to whites. This prevented blacks from living a creative life. They needed to be proud to face up with life in a white society.

To boost up this feeling of pride, the eschatology created a mythical image of blacks claiming that the father of blacks was the “Original Man,” who was the “Black Man,” the “god” who fathered all blacks. Therefore, all blacks were “gods,” who did not know about it because the white man enslaved them and killed them mentally. Furthermore, it taught that a

mad black scientist called Yakub made the white man through grafting from a black gene. As a result, the white man was weak and evil, since he came in the last stage of the gene by bleaching. This assumed origin made Black Muslims believe they were really superior to whites and gave sense to their life during the existence of the NOI under Elijah Muhammad.

The other point in this system of belief is the attitude, which Black Muslims showed towards Christianity. They hated it and considered it the religion of the white slave-master, who had stolen their forefathers from Africa and enslaved them in America, and made them suffer their life long. They described the Bible as the “poison book,” that was used to snare blacks and convince them to remain faithful slaves. That is why they believed Christianity had to be forsaken by the blacks, as it never helped them in their miserable life as Christians.

Besides, they had a moral code to observe strictly. This was not based on religion, for they did not believe in life after death. Unlike true Muslims, they thought they live only one life and tried to improve it. Black Muslims were serious, honest, thrifty, hardworking, courageous, polite, solidary, clean, discreet, etc. They had only one meal a day to avoid indulgence and remain healthy. Extra marital relations were forbidden, wine and pork were not eaten, and so were rice and eggs.

Another teaching in this eschatology was the nature of the Day of Judgment. Their leader, Elijah Muhammad taught that it would be realized by the destruction of the world by *Allah*, by which he means Fard. The American whites would be the first to be destroyed then the rest of the world around 1970, or sometime before 2000. “The mother plane” would bombard the USA and protect black Muslims while killing the white Christians and destroying their religion. It would be the Battle of Armageddon, in which blacks would triumph and regain their domination of the universe and rule it with peace. No wars would happen, for everybody would have known that the “Black Man” was the creator and ruler of the universe. This “prophecy” did not materialize, which proved the falsity of Elijah Muhammad’s claims. From an Islamic point of view, this is contrary to the teachings of religion in this matter.

Besides, Elijah Muhammad wrote a book, which summed up the doctrinal matters of the Nation of Islam. It was entitled: *Message to the Black Man in America*. Certain views have been selected for comment from an Islamic angle. He started his “teaching” by defining Islam partly in accordance with a real Islamic definition, but deviated half way to turn it into a verbal attack against whites to exclude them from Islam. He argued that Islam was not destined for the white “Caucasian” man, because the latter was too proud to accept the black man as his brother. Furthermore, he claimed that Islam was destined to liberate the black man enslaved and oppressed in North America. The white Europeans were dismissed as enemies of God and accused of misleading nine-tenths of non-whites into leading an un-Islamic lifestyle. From an Islamic point of view, this is incorrect, as *Allah* does not specify a race as His enemies.

Elijah Muhammad’s reasoning in the said book led him not to consider Islam as a religion, and claimed that it was called a religion simply to identify it from the multitude of religions being practised in the world. Real Islam does not accept such a claim.

The belief system of Black Muslims would continue even after the death of Elijah Muhammad and the succession of his “*Sunni* Muslim” son, Warith Deen Muhammad, as a leader of the movement. The latter would *islamize* the majority of Black Muslims and this appellation would be forsaken in favour of the Islamic one, that is simply Muslims.

At the end, it could be said that the Nation of Islam borrowed a few Islamic concepts such as prayer, fasting, refraining from drinking wine and eating pork, practising extra-marital sex, forbidding their women from putting on revealing dress and cosmetics out of their homes. However, the practice of those Islamic pillars such as prayer, *hajj*, and fasting were not done in compliance with real Islamic rules. Furthermore, they mixed those tenets of Islam with beliefs and practices that were contrary and outrageous to Islam such as considering Fard an incarnation of *Allah* and that Elijah Muhammad was his messenger. They denied the existence of life after death, hell, paradise, angels, in short, the finality of life according to Islam. Hence, the Board of the *Ulema* of the Italian Muslim Association issued a *fetwa* (Islamic ruling) that ruled that the Nation of Islam was not to be considered as

truly Muslim, and that its members had to convert into Islam. These were the main elements making the belief system of the Nation of Islam.

This system of belief was devised by Fard and developed by Elijah Muhammad and practised by the Black Muslims till the death of the latter in 1975. During the 1940s the movement stagnated despite his assiduity to recruit disfavoured Negroes. However, when a young man by the name of Malcolm Little left prison and joined the movement in 1952 it prospered and its organization as a social movement was reinforced.

The study of movement under the leadership of this man and its organization (1952 – 1964) will be the focus of the next chapter.

¹BEYNON, op. cit., p. 896.

²Correlation Summary, Wallace Don Ford, FBI Main file No. 105-63642, p.2, January 15, 1958.

³Wallace Don Ford, Wallei Ford, Wallie D. Ford, Wally D. Ford, W. D. Ford, Wallace Farad, W. D. Feraud, Fred Dodd, W. D. Fard Mohammed, W. D. Farrow Mohammed, W. D. Ferrad. One *Allah*, W. D. Fard, Wallace Ford, Wallie Ford, Wallace D. Fard, Wallace Don Fard, One Fard, A. Wallace Fard, *Allah* Fard, W. D. Farad, Wallace Don Farad, W. D. Farrad, W. D. Mohammed, W. D. F. Mohammed Muhammad, Wallace Fard Muhammad, W. F. Muhammad, W. D. Farrard, W. D. Farrow, W. D. Ferrard, One Mahadiah, One Mohammed, Fard Muhammad, W. D. F. Mukmuk, Ali Mohammad, Mohammad Ali, Wali Farrad, Wali Mohammad, Mohammad Wali, F. Mohammad Ali, F. Ali Mohammad, Farrad Mohammad, Mohammad Farrad, Mahdi, Professor Fard.

⁴“Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam Excommunicated by the Italian Muslim Association,” The Root & Branch Association, Ltd, Islam-Israel Fellowship, <http://www.rb.org.il/Islam-Israel/news/islamnews1.htm>

⁵Seyyed Yvonne HADDAD, “A Century of Islam in America,” *Hamdard Islamicus*, 1997, Vol. XXI No. 4.

⁶She described him as male, white, New Zealander, exact age unknown, 5' 8", 140 pounds, slender build, black curly hair, black eyes, beautiful even teeth, straight nose, Caucasian features, no visible scars, extremely swarthy complexion, had the appearance of a very dark complected Mexican. (FBI letter No. 105 - 4805 from SAC, Los Angeles to FBI director, 18 October, 1957.)

⁷FBI letter No. 105-63642 from SAC, Chicago No. 100-33683 to FBI director, 4 April 1958.

⁸FBI letter No. 100-33683 from SAC, Chicago to SAC: Detroit, 31 July 1957.

⁹FBI CG 25-20607, 16 May, 1957.

¹⁰FBI letter No. 100- 5549 from SAC, Detroit to FBI director, 17 February 1960.

¹¹FBI Office Memorandum from SAC, Los Angeles No. 105-4805 to SAC, Chicago No.100-33683, 26 August 1957.

¹²Elijah MUHAMMAD, “The Coming of the Son of Man,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 12 December 1957.

¹³FBI letter No. 100-43165 from SAC, San Francisco to FBI director, 27 August 1957.

¹⁴Correlation Summary, Wallace Don Ford, FBI Main file No. 105-63642, p.2, 15 January, 1958.

¹⁵Eric PEMENT, “Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam,” *Cornerstone*, 1997, Vol. 26, issue 111.

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- ¹⁶FBI letter No. 100-35635 Sub B from SAC, Chicago to FBI director No. 25-330971, 19 Feb 1963.
- ¹⁷FBI letter No. 105-63642 from SAC, Chicago to FBI director, 3 February 1958.
- ¹⁸*Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ Edward MONTGOMERY, "Black Muslim Founder Exposed as A White," *The Los Angeles Herald - Examiner*, 28 July 1963.
- ²⁰*Ibid.*
- ²¹FBI letter No. 105-4805 from SAC, Los Angeles to FBI director, October 18, 1957.
- ²²*Ibid.*
- ²³FBI interview of Elijah Muhammad CG25- 20607, 3 March 1951.
- ²⁴FBI Letter No.100-33683 from SAC, Chicago to SAC, Detroit, 31 July 1957.
- ²⁵CSLA 3184-8 as reported by FBI LA- 105-2604.
- ²⁶FBI letter No.105-63642 from SAC, Chicago to FBI director No. 100-33683, 3 February 1958.
- ²⁷*Ibid.*
- ²⁸FBI letter No. 105-4805 from SAC, Los Angeles to FBI director, 3 October 1957.
- ²⁹*Ibid.*
- ³⁰FBI letter No. 100-43165 from SAC, San Francisco to FBI director, 27 August 1957
- ³¹(FBI, LA 105-2604). See also FBI letter 100-33683 from SAC, Chicago to FBI director , 3 October 1957
- ³²MONTGOMERY, op., cit.
- ³³FBI letter No. 105-4805 from SAC, Los Angeles to FBI director, 18 October 1957.
- ³⁴Fard meant the white man by Cave Man.
- ³⁵The Arab Prophet Mohammed Ibn Abdellah (PBUH) was not a black, nor was his family.
- ³⁶This could be the effect of the teachings of the *Ahmadiyya* Movement in Islam, who were active in Detroit and Chicago in the 1920s.
- ³⁷(FBI, LA 105-2604). See also FBI letter 100-33683 from SAC, Chicago to FBI director , 30 October 1957.
- ³⁸MONTGOMERY, op., cit.
- ³⁹(FBI, LA 105-2604). See also FBI letter 100-33683 from SAC, Chicago to FBI director , 30 October 1957
- ⁴⁰FBI office memorandum from SAC, Chicago to FBI director, CG-100-33683, dated 30 October, 1957. A Japanese spy named Satakata Takahashi founded the Black Dragon Society and tried to win the sympathy of blacks for Japan. (FBI, ONI Rating Report No. 100-9129-63, 13 October 1942)
- ⁴¹FBI office memorandum from SAC, Chicago to FBI director, CG-100-33683, dated 30 October,
- ⁴²*Ibid.*
- ⁴³*Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴This conforms to the Black Muslims' diet consisting of one meal per day only. It also helps establish the relationship between Fard, the con man, and Fard the founder of the Nation of Islam.
- ⁴⁵FBI letter No. 105- 4805 from SAC, Los Angeles to FBI director, 18 October 1957.
- ⁴⁶LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p.14.
- ⁴⁷His date of birth according to Louis E. Lomax was October 7, 1897. (Louis E. LOMAX, *When the Word is Given*, Cleveland and New York, The World Publishing Company, 1963, p. 51)
- ⁴⁸A sharecropper was a farmer who did not own land, but worked for a landlord. The sharecropping system rose in the USA during Reconstruction after the slaves had been freed by the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. The Freedmen and their families worked for part of the crop while living on the owner's property. Mary N. BETH, *A History of the USA: A People and A Nation*, Vol. II, Houghton Mifflin Company, 3rd Edition, ND, p. 457.
- ⁴⁹Biography Resource Center, Gale Group, Inc.
http://www.galegroup.com/free_resources/bhm/mahammad_e.htm
- ⁵⁰Claude Andrew Clegg III, *An Original Man:The Life and Times of Elijah Muhammad*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1997, p. 10.

- ⁵¹ An Historical Look at the Honorable Elijah Muhammad,
[http:// www.noi.org/history-elijah.html](http://www.noi.org/history-elijah.html).
- ⁵² FBI interview of Elijah Muhammad, CG25-20607, 3 March 1951.
- ⁵³ FBI report dated November 26, 1973, at the Chicago Office with Field Office file No. 157-5366.
- ⁵⁴ FBI letter No. 100-33683 from SAC, Chicago to director, 3 October 1957.
- ⁵⁵ LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p.15.
- ⁵⁶ An Historical Look at the Honorable Elijah Muhammad,
[http:// www.noi.org/history-elijah.html](http://www.noi.org/history-elijah.html).
- ⁵⁷ LINCOLN, op. cit., p.15.
- ⁵⁸ Adam EDGERLY and Carl ELLIS, "Emergence of Islam in the African-American Community,"
<http://answering-islam.org.uk/Reach Out/emergence.html>
- ⁵⁹ There is no indication as to this imprisonment in Fard's FBI criminal record.
- ⁶⁰ FBI letter No. 100-33683 from SAC, Chicago to director, 30 October 1957.
- ⁶¹ LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p.15.
- ⁶² FBI CG25-20607, 3 March 1951.
- ⁶³ LOMAX, op. cit., p. 51.
- ⁶⁴ LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p.16.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 16-17.
- ⁶⁶ FBI CG25-20607, 3 March 1951.
- ⁶⁷ "An Historical Look at the Honorable Elijah Muhammad." <http://www.noi.org/history-elijah.html>.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.* See also ESSIEN-UDOM, op. cit., p. 77.
- ⁶⁹ Selective Service Act was a military act signed by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1940 to provide manpower to the US Armed Forces. (Wikipedia Encyclopaedia. Online version)
- ⁷⁰ FBI, ONI Rating Report No. 100-9129-63, 13 October 1942.
- ⁷¹ LOMAX, op. cit., p.55.
- ⁷² *Message to the Blackman in America* is a book written by Elijah Muhammad in which he exposes the NOI's doctrine.
- ⁷³ An Historical Look at the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.
<http://www.noi.org/history-elijah.html>
- ⁷⁴ LOMAX, op. cit., p.55.
- ⁷⁵ The Movement for the Establishment of the Forty-Ninth State was established by Oscar C. Brown in the 1930s and advocated Black Nationalism. ([http : //www.marxist.com/usa/blacks.html](http://www.marxist.com/usa/blacks.html))
- ⁷⁶ ESSIEN-UDOM, op. cit., p. 140.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁸ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 72.
- ⁷⁹ يقول تعالى: (فاطر السماوات والأرض جعل لكم من أنفسكم أزواجا ومن الأنعام أزواجا يذكركم فيه ليس كمثل شيء وهو السميع البصير . له مقاليد السماوات والأرض يبسط الرزق لمن يشاء ويقدر إنه بكل شيء عليم.) الشورى: 11-12
- ⁸⁰ و يقول عز من قائل: (وتوكل على الحي الذي لا يموت وسبح بحمده وكفى به بذنوب عباده خبيرا. الذي خلق السماوات والأرض وما بينهما في ستة أيام ثم استوى على العرش الرحمان فاسأل به خبيرا.) الفرقان: 58-59
- ⁸¹ *Impostor in Arabic* دجال
- ⁸² قال تعالى: (ما كان محمد أبا أحد من رجالكم ولكن رسول الله وخاتم النبيين وكان الله بكل شيء عليما) الأحزاب: 40
- ⁸³ LINCOLN, op. cit. p. 15.
- ⁸⁴ Elijah MUHAMMAD, "Master Fard Muhammad, Not a Silk Peddler,"_ <http://www.seventham.com/>
- ⁸⁵ FBI CG25-20607, 3 March 1951
- ⁸⁶ FBI report dated November 26, 1973, at the Chicago Office and Field Office file No. 157-5366.
- ⁸⁷ Elijah MUHAMMAD, *The Pittsburgh Courier*, May 26, 1956.
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁹ Elijah MUHAMMAD, "Master_Fard Muhammad: *Allah* (God) In Person," transcribed from a video-taped lecture of the 1973 Saviour's Day. See NOI website <http://www.seventham.com/>

⁹⁰ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 73.

⁹¹ MUHAMMAD, op. cit.

⁹² LINCOLN, op. cit.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Letter From Master Fard Muhammad to Messenger Elijah Muhammad,
<http://www.seventharm.com/>

⁹⁵ Elijah MUHAMMAD, "Master Fard Muhammad: *Allah* (God) In Person," op. cit.

⁹⁶ ERNEST, op., cit.

⁹⁷ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 73.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Elijah MUHAMMAD, "Master Fard Muhammad: *Allah* (God) In Person," op. cit.

¹⁰⁰ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 73.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ "Messenger Speaks on the Return of *Allah*, In the Person of Master Fard Muhammad," a transcript from a videotape interview of Elijah Muhammad. See <http://www.seventharm.com/>

¹⁰⁴ Elijah MUHAMMED, *Message to the Black Man in America*, online version. See
<http://www.seventharm.com/>

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ ALLEN, op. cit.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ يقول عز وجل: (ولقد خلقناكم ثم صورناكم ثم قلنا للملائكة اسجدوا لآدم فسجدوا إلا إبليس لم يكن من الساجدين (11) قال ما منعك ألا تسجد إذ أمرتك قال أنا خير منه خلقتني من نار وخلقته من طين(12)) سورة الأعراف، الآيتان 11 و 12.

¹¹⁰ قال الله تعالى: (وإذ قال ربك للملائكة إني جاعل في الأرض خليفة قالوا أتجعل فيها من يفسد فيها ويسفك الدماء ونحن نسبح بحمدك ونقدس لك قال إني أعلم ما لا تعلمون) البقرة، الآية 30.

¹¹¹ ESSIEN-UDOLEN, op. cit., p. 148.

¹¹² The NOI used the letter X to replace the last names of its adherents as these names were considered as slave names given to them by the masters of their ancestors, who were slaves. The name X also meant an 'ex slave.' It was supposed to be dropped when the adherent received his "original name" from Fard when he returned from his absence.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 77.

¹¹⁵ قال تعالى: (وهو الذي خلق السماوات والأرض في ستة أيام وكان عرشه على الماء ليبلوكم أيكم أحسن عملا ولئن قلت إنكم مبعوثون من بعد الموت ليقولن الذين كفروا إن هذا إلا سحر مبين) هود: 7.

¹¹⁶ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 77.

¹¹⁷ Lazarus Hebrew ELEAZAR (God Has Helped), either of two figures mentioned in the New Testament. The story of Lazarus is known from the Gospel narrative of John (11:18, 30, 32, 38). Lazarus of Bethany was the brother of Martha and Mary and lived at Bethany, near Jerusalem. When Lazarus died, he was raised by Jesus from the dead after he had been entombed for four days. This miraculous raising of Lazarus from the dead inspired many Jews to believe in Jesus as the Christ. Lazarus is also the name given by Luke (ch. 16) to the beggar in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. It is the only proper name attached to a character in the parables of Jesus. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, op. cit.)

¹¹⁸ قال تعالى: (يا أيها الناس إنا خلقناكم من ذكر وأنثى وجعلناكم شعوبا وقبائل لتعارفوا إن أكرمكم عند الله أتقاكم إن الله عليم خبير) الحجرات: 13

¹¹⁹ قال الله تعالى (وإذ قال عيسى ابن مريم يا بني إسرائيل إني رسول الله إليكم مصدقا لما بين يدي من التوراة ومبشرا برسول يأتي من بعدي اسمه أحمد فلما جاءهم بالبينات قالوا هذا سحر مبين) (الصف: 6

¹²⁰*Ibid.*

¹²¹ يقول عز وجل: (الله ملك السماوات والأرض وما فيهن وهو على كل شيء قدير) المائدة، الآية 120.

¹²² ويقول عز من قائل: (يا أيها الناس اتقوا ربكم الذي خلقكم من نفس واحدة وخلق منها زوجها وبث منهما رجالا كثيرا ونساء ...) النساء، الآية 1.

¹²³ الشرك

¹²⁴ كما قال تعالى: (إن الله لا يغفر أن يُشركَ به ويغفر ما دون ذلك لمن يشاء ومن يشرك بالله فقد افترى إثما عظيما) النساء، الآية 48.

¹²⁵ يقول تعالى: (وما كان الناس إلا أمة واحدة فاختلّفوا ولولا كلمة سبقت من ربك لقضي بينهم فيما فيه يختلفون) الآية 19.

¹²⁶ Since the author of the present thesis is of Islamic faith as revealed to Prophet Mohammed Ibnu Abdellah (PBUH), he does not wish to correct the possible false views of Black Muslims about Christianity. This is left to Christians, who know their religion much better and who had already done a lot of studies on this subject.

¹²⁷ Quoted in LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 78.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹³⁰ This means the end of the white man and his rule would be in 1984. Yet, this did not manifest itself in any sign.

¹³¹ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 78.

¹³² LOMAX , op. cit., p. 28.

¹³³ The Birmingham Crisis refers to the bomb explosion in the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham on Sunday, 15th September, 1963, when a white man from the KKK placed a bomb under the steps of this church. It killed four black little girls. The Church had been used by black leaders of the Civil Rights Movement like King, Abernathy and Fred Shutterworth.

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USA16.htm>

¹³⁴ LOMAX, op. cit.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

¹³⁶ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 78.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 80.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ الدعاء

¹⁴² LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 81.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ قال عز وجل: (ثم بعثناكم من بعد موتكم لعلكم تشكرون) البقرة، الآية 56.

¹⁴⁵ قال تعالى: (والذين آمنوا وعملوا الصالحات سندخلهم جنات تجري من تحتها الأنهار خالدين فيها أبدا وعد الله حقا ومن أصدق من الله قيلا) سورة النساء، الآية 122.

¹⁴⁶ وقال أيضا: (إليه مرجعكم جميعا وعد الله حقا إنه يبدأ الخلق ثم يعيده ليجزي الذين آمنوا وعملوا الصالحات بالقسط والذين كفروا لهم شراب من حميم وعذاب أليم بما كانوا يكفرون) سورة يونس، الآية 4.

¹⁴⁷ القدر

¹⁴⁸ قال جل جلاله: (يا أيها الذين آمنوا آمنوا بالله ورسوله والكتاب الذي نزل على رسوله والكتاب الذي أنزل من قبل ومن يكفر بالله وملأته

وكتبه ورسوله واليوم الآخر فقد ضل ضلالا بعيدا) النساء، 136.

¹⁴⁹ يوم البعث

¹⁵⁰ قال تعالى: (ثم بعثناكم من بعد موتكم لعلكم تشكرون) البقرة، 56.

¹⁵¹ كما جاء في كتابه العزيز أيضا: (وَإِنْ نَعَجِبْ فَعَجِبْ قَوْلُهُمْ أُنْذَا كُنَّا تُرَابًا أُنْذَا لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَرَبَّهُمْ وَأُولَئِكَ الْأَغْلَالُ فِي أَعْتَابِهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ) الرعد، 5.

¹⁵² ESSIEN-UDOSEN, op. cit., p. 153.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ See NOI's website, <http://www.noi.org/>

¹⁵⁵ قال جل جلاله: (أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ) المومنون، 115.

¹⁵⁶ ESSIEN-UDOSEN, op. cit., p. 153.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ جاء في كتاب الله : (وقالوا إذا كنا عظاما ورفاتا إنا لمبعوثون خلقا جديدا) الإسراء، الآية 49.
¹⁵⁹ قال تعالى: (وقالوا إن هي إلا حياتنا الدنيا وما نحن بمبعوثين. ولو ترى إذ وقفوا على ربهم قال أليس هذا بالحق قالوا بلى وربنا قال فذوقوا العذاب بما كنتم تكفرون. قد خسر الذين كذبوا بقاء الله حتى إذا جاءتهم الساعة بغتة قالوا يا حسرتنا على ما فرطنا فيها وهم يحملون أوزارهم على ظهورهم ألا ساء ما يزرون) الأنعام، من 29-31.

¹⁶⁰ قال تعالى: (والذين آمنوا وعملوا الصالحات سندخلهم جنات تجري من تحتها الأنهار خالدين فيها أبدا وعد الله حقا ومن أصدق من الله قيلا) النساء، 122.
¹⁶¹ قال الرسول (صلعم) : بني الإسلام على خمس، شهادة أن لا إله إلا الله وأن محمدا رسول الله، وإقام الصلاة، وإيتاء الزكاة، وصوم رمضان، وحج البيت من استطاع إليه سبيلا. (رواه البخاري ومسلم)

¹⁶²“Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam Excommunicated by the Italian Muslim Association,” The Root & Branch Association, Ltd, Islam-Israel Fellowship, <http://www.rb.org.il/Islam-Israel/news/islamnews1.htm>

¹⁶³Fareed Muhammed is another of the many names of W. D. Fard.

¹⁶⁴ The Root & Branch Association, op., cit.

¹⁶⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶*Message to The Black Man in America.*

Html version <http://www.seventhfam.com/>

¹⁶⁷Warith Deen Muhammad called his followers *Bilalians* after the Prophet's companion black *Muezzin*, Bilal Ibnu Rabah.

¹⁶⁸ يقول الله عز وجل: (يا أيها الناس إنا خلقناكم من ذكر وأنثى وجعلناكم شعوبا وقبائل لتعارفوا إن أكرمكم عند الله أتقاكم إن الله عليم خبير) الحجرات، الآية 13.

¹⁶⁹ESSIEN-UDOSEN, op. cit., p. 155.

¹⁷⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ “The Judgment: Explanation of Master Fard Muhammad,” transcribed by the NOI from an audiocassette tape of the same title. See NOI website, [http:// www.noi.org/](http://www.noi.org/)

¹⁷²*Ibid.*

¹⁷³ يقول الله عز وجل: (لا تدركه الأبصار وهو يدرك الأبصار وهو اللطيف الخبير) الأنعام، الآية 103.

¹⁷⁴The Bandung Conference was a meeting of Asian and African states, organized by Indonesia, Myanmar (Burma), Ceylon (Sri Lanka), India, and Pakistan, which met April 18-24, 1955, in Bandung, Indonesia. In all, 29 countries representing more than half the world's population sent delegates. Among others, the conference reflected the five sponsors' dissatisfaction with what they regarded as reluctance by the Western powers to consult with them on decisions affecting Asia, opposition to colonialism, especially French influence in North Africa. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, op. cit.)

¹⁷⁵ESSIEN-UDOSEN, op. cit., p. 156.

¹⁷⁶ Old Babylon was one of the most famous cities of antiquity. It was the capital of southern Mesopotamia (Babylonia) from the early 2nd millennium BC to the early 1st millennium BC and capital of the Neo-Babylonian (Chaldean) Empire in the 7th and 6th centuries BC, when it was at the height of its splendour. Its extensive ruins on the Euphrates River about 55 miles (88 kilometres) south of Baghdad lie near the modern town of al-Hillah, Iraq. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, op. cit.)

According to the Bible, Babylon was destroyed as a result of God's anger with the arrogance and pride of its rulers, and was doomed to permanent desertion.

¹⁷⁷Quoted in ESSIEN-UDOSEN, op. cit., p. 157.

¹⁷⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ القيامة

¹⁸⁰ كما قال جل وعلا: (يوم تبدل الأرض غير الأرض والسماوات وبرزوا لله الواحد القهار) سورة إبراهيم، الآية: 48.

¹⁸¹ قال تعالى: (وَتَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَمُوجُ فِي بَعْضٍ وَتَفْخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَجَمَعْنَاهُمْ جَمْعًا) الكهف، الآية 99.

¹⁸² كما جاء في كتابه العزيز: (وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ وَقَفُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ قَالَ أَلَيْسَ هَذَا بِالْحَقِّ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّنَا قَالَ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ) سورة الأنعام، الآية 30.

¹⁸³ Elijah MUHAMMAD, *Message to the Black Man In America*, op. cit.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Elijah MUHAMMAD, "What is Islam ? What is a Muslim ?" Reprinted by the NOI from *Muhammad Speaks* newspaper, July 17, 1970. See <http://www.noi.org/>

¹⁸⁷ A.I. PALMER, "The Nation of Islam Exposed,"
[http:// www. geocities.com/Athens/Olympus/4222/noi.html](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Olympus/4222/noi.html)

CHAPTER THREE

THE MOVEMENT'S ORGANIZATION AND MALCOLM X'S CONTRIBUTION TO ITS EXPANSION, 1952 – 1964

In the present chapter, one will study briefly the different aspects of the NOI as an organization and a protest mass movement, and consider its development under the command of Elijah Muhammad, especially with the help of his minister Malcolm X, who contributed to its expansion between 1952 and 1964. In fact, the development and expansion of the movement in this period was due essentially to the efforts and zeal of the latter, who overshadowed his mentor and ended by being excluded before his decision to leave the NOI in 1964. More, even the alteration of the ideology of the movement towards *Sunni* Islam, which would come later with Warith Deen Muhammad was initiated by Malcolm X. He had influenced Warith as a young man and prepared a background for the alteration to take place.¹

The study in this chapter raises the following questions and attempts to answer them. What were the different aspects of the Nation of Islam as a black protest movement? Did it have clear goals to achieve for the black community? What were they? Were they realistic? Did the movement have an economic programme? What was it for, since Black Muslims were part of the American community? Did this programme achieve economic independence from the white society? The NOI had a moral code to be observed strictly by its adherents. What did it look like and to which extent did the members observe it? What convictions were behind its conception? What were its effects on the social life of Black Muslims? As the NOI was a secret organization in many matters, how many members could it recruit? To which social class did they belong? Among them there were hundreds of ex-convicts which the movement was able to recruit and establish three temples in prisons. Why was it successful in recruiting prisoners and regenerating them? Did the NOI also have an educational programme and schools of its own? Why? Who looked after matters of discipline in its organization? What about the media to reach the public? The Nation of Islam certainly interacted with other

groups in the USA and had relations with them. How were its relations with the black community, press, and leaders of other black organizations? How was its relation with the Jews and whites? Could it be accepted by American *Sunni* Muslims? How did white Americans react to the NOI racial discourse? Who was Malcolm X who gave the movement impetus for twelve years? What were his goals? Did his ideology change? What caused it to change? How did he convert to true Islam? Why did he leave the Movement? Could he establish an alternative organization with new goals? How was his end? Would the organization adopt true Islam as he wished?

I. Malcolm X

Malcolm Little, who later became Malcolm X and finally changed his name to *El Hajj* Malik Al-Shabbaz upon his conversion to true Islam, contributed greatly to the NOI growth in membership and national expansion in the 1950s and early 1960s. He had a dynamic personality and an articulate speech, which enabled him to recruit massively and organize numerous temples and provide publicity both nationally and internationally for his movement. Almost all his career was devoted to its development and to the propagation of its ideology. At first, he was welcomed in the fold of the Nation of Islam, but eventually when the current of the African American struggle changed and his intellect grew the rift with the leader of the movement became inevitable.

Malcolm described his life as one of changes for which he adopted three names, each representing a stage of evolution in his ideology and life conduct. He was Malcolm Little as a child and later as a thief, drug dealer, and pimp. While in prison he converted to the false “Islam” of Elijah Muhammad and joined the NOI within which he changed his name to Malcolm X. When he left it he converted to true Islam and performed the *Hajj* and adopted the name of El Hajj Malik Al Shabbaz.

He was born on May 19, 1925 in Omaha, Nebraska. His mother Louise Norton Little, a light-skinned woman from Grenada, the West Indies, who never saw her white father, was a housewife occupied by her eight children.²

Her husband and herself were members of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) of Black Nationalist leader Marcus Garvey. She served as reporter of the Omaha chapter of the UNIA.³ She was a deeply spiritual woman, who endured the abuse of her husband and they both affected their children with their domestic violence. Malcolm X's father, Earl Little, was a Baptist minister and supporter of the Garveyite doctrine of self-help and black unity. Malcolm used to accompany his father to the UNIA meetings and he got impressed by the adherents' exclamation, "Africa for Africans and Ethiopia awake!" However, this was not safe for his father and the family. Earl Little's civil rights activism brought him death threats from the local white supremacist organization, the Black Legionnaires.⁴ As a black man, he was not supposed to be outspoken and to deviate from the accepted stereotype that was usually considered the right image for Negroes to fulfil or reflect.⁵ Consequently, his family was forced by the Ku Klux Klan to move to Lansing, Michigan, for safety. Nevertheless, their new home was burnt in 1929 when Earl was away. When the firemen arrived they did not put out the fire, but rather watched it till the complete burning of the house. Although the police ruled it an accident, the Littles were certain the Black Legionnaires caused it. Two years later, Earl Little was killed by a trolley and his body lay mutilated across the trolley's tracks. The police ruled it an accident, but the family again felt it was the responsibility of white hate groups, because he had been threatened by them for his continuing to activate for Black Nationalism. The family believed the police had not said the truth, because at that time the police department and various branches of the law were usually interwoven with the Klan element. So, the Klan had the backing of the police, and the police had the backing of the Klan.⁶ Recent researches, however, suggested the death was accidental. Whatever the case, it had negative consequences for the family.⁷ One of the principal effects was that Malcolm's mother had to support eight children during the Great Depression of the early 1930s.

Under the strain of poverty and the dehumanizing welfare system she eventually had a mental breakdown and was committed to a mental institution at Kalamazoo. She remained there for twenty-six years. Her children, despite their striving to stay together, were split up among various orphanages and foster homes. He himself moved from one foster home to another. The family breakup pushed Malcolm to desperation. However, during that time, he

went to Mason Junior High School in Lansing, and there he graduated at the top of his class. He also participated in basketball and boxing, but he gave up when he was defeated twice by the same white boy. Later, an incident took place at school that had far-reaching negative consequences on his academic life. One of his favourite teachers remarked when Malcolm told him he aspired to become a lawyer by saying that it was “no realistic goal for a nigger.”⁸ The white teacher suggested instead that he should become a carpenter as a proper profession for his race. This remark deceived him and pushed him to drop out of school. It would even remind him of the white man’s attitude for life. It alienated him from school and all white America. Soon, he began stealing food for survival and was initiated to hustling, which he later made perfect in Boston, Massachusetts. He corresponded with his half-sister Ella asking to live with her. Finally, she obtained official custody of Malcolm and had him transferred from Michigan to Massachusetts. Once in Boston, he worked various odd jobs. In this city, he met for the first time with the black bourgeoisie with its social pretensions and exaggerated rituals of cultural self-affirmation. This was the Sugar Hill section of Roxbury, where Ella lived. This led him later to make the conclusion that this black middle class could not achieve authentic black liberation. He was rather attracted to the urban poor and working class. Then, he travelled to Harlem, New York. In Boston’s Roxbury and New York’s Harlem, Malcolm came to know first hand the northern urban poor and working class, and knew about the daily sufferings and aspirations of Negroes. His first job in Boston was shoe-shining in the Roseland State Ballroom where he started to smoke marijuana, play numbers, wear zoot suits, conk his hair red and dance Lindy Hop.⁹ When he left the Roseland he had a job as a fourth cook on the *Yankee Clipper*, the train that travelled between Boston and New York. In his first visit to Harlem he liked it and decided to stay. In 1942 he quit the *Yankee Clipper* and got employment in a bar. Soon he was dismissed from it and became a full time criminal. He committed petty crimes. His hustling activities ranged from drug dealing, gambling, burglary, prostitution coordinating, and other illegal practices. After six months he engaged in armed robbery. He armed himself with pistols and prowled the streets of New York in search of victims. Eventually, he returned with his friend Malcolm ‘Shorty’ Jarvis to Boston. There, they continued their criminal career until their arrest for burglary in 1946.¹⁰ Subsequently, they were convicted for the charge and served a six-to ten-year sentence. During the period of his jail from 1946 to 1952, he read widely from biblical theology to Western philosophy.

Consequently, he underwent a profound transformation from ignorant hustler to a self-educated, sophisticated person. In this establishment, he moved from Christianity to Gnosticism to atheism.¹¹ And it was in prison that his brother Reginald visited him and told him he had converted recently to the NOI so-called Islam. Soon, he started to study Elijah Muhammad's teachings and came to learn that the latter taught that white society worked actively to inhibit blacks' social, economic, and political development. The NOI also strove for obtaining a separate state for the blacks to live independently from the whites. He embraced these teachings and became a devotee of Elijah Muhammad. His attraction to the NOI was due to the Black Nationalist character of its beliefs and practices, for its ability to rehabilitate black male prisoners, its emphasis on self-pride, history culture and unity, and also for its assertion that white people were devils.¹²

A year after his release from prison in 1952 at the age of twenty-seven, he became a Black Muslim and soon acquired his X. After displaying zeal and loyalty, he was promoted to the post of minister for this organization and went to its headquarters in Chicago, Illinois, where he met Elijah Muhammad who satisfied with his energy and activism. Malcolm displayed considerable work ethic and self-discipline to rise from assistant minister of Detroit's Temple Number One to National Spokesman for Elijah Muhammad and the NOI. He spent the next twelve years in total devotion to him and to his organization. In this role, he made wide publicity for the movement and brought it considerable attention.

He was a diligent recruiter and a hard worker, who worked eighteen-hour days. In 1952 he was employed by the Ford Motor Company, and after work he went to the ghetto to recruit blacks in bars, poolrooms, and streets. In that year, each week a two- car caravan transported Black Muslims from Detroit to Chicago to hear Elijah Muhammad' sermon. However, Malcolm adopted aggressive recruiting tactics that he was able in a few months to lead a caravan of twenty-five cars to Chicago. Elijah Muhammad was pleased and the following year Malcolm was appointed assistant minister of Temple No. 1 and a full-time employee for the Nation of Islam. In large temples such as his, the membership supplied the minister with a car, a home, and his family's necessities from donations. In smaller ones, the minister had to have a full-time job outside to support himself.

He began to act as a prime minister for the leader and he visited cities to recruit, preach, and establish new temples. In his service for the NOI, he established most of the one hundred temples in the USA.¹³ It was a period of expansion for the movement and Malcolm had his contribution. He kept crossing North America from temple to temple and in 1954 he moved to Temple No. 7 in New York. There he roamed the borough of Manhattan, churches, and street corners to recruit for the temple. He sometimes preached in private homes until there were enough members to open a new temple.

He was angered with the slow pace of the old NOI ministers and their methods of recruiting, which led Elijah Muhammad to chastise him for his criticism. Malcolm had charisma and organizational skills, which his leader needed, but his enthusiasm had to be controlled. What kept him under control was his trust and devotion to Elijah Muhammad and his movement. Malcolm X believed that he had increased the number of followers from about four hundred to forty thousand in a few years. In 1955 he established Temple No. 15 in Atlanta, Georgia and Elijah Muhammad rewarded him with a new Chevrolet in 1956. In five months he travelled 48,000 kilometres for the service of the NOI. In 1957, he was sent to Los Angeles, California, where he organized its temple.

In 1957 Malcolm was able to attract the young educated people such as academics, professionals, nurses, civil servants, clerks, etc., where Elijah Muhammad had failed before. The Nation of Islam was able to recruit only poor and working people. Even the ministers were rejuvenated by Malcolm. His youth, new thinking, courage and sincerity attracted young educated people. His leader had failed here. Seven of the most leading nine ministers like Louis Farrakhan were recruited by Malcolm.

The ministers recruited by Malcolm X were important but they were under the influence of the NOI hierarchy in Chicago. The latter consisted of the immediate family of Elijah Muhammad like Raymond Sharrief, Elijah Muhammad's son –in-law, who was the supreme captain of the Fruit of Islam, Hassan Sharrief, Elijah Muhammad's grand son, was in charge of public relations, to name only these. The only leader out of the family was John Ali, the national secretary. However, recent studies show that the latter was an FBI agent spying on the

leadership of the organization. Malcolm was shaping the destiny of the movement indirectly through recruiting and training of young and able ministers, but the family hierarchy remained faithful to Elijah Muhammad.

During this period the father's economic programme of started to come into fruition. Businesses like restaurants, bakeries, dress shops, barbershops, grocery stores, and cleaning businesses sprang up in numerous cities. Most of the clients were from the membership of the Nation of Islam itself and the blacks in the neighbourhoods where these businesses were established.¹⁴

Socially, Malcolm X married Sister Betty X, a graduate of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. They had four daughters: Attilah, Qubilah, Ilyasah, and Amilah.

The following year brought the Nation of Islam into media coverage and national and international recognition. Mike Wallace from the television and Louis Lomax, a black author, produced a documentary film on the Black Muslims entitled, "Hate that Hate Produced." This gave the movement an opportunity to reach millions of Americans and shock them with the hate message it carried. It was the time when Malcolm X began to speak before students in campuses, radio talks, television, and the written press.

In 1959 Malcolm X still trusted Elijah Muhammad and worked hard to attain the goals of the NOI. He preached the doctrine of his leader and called for separation of the blacks from the white society, because separation, not segregation, would solve the economic and social problems of the blacks, especially the poor ones. He would preach that the American political and economic system was unequal and unjust. He believed that the separation would be done voluntarily between two equals for the good of both.

Like his mentor, Malcolm kept repeating that Christianity was the religion of the white man, who used it throughout history to enslave millions of nonwhites. To him, Islam was the natural religion of the black man, where he felt free and respected. Christianity did only enslave him and make him toil for the white brethren.

On matters of race, he still held to the doctrine of the NOI that the white man was the devil and the enemy of the blacks. He broadened this concept from race and colour to actions and behaviour. He insisted that he did not mean the individual white man, but the collective one who had collective cruelties, deeds, and evils.

In 1959 Elijah Muhammad was confined to his winter home in Phoenix, Georgia, because of his bronchial condition and was unable to run the administrative matters of his organization. Being away, he could not make decisions either. The alternative presented itself as entrusting this task to his family members and loyal ministers. Eventually, he appointed Malcolm X national spokesman. The latter received from his leader the permission to take his own decisions for managing the affairs of the Nation. As guidelines, Elijah Muhammad told him to do whatever he felt was wise and in the benefit of the Nation.

Before continuing with Malcolm X as national spokesman of the Nation of Islam, an examination of the organizational aspects of the movement will be made in the following subsections.

II. Goals

When Fard started his teachings to the blacks of the Paradise Valley in Detroit, Michigan, in 1930 he told his audience that he was a prophet who came to secure freedom, justice, and equality for the blacks. He called the latter “My Uncle” living in the “wilderness of North America, surrounded and robbed completely by the Cave Man.”¹⁵ He also taught that the blacks would be delivered from the whites, who would meet their final doom, that is destruction at the hands of the blacks. He declared this goal as his essential mission. However, more has been added to the list of the goals of the Lost-Found Nation of Islam later on with its growth and development. The Black Muslims published a list of their goals in each issue of *Muhammad Speaks*, the main press organ that was created by Malcolm X in 1959. Here below is a summary of their most important ones.

They declared that the goals, which the movement established for itself, were to achieve freedom, justice without discrimination, and equality of opportunity. In addition, they sought to establish a separate state in the USA, have equal job opportunity, and an end to police brutality. Since they were deprived from equal justice, they demanded compensation from the US Government under the form of exemption from all taxes until they got justice. They also wanted equal education for all black children, but in separate schools from whites. To achieve these, they devised, among others, an economic programme that is examined below.

III. Economic Programme

For the Black Muslims to regain their “original nobility” and demonstrate that they had really escaped slavery, Elijah Muhammad devised an economic programme and dubbed it the “Economic Blueprint.” This programme was later emphasized by Malcolm X. It called them to provide for their economic security through a collective ownership of businesses and industries that would create jobs for black workers and capitals for black entrepreneurs. This aimed at securing their economic independence and reducing their contact with the white man to the minimum. In other words, it was economic separatism from the white man’s community. All this was a transitional stage before they could obtain their territory in the USA, as their leader and Malcolm X kept teaching. By the way, though they realized the impossibility of obtaining a territory in the United States for their followers alone because of security reasons, they still insisted on demanding it and calling their followers to do likewise. Elijah Muhammad came one day to admit that, “they will never give us three or four states. That I probably know, but that doesn’t hinder you or me from asking for it.”¹⁶

This programme was called for in 1937 when their new leader, Elijah Muhammad, called upon them to rise up to the nobility of their original status as the chosen people of God and live in good houses and clad in fine clothes, and purchase better commodities. The basic assumption upon which this programme was devised was that as long as the white man held economic dominance over the black, he would hold him prisoner and limit his independence to a minimum. Thus, Black Muslims were obliged to comply with a strict moral and economic code that would yield their thrift, capital accumulation, independence, and self-respect.

Followers of Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X stressed industriousness and were recommended to work fully for their wages and not cheat. The sense of responsibility in whatever activity they did was prized. Moderate spending was required and conspicuous consuming was discouraged. They identified themselves with the working class and preferred to live in Negro Ghettoes, and avoided the residential areas where Negro businessmen lived. They bought the less expensive cars, and had one meal per day only. Generally, their meal consisted of vegetables and fruits.¹⁷ In this line of ascetic consumption, they were forbidden from buying or drinking wine, eating pork, polished rice “the slave meal,” gambling, smoking, or playing sports. They did not take long vacations from work and were encouraged to save and discouraged from buying on credit. No Black Muslim was encouraged to live beyond his means and no money was to be wasted. Thus, this ascetic manner of life allowed them to meet their necessities, make savings, and be able to help the Nation of Islam with donations. In brief, complying with this economic way of conduct had a salutary effect on their economic condition. Elijah Muhammad discouraged them from wasting their money:

Stop wasting your money! Your money was not given to you, so why should you give it away for what you can do without? ... We could save millions of Dollars for education...land, machines...cattle...homes and factories...Feed your own stomachs and hire your own scientists from among yourselves.¹⁸

These economic ideas and rigorous practices were considered in the leader’s time as a transitional step towards the establishment of the Black Nation, the ideal nation in the philosophy of the NOI. However, before reaching this stage of economic independence, members of this movement had to work for whites if necessary, for any work was noble. In addition, this work could be considered as a training experience in the right way of building the Black Nation. Here, they would run their own farms, factories, shops, and banks, etc. In practice, this firm discipline enabled them to find jobs easier than other African Americans, since white employers noticed that they worked hard and kept a clean and tidy appearance, and were confident-looking when looking for work.¹⁹

To accomplish the economic independence and security, Elijah Muhammad made five key propositions to be followed by Black Muslims. These can be summed as follows:

Know yourselves that you are members of the Creator’s Black Nation and work in

group unity.

Pool your resources, physically as well as financially.

Stop wanton criticism of everything that is black-owned and black-operated.

Keep in mind—*Jealousy Destroys From Within*.

Learn from the white man's operating manners and be successful like him and do not give excuses to your failures. Work hard in a collective manner.²⁰

Thus, the members of the movement were called upon to pool their resources and techniques in the business fields such as building, maintenance, purchasing, in brief, wherever unity helped achieve efficiency. They were urged to exchange mutual help in training and experience from their brothers. Above all, they had to buy from their kin whenever possible, just like the whites. The example of the Chinese and Japanese was set for following in this respect. The black businessmen were called upon not to exploit their black clients and employees. The clients were also expected to help in upholding their businessmen in facing the competition of their white counterparts by paying the extra pennies that the black businessmen might charge.

The Nation of Islam under the leadership of Malcolm X maintained small businesses in the 1950s and early 1960s before they were expanded later into a business empire. It owned restaurants, bakeries, department stores, groceries, laundries like in Chicago, and large farms in Michigan and Atlanta, Georgia. The movement had established temples in almost all the cities of the USA and the latter were accompanied with restaurants, pizzerias, barber shops, clothing stores, and other businesses.

Elijah Muhammad taught his followers mutual help and set the example himself by buying a large apartment building in Chicago, evicting the white tenants and accommodating the blacks of a ghetto in the same city at lower prices. He gave another example of mutual black aid in February 1961, when he allowed free space for black exhibitors in the giant Coliseum of Chicago for three days. Fifteen thousand delegates and visitors met there in an attempt to promote Negro business towards the final aim of their economic independence.

Later during the 1960s and even the mid-1970s the Nation of Islam would continue its economic schemes, providing, thus, its followers and numbers of blacks at large with jobs, capital, and an opportunity to practise economic activities within the same race group. However, after Elijah Muhammad's death, his son would started to dismantle these programmes. First, he liquidated more than six million dollars in long-term debts and tax obligations and sold unprofitable businesses. Then, he put some other businesses under the management of *Imams* of *Masjids* (leaders of prayers at mosques) and the farms and other properties were leased to Muslims and even to non-Muslims. Warith Deen Muhammad asked only a share in the profits if they managed to make any, not to run them, for he wanted to separate the spiritual from the business element of his organization.²¹ Warith stated his opinion, "These individuals have a freehand to manage the income, monies and operation. We just look for him to show a profit. If he shows a profit, we want our share."²² This will be examined in more details in Chapter Four. The next subsection will examine what kind of moral behaviour Black Muslims adopted to achieve their goals.

IV. Moral Behaviour

Black Muslims observed a moral code in their daily life both privately and publicly. This morality, however, was not dictated by a religious faith like in true Islam or Christianity, but it was rather a set of rules of behaviour that the Black Man as a ruler of the planet had to follow.

A Black Muslim performed five prayers a day, facing the Holy City of Mecca after an ablution, for cleanliness of the body "inside and outside" was an essential requirement. This prayer, nonetheless, was unlike the Islamic one. It was rather a mere ritual which was not performed for the same reasons as the Islamic one. No relation existed between this prayer and the Hereafter, and so was the case with the morals of the Nation of Islam as led by the late Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X before his conversion to true Islam. When Black Muslims abode by their morals, they did not follow the orders of God or avoided what He forbade them to do. They expected nothing in the Hereafter, neither as reward nor as punishment for their behaviour in this life.

In this respect, Black Muslims were prohibited from eating numerous sorts of food like corn bread, and pork, and considered them as a threat to the health of their consumers. Certain sorts were considered as slave diet that had been eaten commonly by slaves in the South of the USA. Those were forbidden, as “Islam” did not tolerate slavery. The hog was forbidden, whereas lamb and fish were not. The reason why Elijah Muhammad forbade hog could be stated in his saying:

The hog is absolutely shameless. Most animals have a certain amount of shyness, but not the hog or its eater...The hog eater, it is a fact, will go nude in public if allowed. His temper is easily aroused...and he will speak the ugliest, vilest, and most filthy language...²³

The list of prohibited food contained tobacco as well. No Muslim smoked. Added to this, they were required not to overeat and one meal per day was enough. Overweight was fined until it was lost. They believed that overeating resulted in physical and mental slowness, while they were required to work hard.

The moral list extended to include temple activities and viewed them as morally binding. Muslims had to attend temple meetings two or three times a week. Those who failed were suspended. Related to the temple activity was what they termed “fishing for the dead,” which meant that male Muslims had to go into the streets to convince blacks to join the Nation of Islam. Those who failed to do so received a penalty.

Black Muslims were warned against what they called the “temptations of mainstream black culture” by meeting in each others’ homes to create their own sense of community and avoid moral deviation. As Abdul Shakir, a former FOI captain recalled:

We could not smoke. We did not drink. We were pretty puritanical in our beliefs. We couldn’t go to the movies, couldn’t go to the nightclubs, so we had to socialize at somebody’s house. The sisters would cook pastries and dinner; the brothers would listen to tapes and study their lessons. It brought strong cohesiveness among the Muslims.²⁴

Yet, it should be remarked here that this was not always the case. Not all “Muslims” abode by the teachings of Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X. This consisted in leading a hypocritical behaviour by showing conformity during service and having the forbidden pleasures

afterwards in hiding. Gerald Early, a Washington University professor and essayist, reports that NOI members would “take me to their apartment where, after the Muslim service, they would dump their paid- for copies of *Muhammad Speaks* in a closet, break out some marijuana and play jazz records all the night.”²⁵

The Nation of Islam had put a strict and puritanical code for sex and enforced it without any neglect. Breakers of this code received their punishment at the hands of the paramilitary organization, the Fruits of Islam. This code discouraged Black Muslims from seeking to marry outside the group, and those who married from without had their spouses under great pressure to join the NOI. It also discouraged divorce, but it often ended by being allowed. A Muslim woman was not allowed to be alone in a room with a strange man other than her husband. In addition, a woman member was strictly forbidden from wearing provocative dress or cosmetics. Interracial liaison incurred punishment or even exclusion from the NOI. Muslim males kept a constant alert to defend Muslim women from white men as to sex.

Another field of concern for Black Muslims was the regeneration of criminals and other fallen people for which they had been successful. The movement had done to this category of blacks more than any church or the Government or the social agencies could do for them. As Malcolm X put it:

It is a known fact, and sociologists agree that when a man becomes a follower of Elijah Muhammad, no matter how bad his morals or habits were [before], he immediately takes upon himself a change which every one admits. He stops them from being dope addicts. He stops them from being alcoholics, and [alcohol] is a curse on the so-called Negroes...²⁶

The same regenerating effort applied to thieves, who stopped stealing when the Black Muslims spoke to them, and even hardened criminals were rehabilitated.

The Black Muslim was supposed to lead a decent and clean life that did not harm society, but rather benefited it. He was called upon to live in sobriety and have dignity. He had to work hard, devote himself to his family to ensure its welfare, and be honest to others. He was also

expected to obey all constituted authority. As to the woman, she was asked to avoid imitation of the white women, whom the NOI saw as silly and often immoral. The NOI feared that imitation would destroy her marriage and harm her children. She also had to obey her husband and be modest and thrifty.

The Black Muslim community stressed self-reliance. The members were urged to think and work for themselves and their children. They were specially enjoined to stop begging others for what they had and help themselves to the goods of this earth.

V. Membership

As Eric Lincoln put it “a Black Muslim is an American Negro who is a follower of Elijah Muhammad, Spiritual Leader of the Lost-Found Nation in the West.”²⁷ Unlike true Muslims, Black Muslims believed that their late leader, Elijah Muhammad, was a messenger directly commissioned by *Allah* (W. D. Fard) to wake the sleeping Black Nation.

Most of the earliest adherents to the movement (1930-1934) came from the rural South in search of better economic opportunities in the industrial North. Here they experienced a margin of liberty that made them conscious of the total subordination of blacks by whites in the South, and sharpened their hostilities to the white man and his institutions. They were illiterate Christians, who realised that the lynching was perpetrated by whites with the same religion as themselves, and so was the case with the segregation laws to which blacks were subjugated. However, this pattern of rural migration to the North remained the same until 1959, with the exception that the overwhelming majority of adherents in this year were not from the rural South, but rather from the North. This was the result of the growing Negro population in the North and East compared to the 1930s. This northern black population became more established and those migrants who continued to arrive were from southern urbanities. The movement itself spread from the North to other parts of the USA. The members were still from the most disinherited class, but not from recently arrived rural Negroes from the South, and they were no longer illiterate.

The Nation of Islam had built its membership on young males with about 80% aged between seventeen and thirty-five.²⁸ The same proportion applied to ministers. The movement appealed to the youth because it was an activist movement in need of enthusiastic people. Old people were reared in Christianity and were not likely to shift to a totally different religion. The youth were also dynamic and receptive of new ideas. Some of the old members were ex-Garveyites or ex-Moorish Science Muslims or other black cults which developed in Harlem, Detroit, or Chicago. The three former places held considerably large black ghettos with the miserable living conditions usually concomitant with such ghettos. They found it natural to belong to the NOI, believing it was the natural heir of these Black Nationalist movements.

The males occupied the first position in number in the movement and fully managed the temple affairs.²⁹ Women also took part in temple activities in the businesses owned by the temples. Inside the temple, they assumed roles not conflicting with the males' ones, who had the primary organizational responsibility.

The members were essentially from the lower class, and in the early 1930s they were all dole recipients and lived in the most deteriorated Negro living boroughs in Detroit. Nonetheless, by 1937 they were all employed in the automobile industry and lived in the best Negro boroughs and purchased the most expensive furniture, cars, and clothes.³⁰ By 1959, Black Muslims enjoyed full employment, but continued to live in the worst areas of the slums.

The NOI still recruited its members from groups with a low income and lower educational level. Only few intellectuals joined the movement with an increasing number of university students and a small number of businessmen, and professionals. Membership of the temples remained predominantly composed of labourers, factory workers, and other low-income jobs. Nonetheless, the number of skilled workers increased with time until the majority of the NOI businesses were housed in buildings renovated by Black Muslims' engineers and technicians. The movement had also many photographers, stenographers, and secretaries.

Not all members were recruited from healthy and moral social backgrounds; a number of them came from extralegal ones. Some were drug addicts, alcoholics, pimps, prostitutes, gamblers, and ex-convicts. By 1959, the NOI had about three temples in prisons. The movement was successful in rehabilitating all those who joined it and remained within its ranks. There was no delinquency within the movement.

In the early 1960s, Black Muslims still chose to live in slums, marking their affiliation to lower-class Negroes even if their economic situation improved. Only Elijah Muhammad lived in a nineteen-room mansion in a rich borough near the University of Chicago. Part of this building housed the Nation's offices, and a number of rooms were destined to the ministers, guests, and visitors from abroad for temporary use. But most ministers lived in slums.

The Black Ghetto was the best choice place for Muslims to set up their temples and businesses for the purpose of drawing their support from the disinherited and dissident groups, who were ready to revolt against the aggressive white community.

It can also be said that the membership was made solely among American Negroes. Even though Theodore Rozier, a Haitian, was a minister of the NOI in the mid-thirties, no other foreign national was ever encouraged to join the movement thereafter. Satakata Takahashi, a Japanese spy, aided the Nation as an advisor, not as a member, though he had established friendship with its leadership. The Arab Shaikh Diab, from Palestine, a teacher of Arabic in the University of Islam of the NOI never became a member, because he was a white foreigner. Black Muslims did not trust foreigners. The same applied to students from Islamic countries, who attended the temples of the movement but were not encouraged to join.

Another feature of the membership in the movement was that the predominant members came from Protestant Christian backgrounds. A minority was ex-Catholic, and some were even former Christian preachers. The black joiners under twenty had shaky Christian convictions, the fact that explains their readiness to join a new religion. They were in need of a religion or a movement that would provide them with a satisfying religious feeling and concrete results. Blacks in the USA had always been religious, but they became bitter with

their religion, which had not protected them from the oppression of their white Christian brethren.

On the other hand, what made the NOI attractive to blacks was its strong insistence on group solidarity and its acute sense of consciousness of kind. It viewed people either as black or white, and called upon blacks to join its ranks and pool their efforts to attain the goals of this group. The aims could be summed up in gaining the independence of blacks from the dominance of the white man, ensure economic protection and security from his aggression everywhere, and enable them to face him and criticize him without fear.³¹ The movement's ultimate appeal to blacks lay in the chance offered to them to become identified with a strong power able to overcome white domination and even subordinate it later. Thus, although the movement claimed to be a religious one, it relegated what it called religion to a secondary position. "Religion" was used to strengthen the sense of group solidarity.³²

The anti-Christian teaching of the NOI ministers appealed to some of the black youths as a rebellion against the authority of parents, which wore the symbol of regular church attendance. To reject this authority, a youth might take refuge in the temples of the NOI. The church led the black youths to disillusion, and caused them to identify it with social apathy and racial subordination.

The NOI stress on manifest fraternal responsibility represented a strong appeal to the blacks, who had an extreme feeling of social and civil insecurity. Being social outcasts, they felt compelled to join the Black Muslims to get out of the feeling of helplessness and isolation and to overcome the insecurity of want and sickness. In the movement, they found consolation and companionship.

The NOI had a cause that was expressed in extreme solidarity among the group. Each one was called upon to lie his life for his brother, and more particularly for his sister in case of aggression by whites. A number of blacks were ready to join the movement for this sake to canalize the excessive hostility resulting from the racial oppression they had been subjected to. This readiness to die for the brother was manifested in 1958 when the New York Police

arrested a black man mistakenly. In a short while, hundreds of Black Muslims gathered near the precinct in a disciplined manner, waiting for a gesture from their leader, Malcolm X, for action. Seeing this, the police were awed and immediately released the Black Muslim and so the brothers dispersed in a similarly quiet manner. This demonstration of strength on the part of Black Muslims impressed many blacks, who immediately joined the NOI. This was seen as an important victory for the cause of Black Muslims.

Another appeal to blacks to join the movement was the simplicity of its titles and social status. Simplicity could be found in titles which were limited to “minister” and only the leader had the title of “the Honorable Messenger Elijah Muhammad”, but no “doctor” or “saint.” They all called one another “brother” or “sister.” The Black Muslims emphasized youth and masculinity. Members were all clean-shaven, well dressed in conservative clothes, without any flamboyance. In temples they appeared in military-like movements inspiring force and strong dignity. They put on no uniforms, except for a button with a crescent and a star fixed to their lapels. Added to this, their appearance suggested self-assurance, confidence, and dignity. Many blacks found themselves attracted to the NOI with the aforementioned values it represented as well as the redefined roles of men and women. Each sex was given a proper role, contrary to the trend of blurring traditional lines between them. Thus, the NOI claimed it had restored dignity and respect to the woman and the traditional responsibilities of the man as head of the family. The women felt secure in their homes and well respected, for Black Muslims were forbidden any kind of disrespect towards wives. The children were totally spared delinquency.

VI. Education

The Nation of Islam established its own schools for the education of its members’ children as early as the beginning of the movement during the short leadership of W. D. Fard. Dissatisfied with the white education given to black children, the latter set up the first parochial school which he styled the University of Islam in Detroit in 1932. Soon thereafter, a second one was established in Chicago in 1934. The distrust of white educational institutions had been signalled occasionally by Black Nationalists, and the leadership of the NOI was no exception. Elijah Muhammad believed the black children did not really benefit from the

education received in the established schools, because, he thought, the programmes were designed by the slave masters to keep the Negro in his place. He said:

The education and training of our children must not be limited to the “Three Rs (reading, ’riting and ’rithmetic)” only. It should instead include the history of the black nation, the knowledge of civilizations of man and the Universe, and all sciences. ..Learning is a great virtue and I would like to see all the children of my followers become the possessors of it. It will make us even a greater people tomorrow.³³

He thought that the Negro education in white schools did not enable him to think for himself and inquire into his past and be proud of his history before his enslavement. The Negro knew nothing about his glorious past. The white man was not ready to give him such knowledge.

In addition, this education did not inculcate in him the desire to be economically independent. Above all, most of the educated black elite were not made to feel responsible towards the black community at large. Later, Elijah Muhammad reminded the educated Negroes that although they had spent almost a century since their emancipation, they still held only a few diplomas and degrees. Worse, the white man did not give justice and respect to the Negro holders of college degrees. According to him, the white man had designed the blacks’ education with the intent of perpetuating their servitude. This aroused the desire of the NOI to set up its own parochial school system.

Elijah Muhammad set the objective of his schools as to re-educate the Negro, who had been victimized by mis-education in order to enable him to regain his high place as a Black Man. The student had to acquire from his education a feeling of dignity and appreciation of his own black kind. Besides, the University of Islam took the duty of teaching the supposedly daily Muslim duties, Arabic, observing the presumed Muslim dietary laws alongside with developing the Muslim child’s character. The University of Islam operated on a basis of fifty-two weeks a year.

The Nation of Islam did not exclude girls from its system of education. It believed that both sexes had to receive equal education. Moreover, girls had to receive special training in house management for their future duties as wives and mothers. The University of Islam dispensed courses for this end; however, those who could not attend them were invited to join

the Temple of Islam and attend the Muslim Girls' Training classes. The NOI, furthermore, believed that black students should not integrate with white ones in schools and colleges. More, especially, black girls were discouraged from mixing with white children.

The members' children were supposed to attend the University of Islam, which was not a university in the true sense of this word. It was rather a series of elementary and secondary schools. At the beginning of its history in the 1930s, it had a problem with the Board of Education of Detroit, which decided that its curriculum did not match with those approved by this authority. Elijah Muhammad and other ministers of the NOI were sued at court under the charge of contributing to the delinquency of minors, but were freed later.³⁴ A similar trouble happened to this university in 1959 when the same Board decided that it had inadequate physical facilities.

The University of Islam in Chicago worked only as an elementary school up to 1953, and the following year a high school curriculum was provided. It was built up of two stories only, with the first floor containing five classrooms and small facilities like the restrooms and the principal's office. The second floor housed an auditorium where classes were held in the day and Temple activities at night. A small library was also there, and the auditorium contained the picture of Elijah Muhammad and the flag of the NOI, along with a mural of the Taj Mahal as the only decorations.³⁵ Later in 1956, it contained replicas of the flags of Muslim countries like Turkey, Morocco, Arabia, Egypt and even the flag of the Algerian government in exile was present.

Almost only children of Black Muslims were enrolled, but a few girls whose parents were not adherents of the NOI were an exception in the mid-1950s.³⁶ Boys studied separately from girls, for the poorest Black Muslims' children, whose parents lived in apartments with one or two other families, attended the University. This environment encouraged juvenile delinquency, immorality, and many sorts of vice. Therefore, the NOI separated them in order to inculcate morality to them. It was an effort to reform the Black Muslim family. Although an Egyptian principal integrated both sexes in the same classes for the reasons of lack of space and economy, Elijah Muhammad asked him to separate them and wait until the new centre

was built to provide more space. He aimed at building an Islamic Centre in Chicago with an estimated initial cost of \$20 million. It would include a mosque, a library, and a hospital.³⁷

As to the curriculum, it was patterned after that of public schools, except for a few subjects that were particular to the NOI: Astronomy, Chronological History from B.C.13,000, Spook Being Displayed for 6,000 Years, Ending of the Spook Civilization, and Chronology. These subjects were not taught separately, but rather considered as religion and taught by the minister in the class on Islam.³⁸

Special emphasis was put on Arabic, which was taught from the fourth grade and throughout high school and was considered as the national language of the Black Muslims. Some of the students acquired a good level in Arabic. An example could be made of Elijah Muhammad's son, Akbar, who graduated at the University of Islam in Chicago and was able to translate for his father during a tour to the Islamic states in Africa and Asia. Religion was taught only in the Islam class, and had no status as a separate academic subject.³⁹

Black Muslims gave the history of world civilizations importance and emphasis, but no separate course was devoted to the history of the Black Nation, though Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X glorified it in order to heighten the spirits of their followers. The latter were supposed to have inspiration from their past history and regain their position as masters of the world ultimately. Students studied, instead, American history and the University bought the most current books of history to be used for reference.

Despite the physical limitations of the school, its performance seemed to Essien-Udosen reasonable.⁴⁰ Besides, Naeem, a Muslim Arab, who visited it in 1956, expressed his satisfaction with the learning of Arabic and authentic Islamic prayer practice⁴¹ by saying:

During my visit to the School, I had the great pleasure of seeing young adults (boys and girls) recite passages from the Koran from memory and perform the prayer ritual in a perfect manner. They were also able to carry on conversation in Arabic, using authentic Arab accent. (Needless to say, I was greatly impressed to see such a progress made by the converts to Islam. In fact, when a group of eight or nine girls sang for me a popular hymn in Arabic I was moved to tears. Such was the beautiful and unforgettable sight that my eyes saw there !)

In this quotation, Naeem testified to the authenticity of the Islamic prayer as performed by the students at the University of Islam. In the preceding chapter of this thesis, there was a

description of prayer being performed by raising hands towards the East and reciting an imploration (*Duaa*). The imploration version was confirmed by authors as well as by Malcolm X in his *Autobiography*.⁴² When Malcolm X went to Mecca to perform the *hajj*, he was unable to perform the right Islamic prayer, because he had never learnt how to do it in the Nation of Islam, though he had been a plenipotentiary Muslim minister. What Naeem described as authentic Islamic prayer might be the result of the work of a Palestinian teacher of Arabic by the name Jamil Diab, who attempted to reform the Islamic belief and practices of the NOI from within. Being unable to obtain concrete results, Diab left the movement.

Adults benefited from the education offered by the University of Islam through evening and night courses. Those nightly classes were reserved only to registered Muslims, the Fruit of Islam, and Muslim Girls' Training programmes. Information about them was limited, as the Nation of Islam enveloped the training of the FOI in secrecy. Some courses were dispensed at night, and these probably concerned newly arrived Southerners with limited ability to read and write. The latter were offered the chance to improve their level in reading, writing, and arithmetics. However, this was not the only place to improve themselves. Another evening training could be taken at the evening city schools to learn technical skills and businesses.

Black Muslims placed a high premium on the special education of Black Muslim women to prepare them for their important future role as mothers of the would be Black Men, the inheritors of the Original Black Man. The women attended a special training programme at the Temple on weeknights called the Muslim Girls' Training and General Civilization Class (MGT-GCC). This programme was used by the NOI as an effective means for recruiting women in the movement. Its main concentration was upon the homemaking art. Women received training on hygiene, cooking, sewing, keeping a house, rearing children, caring for husbands, and behaving at home and outside.⁴³ The women attending the MGT programme were required to have a high moral behaviour to be able to bring up a generation of highly behaved Black Men. Girls aged fifteen to nineteen joined an MGT programme called Junior Division.

Ministers of the Temples of Islam attended the adult programmes of the University of Islam, even though they received the greatest part of their training from Elijah Muhammad. The ministers were selected among the members of the Fruit of Islam and were taught and tested in public speaking. For their training, they used to speak briefly in the nightly meetings of Wednesdays.

VII. The Fruit of Islam

The Fruit of Islam (FOI) was a paramilitary organization established by W. D. Fard during his leadership in the early 1930s for the aim of providing security for the Lost-Found Nation of Islam. At that time, the adherents of the Temple of Islam were small in number and vulnerable to the hostility of the whites, especially the police. As Erdman Beynon reported in his early study of the movement:

Fear of trouble with the unbelievers, especially with the police, led to the founding of the Fruit of Islam –a paramilitary organization for the men who were drilled by captains in military tactics and the use of firearms.⁴⁴

This organization had a section in every temple of the NOI and had become the most powerful autonomous body within the movement. It was placed under the command of Supreme Captain Raymond Sharrieff, the son-in-law of Elijah Muhammad. Its headquarters was established in Chicago with that of the movement. Members of the FOI reported not to the minister of the local temple, but to the Supreme Captain. Thus, they were independent from the command of the ministers of the local temples in all parts of the USA. This meant they were distinguished as an elite within the rank and file Black Muslims and caused fear to ministers and the rest of the followers. Trained in military protocol, boxing, judo, and wrestling, the FOI members modelled proper male behaviour for other members and blacks outside the Nation.⁴⁵ Given their special roles and responsibilities, they were both the objects of admiration and fear.

Elijah Muhammad assigned to the FOI top security responsibilities and made it to operate in total secrecy, the fact that aroused the suspicions of the FBI as to the real role of this body. Black Muslims themselves later began to fear it when its role exceeded that of protecting the

Muslims from aggression from without, and took to imposing discipline and whipping them into line, in case they did not abide by all regulations of the movement.

The functions of the FOI had doubled back on the movement. In the 1950s and 1960s, it took the responsibility of acting as a police force and court-martial to prevent any Muslim from displaying a desire to disobey the leadership of the movement, or have a different opinion—in short any opposition to the leadership. It became an admirable and fearful body for members of the same fold. Later, it was accused of even executing physical elimination of dissenters.

The best able-bodied and psychologically fittest males had been selected to this body, where a temple enjoyed a high number of joiners, but the criteria for selection could be less demanding in temples with low membership. In such a case, all males were taken in as members of the FOI in that temple. The chain of command was simple and efficient. The organization was divided into sections, which in turn were divided into squads, and a lieutenant headed each squad. All the lieutenants of a section reported to a captain, who in turn reported directly to Elijah Muhammad. In practice, the captains used to report to Raymond Sharrieff. During the lifetime of Muhammad, the latter assigned the leadership of the FOI to Raymond Sharrieff, his son-in-law, and entrusted Elijah, Jr., his son, with second command in order to secure trust and loyalty. This indicates the Chief Minister's wise choice, since he was aware of the danger of the organization if put into hands out of his family fold. The Chief Minister, whom the followers called by the title "the Most Honorable Messenger of *Allah*" drew his personal security force from the FOI section of Temple No. 2, in Chicago, headed by his son, Elijah, Jr.

The FOI members engaged in body building sports and received training in Judo and military drill as well as the use of knives and blackjacks.⁴⁶ They prepared themselves for playing heroic roles in the 'Battle of Armageddon' that would topple the dominance of the white devils. As providers of security and discipline, the members stood guard inside temples to enforce security, search visitors, guard ministers and travelling officials, and impose order during Muslim meetings. They also had the duty of supervising trials of Muslims, who

committed offences like adultery, consumption of drugs, and improper use of temple funds. Other offences were absence from weekly meetings or sleeping during them, being unable to bring new prospective recruits, reporting temple activities to non-members, being impolite to Muslim women, eating pork or selling liquors, or not paying the dues for overweight, etc.

The minister and the FOI captain conducted the trials in the presence of all the FOI sections. In case a religious issue was involved, the minister would pronounce the verdict after the charges were read, without allowing the defendant to defend himself. The sentence had no appeal. The captain pronounced the sentence in all other cases. For each category of offences, there was a sentence. This ranged from performing labour in the temple for minor violations to suspension from any contact with the rest of the movement for three months to five years. The most serious punishment was complete and definite expulsion from the movement. The latter sentence was rarely invoked.

The Fruit of Islam were considered as the best exemplars of the Black Nation, and were submitted to live to the most demanding ideals of the movement. Careful screening of the candidates took place before they were admitted into this body. They passed oral examinations and were required to recite passages verbatim from the history of the NOI and its organization without any single error. If successful, they were required to take a secret oath of admission. They were required to be able to protect themselves from any attack at any moment and also to promote unity and harmony within the FOI. Members were also taught to respect all constituted authority and to protect Black Muslim women from any immorality or aggression by white males. They were made to defend their women even at the cost of their and her life. The FOI were, besides, called upon to assume the position of leaders of their families at home. This paramilitary organization was characterized by power, secrecy, high standards, and strict discipline.

The NOI members used to see the members of the FOI as the vanguard of Muslims and the army of the Black Man that would fight the Battle of Armageddon to eradicate the white man. The Black Muslims viewed their movement as the natural and logical outcome of the chain of slavery and injustices that their fathers and themselves had been exposed to for centuries. The movement bore inside itself the seeds of the Black Nation that would come at the aftermath of

the Battle of Armageddon to rule the world in peace and justice, in a world free from the hateful domination of the white man. Thus, the FOI was the symbol of the inner meaning of the movement, as Eric Lincoln put it.

The FOI attended all trials of the NOI and punished those brethren committing major offences as well as minor ones. The FOI punished them for disloyalty and disobedience to the line of the NOI, but these turned later to be resented by the rest of Black Muslims. The latter hated them when they were, for example, punished for failing to sell their daily quota of *Muhammad Speaks*, the central press organ of the movement. The FOI turned to a power keeping the brethren in line. It became an elite in the NOI, contrary to the promises of the leadership to establish a community without distinction and oppression. The Black Muslims found that they were second-class citizens again, this time within the Black Nation of Islam, their high ideal.

VIII. Mass Media Communication

During his lifetime, Elijah Muhammad made considerable efforts to reach the Negro masses and enable them to hear his “*Message to the Black Man in North America*,” to lift them from their fall. Malcolm X too made contributions even greater than the leader to establish newspapers and magazines and speak in radio stations and television channels. To this end, Elijah Muhammad used all the mass media available to his movement. First, he used rallies to address the Negro masses in the 1950s and visited cities such as New York, Boston, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Los Angeles, Washington, etc., where blacks came in thousands to hear him speak. Generally, his speaking rallies drew crowds of eight to ten thousand and no fewer than four hundred.⁴⁷

In the 1950s, Elijah Muhammad wrote a regular weekly column in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, which drew a large black readership and stirred a passionate debate between his supporters and his detractors. His column revitalized the newspaper, which had been losing readers and caused its circulation to increase suddenly as Black Muslims took the duty of hawking the papers in street corners and places usually frequented by Negroes such as black churches and NAACP meetings. Each brother was assigned a quota to sell out obligatorily. However, in

1959, Chicago businessman S. B. Fuller bought the controlling interest in the paper and dropped Muhammad's column immediately.

Subsequently, Elijah Muhammad moved his column to California, where it began to appear in the *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch* on a weekly basis. This paper came close to becoming a NOI press organ in effect. It began to publish an edition in Chicago and opened offices in other cities having important numbers of Muhammad's followers. The Chicago offices of the paper were put under the supervision of Raymond Sharrieff, the Supreme Captain of the FOI. It was sold in all Black Muslims' businesses, ghettos and street corners, with individual brothers being assigned quotas to sell out and not return any issue. Those who failed to sell out all were either punished by the Fruit of Islam, or hid the rest of newspapers at home and paid their total price themselves to escape punishment.⁴⁸

The Dispatch was totally pro-black, approving the NOI goals to attain the salvation of the Negroes in America. It gave predominance to Black Muslims' affairs, and extensive coverage to Elijah Muhammad's addresses as well as to those of Malcolm X before his exclusion from the NOI in 1964. Featuring included guest columns by Black Muslim ministers, stories about temple activities, temples addresses, enterprises, and individuals. To encourage Elijah Muhammad, in 1960 the paper presented him with the highest Achievement Award as a recognition for his organizing about one half million Negroes, uplifting fallen humanity, teaching the Negro to be pro-black, which according to the *Dispatch* was not teaching hate.

The *Dispatch* frequently attacked Christianity and Judaism. Christianity was described as the religion of the white man, who held the Bible in one hand and the bottle of gin in the other and enslaved the blacks, oppressed them economically, lynched them, bombed their churches, segregated them from whites, and forbade them from voting. The paper also reminded its readers that Christianity in Germany used gas ovens to rid the world of millions of Jews, and the USA dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the paper charged the Belgians of slaughtering the Congolese, the Christian French of bombing the Algerians and Tunisians while receiving the support of Christian Britain and the USA. Such was, sometimes, the editorial line, though the paper claimed total neutrality as to religious matters.

The NOI had a number of special publications during the leadership of Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X that were aimed at advertising Elijah Muhammad's activities and philosophy. Among these, there was a booklet with the title *The Supreme Wisdom: Solution to the So-Called Negroes' Problem*. Containing fifty-six pages, the booklet was poorly written and poorly organized, and few out of the movement could see it. In it, Elijah Muhammad addressed topics such as Christianity, what the enemy of the Negroes was doing, integration, the hog and its eaters, heaven and earth, principles of belief, speaking the truth, prayer keeping, cleaning internally and externally, liberating the believer, etc.

In 1959, *The Islamic News*, appeared as a tabloid-sized paper of eight pages and was devoted to the transcript of the "Exclusive Verbatim Transcript of [Muhammad's] Historic Washington Speech"⁵⁰ The address was an important one and was delivered in Washington in a large mass rally. Muhammad considered himself triumphant and showed off his power to the government that had earlier humiliated him and put him in jail. It was a kind of revenge.

Later, Malcolm X launched *The Messenger*, a magazine, as a resolve of Black Muslims to recruit a million blacks by the end of 1961. It featured typical Muslim activities with pictures. Several pages were devoted to the schools of the movement, to women shown in pictures busy doing their homemaking, and to commercial enterprises. One issue featured a typical Muslim family, that of Supreme Captain Raymond Sharrieff, the son-in-law of Elijah Muhammad. However, *The Messenger* ceased publication after its first issue.

The major paper of the movement was a tabloid-sized monthly paper entitled *Muhammad Speaks*. Launched in May 1960 by Malcolm X, it was devoted to covering the general activities of Black Muslims, with issues with special interest to women. It was a professional paper in many respects such as composition, layout, and effectiveness of photography. It had a wide circulation, and was sold in places where blacks generally congregated.

Another paper called *Salaam* appeared in 1960 and was a picture magazine, published in Philadelphia and focused on Elijah Muhammad's activities like his trip to Mecca. Along with this publication, another one called *Elijah Muhammad Speaks to the Blackman* appeared and

dealt with stories by playing on racial feelings to such a degree that many blacks found it exaggerating.

In addition to these Black Muslim publications and what stories other general media published about them, they had the tendency to exploit every chance for advertising their cause. In addition, Black Muslims were interested in addressing the public by radio and television to get its attention. Specially featuring in these media, was Malcolm X when on good terms with his mentor Elijah Muhammad in the late 1950s. He interpreted the movement to the public at large through his radio and television interviews. Notable television journalists such as Mike Wallace and radio top-flight journalists like Nat Hentoff, Louis Lomax, and Chuck Stone interviewed him. Malcolm X sometimes turned a half-hour planned interview to one longer than two hours.

Black Muslims were also interested in having their own radio stations on which they broadcast weekly lectures on their movement and its philosophy and the different programmes to solve the Negro problem in America. In 1960, they were able to talk about their movement in seven radio stations in major US cities, with more than a hundred-mile radius. This included, for example, stations like WERD, Atlanta; WHAT, Philadelphia; WSID, Baltimore, etc.

IX. Relations with other Communities

9.1. The Black Community

The Lost-Found Nation of Islam was born among Negroes in secrecy until it was brought into public attention in Detroit in 1934, when an adherent killed another one as a religious ritual. Police then started to watch the movement closely to prevent the occurring of such crimes in future. The first public knowledge of the NOI was that of the horror of the sacrificial rite, which left a negative impression in the American communities. The Black Muslims, who were psychologically indrawn, shrouded their activities with secrecy. Therefore, they were almost unknown to the large public until the late 1950s. In this time, Mike Wallace produced his documentary film “Hate that Hate Produced” on the movement. The film shocked the

audience with its intense hate message. Black leaders became seriously concerned with the increasing appeal of the movement to the black masses for both attracting their recruits, as well as for threatening the integrational achievements painstakingly won by the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s.

The black leadership comprising businessmen, intellectuals, and politicians believed in the joint action with whites to improve the condition of blacks in the USA. Muhammad's allegations against the "white Devils" embarrassed them and risked endangering their strategy. American blacks believed in reaching their desired aims even with delay, for they believed in the essential integrity of the American Creed and Christianity. The black leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr.,⁵¹ Ralph Abernathy⁵² were aware of the impossibility of solving the Negro problem without help from other groups of society. The other alternative to solve it by blacks alone would be either by separating from the whites or annihilating them. Neither choice offered itself as realistic to the black leadership.

However, the NOI did not repudiate any of the two possibilities. It went some way in separating socially, economically, and politically from the white community and it even considered the way to destroy it when time came. Malcolm X saw this option a necessity while talking to a white audience at the Boston University. He likened the blacks in America to a baby for which it was necessary to get out of the mother or to destroy her:

A child stays within the mother until the time of birth. When the time of birth arrives, the child must be separated or it will destroy the mother itself...Twenty million so-called Negroes in America number a nation within a nation, crying for freedom. We must be free. We must be born. We must be separated or cause the destruction of both.⁵³

The Black leadership, however, could not ignore the Black Muslims altogether. It had to recognize this radical black movement, especially as it was attracting followers by thousands. Thus, in 1958 Black Muslims organized a two-day feast in Harlem, New York, to which they invited black politicians. A number of distinguished ones attended. Hulan Jack, the president of Manhattan Borough came as did City Councilman Earl Brown, Judge Carson DeWitt Baker, State Senator James Watson. Other notables of political, labour, and fraternal organizations came as well. Black Muslims' relations with black politicians were generally better than with any other group of black leadership.

As to the black intellectuals, they failed to know about the existence of the NOI up to the early 1960s. Like other Negroes out of the lower class, the intellectuals were not concerned with attending Elijah Muhammad's meetings in temples or elsewhere. What some of them knew came from their white friends, who happened to have read about them in the press. Black Muslims had been featuring in both the black and white press for the late 1950s and early 1960s and received national coverage. Still the black intellectuals, in their majority, knew practically nothing about their existence. The explanation for this phenomenon was the psychological insulation, which they imposed on themselves in part. The latter were cautious not to have anything that would compromise the Negro social and intellectual maturity. They strove to show the Negro as a normal integral citizen.

On their part, Black Muslims did not approve of the black intellectuals. They believed that the intellectuals had been schooled for a long time in the schools of the white man and had, therefore, their brains washed. The few intellectuals who joined the movement at the expense of their status were considered as true race leaders. Only a few were expected to further join the NOI as they considered them "satisfied black men" little aware of the miserable life of the majority of Negroes. On the other hand, the black intellectuals saw the NOI as a threat to the aspirations of the blacks in America.

The other group of important black groups were the big businessmen, who disfavoured Muhammad's extremism, but approved of his call to economic solidarity to protect and boost black economic interests. They found Black Muslims correct and reliable in their business dealings. The latter bought good quality merchandise with cash in general.

9. 2. The Black Press

The black press gave little support to the NOI and its teachings. Black Muslims used it as a medium to become known to the public. As their public activities were news stories, the black press had to give them space as its duty to inform the public.

The black newspapers, which mostly gave space to the NOI were the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the *Los Angeles Herald-Dispatch*, the *New Jersey Herald News* and the *New York Amsterdam*

News. The latter invited an African Muslim, Isa S. Wali, to write about universal Islam and invited its readers to judge for themselves who was practising true Islam. This initiative was taken as readers contested the authenticity of the Islam of the NOI.⁵⁴

9. 3. Relation with the Leaders of Black Organizations

In the 1950s, the blacks pinned their hopes on the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)⁵⁵ for solving the Negro problem in the USA. As these hopes had failed earlier in the Church and in the major political parties, and an expectation in the goodness of the moral consciousness of a number of whites, blacks turned to their racial organizations.

In its turn, the NAACP showed considerable confidence in the law, the courts, and its lawyers and it could win some legal decisions such as the *Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka*⁵⁶ in 1954 to desegregate schools. These encouraged blacks to express their moral and civic convictions through this organization. But to many American blacks, the NAACP legal ways were considerably slow, expensive, and uncertain. Consequently, they questioned the usefulness of such an organization if other groups of non-black citizens took those privileges for granted while blacks spent money and time repeatedly to secure them. Followers of Elijah Muhammad, who lacked the means to secure their rights through time-consuming proceedings rejected them and saw no reason why the NAACP should continue to exist. They did not understand the organization or the complex politico-social relations surrounding it. They also rejected it because blacks seeking acceptance by whites identified with it, and Black Muslims wanted separation not acceptance that they distrusted. They also believed that any black organization containing among its leadership whites would be inhibited and its freedom curtailed by white participants and donations.

In April 1959, Elijah Muhammad praised the NAACP and the good job it was doing “within its limitations” by which he meant the interracial board and the donations it received from whites. Elijah Muhammad wanted above the interracial contacts the establishment of a “Black Council” to co-ordinate a strategy that would ensure an independence from the white man, wishing to preside it himself. But this was not to gain acceptance from the NAACP.

In 1959, Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary of the NAACP, under the pressure of both races made a strong indictment of the NOI. He said:

The NAACP opposes and regards as dangerous any group, white or black, political or religious, that preaches hatred among men. Hatred destroys men—the haters and the hated. The so-called Moslems who teach black supremacy and hatred of all white people have gained a following only because America has been so slow in granting equal opportunities and has permitted the abuse and persecution of Negro citizens.⁵⁷

Thurgood Marshall, chief legal council of this organization, made a less diplomatic and a more direct statement of the NAACP when addressing an audience at Princeton University. He denounced the NOI as being “run by a bunch of thugs organized from prisons and jails, and financed, I am sure, by Nasser or some Arab group.”⁵⁸

The answer came from Malcolm X, who referred to Marshall as a twentieth century Uncle Tom, who had accepted the Zionist philosophy. He also accused the NAACP of being infiltrated by the Zionists, who were “the most subtle, successful, and insidious [hate group]... and have injected their poison into the ugly American, the Uncle Tom.”⁵⁹

According to *The Dispatch*, which published the article of Malcolm X, the Jews infiltrated the NAACP to promote the Jewish interests in the guise of helping the Negro.⁶⁰

The other black organization that came to the attention of Black Muslims was the National Urban League.⁶¹ They believed the white man controlled it and it depended on his philanthropy. Thus, it was not the answer to the Negro question. This movement did not come into direct conflict with the NOI. However, its Executive Secretary Lester B. Granger conceded that Black Muslims were only a temporary symptom of the crisis in the race relations, and that later they would fade into oblivion. In his opinion, improvements in the Negro status were to result from the patient co-operation of whites and blacks.

Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., came under the fire of the NOI, which blamed him for his passive resistance and his college student sit-ins. It castigated King for what it termed a “slave philosophy” which cunning Christianity succeeded in instilling in him. His principle of loving his oppressor instead of retaliating against him angered the NOI. It furthermore accused him of turning thousands of Negroes into docile slaves. Even his fitness to lead American

blacks was distrusted when he left Montgomery, Alabama, and went to Atlanta, Georgia, to work as associate minister where his father had served. The NOI accused King of fleeing the racial struggle that was soon to erupt in hostile Alabama to the safety of Atlanta, among wealthy Negroes. It depicted him as developing his philosophy from “turn the other cheek” to “turn and run away.” Passivity, Black Muslims believed, robbed the Negro of his sole weapon that was to fight like a man. Malcolm X challenged King to come to Harlem, New York, and prove to the Negroes that “peaceful suffering” was the solution to the daily atrocities they were suffering in all America.

King did not reply to the accusations of Black Muslims, but some time earlier while addressing the National Bar Association in Milwaukee, he described the Black Muslims as one of the hate groups arising in their midst, which would preach a doctrine of black supremacy. It was a new bigotry as bad as the old one of white supremacy.⁶²

The Committee on Racial Equality (CORE), the organization which led the student sit-ins in the mid-1950s did not escape Black Muslim attack. They charged it with putting the lives of Negro children on the line while they sat and sipped cocktails in the lounges of Fifth Avenue in New York.

Generally, black leaders of non-violent organizations seeking to improve the Negro condition ignored the NOI charges and refrained from writing about them in the press. They saw that they would gain nothing from defending themselves in the press. No constructive communication between the two groups was possible.

9. 4. The Movement and Blacks outside it.

In the late 1950s, black people in America became more impatient about attaining their social dignity and being the object of the values of the American society of equality, liberty, and the right to the pursuit of happiness. To achieve this aim, they generally could not decide about the means to use. Would it be suitable to just rely on the institutionalized black leadership as the NAACP, CORE⁶³ and the Student Non-Violent Committee (SNCC),⁶⁴ and wait, or would it be more convenient to use individual initiative to be first class citizens? In

the street, they could wait no longer. The case of Rosa Parks,⁶⁵ who sparked the bus boycott of the city of Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955, could be singled out as an illustration. Although she believed in the programme of the institutionalized black leaders, she was physically and spiritually unable to stand the maltreatment of racial discrimination any more. As she was riding a segregated bus in Montgomery in the evening after a tiring workday, a white man got into the bus and the bus conductor asked her to give up her seat to the white man. She refused to get up and pushed back to free the seat for him, which led the bus conductor to call the police who came and arrested her for breaking a city transportation regulation. When black activists heard about the incident, they organized a bus boycott that lasted more than a year and obtained the desegregation of transportation for all America. This proves that the black man in the street could not wait further for the black leaders to realize his aims. The bus boycott took the NAACP by surprise and invigorated it. The same thing can be said about student sit-ins⁶⁶ of the 1950s when the students started a spontaneous movement of desegregating eating places and cafeterias. They went to restaurants reserved for whites only and ordered for meals, with the knowledge that they would not be served. This happened as they expected. The Sit-in Movement spread to various states in the South and resulted in the desegregation of eating places and other public services. Here again the students took the black leaders by surprise. In both cases the black people were unable to wait for the slow progress which the institutionalised black movements were making to respond to their pressing daily needs. In such a situation, Elijah Muhammad's call for a "united front of black men" could find hearers.

Blacks believed in general that their plight also resulted partly from their lack of unity to resist white oppression. However, middle-class Negroes were receptive to the idea of group protest, but within the limits of American democracy. They wanted a united front to resist racial prejudice, not an aggressive black front.⁶⁷

Moreover, the majority of middle –class Negroes were dissuaded by the rigid discipline of the NOI and its total control of the members' behaviour. These black people were conformist to the general values of society whereas the philosophy of the Black Muslims was not so. Besides, they associated Black Muslims with potential violence. To this, another reason that

kept them from joining the movement or making a committed participation to it can be added. It was the idea of suspicion by which the FBI enveloped this movement. Some blacks reported that after they had visited a temple, the FBI agents soon called them for investigation. Above all, the middle-class Negro was disgusted to add another racial philosophy after suffering a long time from the white one.

A few small black businessmen from the middle-class, however, joined the movement to save their business. These were threatened by the white boycott of their business and believed that solution could be found in the NOI economic programme, race pride, and moral uplift. The rest of the philosophy did not interest them.

The few other Negroes of the middle-class who joined the movement were those who challenged the values of society, implying conformity and particularly docility and admission of the inferiority of their race. This occurred when a limited number of college students were recruited. Veterans of the armed services who nursed their resentment of the “reward” they had been promised for defending their nation, also fell into this category.⁶⁸

Low-class Negroes’ attitudes towards the Black Muslims had more motivations than the preceding class. They had a strong admiration for Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X and the other ministers and expressed their identification with what they stood for. Talking about them in street corners, cafés, hairdressers’ and the like was unavoidable. Black Muslims came to symbolize action for them. The black people further down in the social scale lost patience in the techniques of education and negotiation adopted by the black institutionalised leadership and the white moderates. They were in the incapacity of understanding how a man so educated and sophisticated could not make the difference between right and wrong. More, how could a few Ku Klux Klan Congressmen impose a status of wrong on the whole USA, a nation supposed to live up to its ideals of equality for all its citizens. They had been forced to doubt the good will of whites and be more ready to accept Elijah Muhammad’s allegation that whites brainwashed the Negroes with their “tricknology.”

The Spartan requirements of the NOI prohibited certain black people in the lower class such as women who found the ban on cosmetics and the restriction of dress discouraging. Many young people could not join because of the prohibition of extra-marital sex, alcohol, and tobacco. Some of those who did not join the movement felt guilty and saw it as a matter of their lack of courage.⁶⁹ Furthermore, some black people of the lower class did not join because they believed that the American Creed would be realised some day.

9. 5. The Jews and the NOI

During the leadership of Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X, Black Muslims came to develop certain ambivalent attitudes towards the Jewish community. While the NOI leadership found no significant reservoir of hate for the Jews as Jews among its followers, a negative view could be found in the literature of the movement. Some of the beliefs were stereotypes held commonly with the white community, whereas others were special to the NOI. The Jew was generally classified as white, since he was accepted by the American whites and lived in ghettos in white neighbourhoods. However, this was not always the case. Some of them lived in black ghettos where they had stores and entertained relationships with blacks. Since only Jewish merchants lived among blacks, they became highly visible and were, thus, made target for criticism. Black Muslims viewed them as parasites leeching the blood of black people, for they opened stores and employed their relatives, but almost never the blacks. There were no black people behind the counters, a fact that heightened their suspicion that they were there only to take their money by providing them with food, clothes, and services. The sale of liquors was also part of the Jewish business, which pushed Black Muslims to believe it was a ruse from the Jews to dope them and suck their money. The Jews in black ghettos separated themselves from blacks racially and socially, and their fraternization with blacks was interpreted as hypocritical, the aim thereof being to promote business. According to them, the Jews stuck to their white identity even though other whites persecuted them.

They were viewed as dominating blacks not only economically but politically as well. The NAACP, a black organization for the promotion of civil rights of the blacks, was believed to be manipulated by Jews. It was a Jewish “tiger” used against white Christians from time to time, but it was worthless for blacks as all the law enforcing agencies were in the hands of

whites. Blacks could not expect the NAACP to achieve their aims. Black Muslims viewed the Jews of this organization as keeping both stupid blacks and whites in their conflict about sitting blacks near whites in the backs of buses, and having blacks to eat with whites in restaurants. Whites were busy trying to prevent blacks from sitting near them and had no time to build department stores. This gave the opportunity to the Jews to build stores and provide both with food and services and exploit both. To keep the fight going on, the Jews would not hesitate to provide the black with money.

Black Muslims believed the Jews controlled public opinion in America through their control of the mass communication. They owned television and radio stations, newspapers, and magazines. The control of the people's minds was used to further the cause of Zionism. This could be illustrated by Malcolm X's declaration over the Palestine issue:

We make no distinction between Jews and non-Jews so long as they are all white. To do so would be to imply that we like some whites better than others. ..However, the Jews, with the help of Christians in America and Europe, drove our Muslim brothers (i.e., the Arabs) out of their homeland, where they had been settled for centuries, and took over the land for themselves. This every Muslim resents.

In America, the Jews sap the very life-blood of the so-called Negroes to maintain the state of Israel, its armies and its continued aggression against our brothers in the East.⁷⁰

Malcolm X said this could not be tolerated by any Muslim and he castigated the European and American Christians for helping to establish the state of Israel for the goal of getting rid of the Jews and then taking over their businesses. He saw that this failed and returned against the white man, for the Jews remained in America with their business.

The Jews, for their part, were aware of the existence of the NOI and its rhetoric of hatred towards them, but were not really concerned as long as this movement was a local one that had no relation with international Islam. This sect, as the Jews saw it, was just another of the Negro sects and cults that abound and never harmed any minority.

As to anti-Semitism, Senator Kenneth B. Keating of New York deplored the anti-Jewish propaganda by reporting to Congress:

A very disturbing development has been the emergence of a new hate group in the United States which call themselves "Moslems." [Their] leader preaches a cult of racism for Negroes and extreme anti-Semitism.⁷¹

However, the Jews were not a special target for the hatred of Black Muslims during the leadership of Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X. It was the new Nation of Islam under the leadership of Farrakhan that would frequently criticize Jews.

9. 6. The American Muslims

Black Muslims found no recognition of their faith by all real Muslims in the United States during the period of the leadership of Elijah Mohammad and Malcolm X. Rejection was made on the basis of their false Islamic faith, the extreme racial views of Elijah Muhammad and his preferred National Spokesman, Malcolm X, as well as his emphatic militancy and unhistorical teachings about the Black Nation. It was not a wish of the American Muslims to be identified with a group with such doctrines.

To this categorical rejection, Black Muslims reacted by accusing white Americans to have influenced American Muslims with their misjudgement. They accused them of behaving suspiciously like the blue-eyed devils in their yearning to gain the white man's acceptance. Malcolm X argued that "no Muslim will reject another Muslim except where the devils have made him forget who he is."⁷²

The Federation of Islamic Associations, which was the official Muslim organization in the USA and Canada, did not recognize the NOI as Islamic and the latter was not affiliated to it. The Federation officers suspected Elijah Muhammad and his pseudo-Islamic movement.⁷³ Another body, The Islamic Center of Washington, D. C., actively dissociated itself with Elijah Muhammad, denying any claims of Islamic legitimacy for the group.⁷⁴

Jamil Diab of Chicago, the real Palestinian Muslim, who formerly served as Elijah Muhammad's personal adviser and had taught Arabic in the University of Islam in Chicago, issued statements dissociating himself and his followers from the NOI. He denounced it as "a cult totally lacking in the requisites which constitute any Moslem group." Furthermore, he stated that because of them an insidious stigma was attached to all Islamic societies in America.⁷⁵ Shaikh Diab sought to convert Black Muslims into true Islam, but no one from the

rank and file followed him. He is said to have split with Elijah Muhammad over issues of ritual. This led to his quitting the NOI.

Another Muslim personality who sought to expose and discredit Elijah Muhammad was Talib Ahmed Dawud, an American convert to Islam who headed the Muslim Brotherhood, USA. Dawud had a following of a few hundreds, most of whom were popular musicians and entertainers. He wrote a series of articles in a newspaper in Chicago to contest the authenticity of the Islam of Elijah Muhammad. He qualified him as a “no Muslim.” Dawud also asserted that the *Hajj* Committee, which ruled over the acceptability of the Islam of an alleged new convert to Islam, would not allow him to make his pilgrimage. Yet, a few weeks after this statement, Elijah Muhammad was able to go to Mecca for pilgrimage.

Most real American Muslims stood back from contesting the authenticity of the Islam of Elijah Muhammad, an attitude that led to the strengthening of the Black Muslims, contrary to the expectations of the real ones. This left the way free for Elijah Muhammad to direct his movement with absolutism and even gain the respect of many informal representatives of African and Asian Islamic countries. Muslim students, who came from abroad to study in the USA, also visited his temples.

In a conference sponsored by Dr. Mohammad T. Mehdi of the Arab Centre in San Francisco in Hollywood in 1958, Malcolm X called the Arabs to give attention to Black Muslims who could play an important role in international politics:

The Arabs as a colored people should and must make more effort to reach the millions of colored people in America who are related to the Arabs by blood. These millions of colored peoples, would be completely in sympathy with the Arab cause!⁷⁶

9. 7. Reaction of the Whites

Contrary to expectation, the white community in America did not retaliate to the NOI hostile philosophy and its diatribes against the white man. Only limited conflicts arose between them because of this subject. Given all the virulent speeches by Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad as well as the ministers, the white community remained passive and almost unaware of the movement. When Elijah Muhammad allowed whites to attend some of his public rallies in 1960, some whites attended among seven thousand blacks. In the hall they

joined the Black Muslims in their “prayer” by raising their palms and facing east, others applauded parts of Elijah Muhammad’s speech while others sat and took notes or watched around with disbelief.

Although the movement excited the attention of the white man in the street, he did not respond. Some whites, who learnt of the existence of the NOI without details, even approved it like that woman in Boston who applauded Malcolm X on a radio broadcast and commented:

This movement will do more for the Negro and the whole country than anything the Negroes have tried so far.⁷⁷

A Texas businessman gifted the movement with several thousands of dollars as a sign of approval. However, most whites, who had a better knowledge of it, tended to consider it an extreme and dangerous social aberration. They were hopeful that the majority of Negroes in America would not approve of it.

Researchers at universities became interested in the movement. Teachers and students studied it in universities such as Harvard, Radcliffe, Chicago, etc. Law enforcement agencies, the police, and the FBI were collecting data on the movement.

As to the white media, they had in the 1960s a tendency to ignore the movement; however, its growing role in the racial crisis of that period forced them to write about it for the information of the public. Black Muslims received extensive coverage in *Time*, *The New York Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Reader’s Digest* and others.

Time referred to Elijah Muhammad as a scowling incendiary speaker, who poured his scorn on all white devils and considered him a purveyor of cold black hatred feeding the frustration of the urban Negro. *Time*, furthermore, described him as of rising concern to respectable Negro civic leaders, the NAACP, the police, and the FBI.

The Christian Science Monitor had somehow positive views on the movement. It suggested that Elijah Muhammad brought improvements to the lives of many Negroes, who had become respectable middle-class citizens.

On the other hand, *The Denver Post* warned that the excesses of a Negro hate group might poison the whole integration movement in the USA and threaten the progress already achieved.

In Boston, *The Herald* criticized Elijah Muhammad for his “black supremacy” and likened it to that of the Ku Klux Klan. It pointed out that if a white man happened to pass by a group of Negroes in a street corner where a Black Muslim was haranguing them, it would be wise for the white man to quicken his pace.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, there existed a tacit agreement between the major news media and the law enforcing agencies to refrain from writing on the movement in order to help destroy it.⁷⁸

Finally, the Pulitzer Prize winner Harry Ashmore wrote in *The Boston Globe* that the Muslims would not achieve success but would only stir blacks to agitation:

[Black Muslims]... are not themselves going anywhere. But as long as they are around and talking it is a reasonable assumption that the great mass of American Negro people are not going to be content to stand still.⁷⁹

Before closing this chapter it is convenient to finish it with the new developments in the career of Malcolm X as a national spokesman for Elijah Muhammad and as a decision-maker. Then his intellectual evolution will be examined as regards the new political arena and his view of the NOI doctrine, and the suspicion of Elijah Muhammad’s morality.

At the beginning of the 1960s Malcolm X was a decision-maker and a trusted leader. He soon started to emerge as an independent individual with charisma and talent. He also became a prominent international leader. This prominence was generated by his charisma as a national spokesman and his administrative duties which gave him more power to utilize the institutions of the movement. The media coverage of his and the movement’s activities exposed him massively.

Another development in the era was the escalation of the Vietnam War and the liberation movement in Africa, which revived the mood of Black Nationalism. The Nationalist leaders

viewed the African American struggle for the Civil Rights as a struggle against colonialism, racism, and capitalism. Since the NOI was the strongest Black Nationalist organization in the USA, Malcolm X became the natural symbol of the struggle for liberation.

Malcolm X believed that it was time for the Nation of Islam to lead a frontline struggle if it engaged in more action. This, however, was contradictory with the line of conduct of Elijah Muhammad, who insisted that the Muslims should not take part in the white man's politics, and should instead seek to improve themselves.⁸⁰ Malcolm viewed this neutral position as isolating to the movement, and closing it within the black community. He even considered voting to fight the black man's cause with power and dignity.

The other development in the itinerary of the movement in 1960 was the sentence of Wallace Deen Muhammad, Elijah's son, to prison for three years as a conscientious objector to the military draft. Although his father would continue for the next three years appealing to the court for a reversal of the decision, he was unable to obtain it and Wallace was imprisoned in 1961. The latter had doubts about his father's version of Islam and the God image of W. D. Fard, who referred to himself in his writings as the messenger of *Allah*.

Another development in this same period was that Malcolm X began to encounter hostility and jealousy from the influential hierarchy of the movement, particularly from the national headquarters in Chicago. It was rumoured that Malcolm X was taking over the NOI and was building a financial empire. He had won credit for the progress of the movement. In response to the accusations, he began to avoid interviews and media coverage. He also asked the journalists to use Elijah Muhammad's photo instead of his. By 1962, he noticed that he was given less and less coverage in *Muhammad Speaks*, the organization's paper which he had established in 1959. Gradually he received no coverage at all. He felt that it was ingratitude after all the hard work he had done for the Nation. The hierarchy also discouraged him from holding rallies and public speeches.

On January 10, 1963, Wallace D. Muhammad was released from prison. While there, he read about Islam and meditated and consulted his friends and relatives, including Malcolm X,

and ended by doubting his father's version of Islam. He noticed that it was different from the true Islam about which he read three years in prison. After his paroling, he took part in the NOI activities and lectured at the University of Islam. However, his lectures brought about more controversy concerning his father's teachings and activities.

During the same year, a UPI press release indicated that two former secretaries of Elijah Muhammad, Miss Rosary and Miss Williams, claimed that the leader practised sex with them since 1957 and had fathered their children. Elijah Muhammad became a subject of rumour about his morality as a "messenger of *Allah*." Malcolm X used to see in him the epitome of moral reform and a model for blacks in America. This discovery shocked him and disturbed him, after all the devotion and total trust. These rumours forced Malcolm X to avoid the subject of morality and focus instead on politics, current events, and social problems in his public addresses.

Malcolm X started his own investigation of the rumours to satisfy his curiosity and find an explanation for the immoral conduct of the "messenger." He interviewed family members and Elijah Muhammad himself, who ended by confessing the deeds after dodging the issue initially. The three secretaries confirmed the rumours as well. Consequently, Malcolm X confided into Wallace D. Muhammad and they both started to review the Bible and the *Quran* in search of texts to read to the Black Muslims as a justification for the "messenger's actions." They would be considered as a fulfilment of prophecy. Malcolm X told Elijah Muhammad about the texts, and the latter was pleased. He said,

I'm David, when you read about how David took another man's wife. I'm that David. You read about Noah, who got drunk— that's me. You read about Lot, who went and laid up with his own daughter. I have fulfilled all those things.⁸¹

The "Royal family" as Elijah Muhammad's family was called interpreted Malcolm's concern as an attempt to cause dissension and discontent among the members. The leaders in Chicago began to sever his powers within the organization and eventually excluded him from the leadership circle and ultimately from the organization itself. At that time, Malcolm X had become more powerful and influential than Elijah Muhammad. He was more dynamic and efficient than his leader wished. His move in new political directions did not please to his leader. He won more fame at home and abroad than any other black leader.

By 1963 Malcolm X's ideology matured and he began to question Elijah Muhammad's leadership, prophecy, activities, ideology, and version of Islam. He also felt uncomfortable towards the lack of political activities of the NOI. Eventually, he left Elijah Muhammad's doctrine aside and addressed social and economic issues which affected black people at home and abroad.

The other important event that had bad consequences on Malcolm X's career and destiny was the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963. Elijah Muhammad ordered all his ministers not to comment on this event. However, when Malcolm X was asked his opinion by the press he commented that it was a case of "chickens coming home to roost." This meant that the violence caused by the USA abroad backlashed. As an immediate reaction, Elijah Muhammad silenced him for ninety days as was the regulation of the NOI. This was followed by removing him as minister of Temple No. 7 in New York in January 1964. Soon he excommunicated his son Wallace for propagating the family's secrets and being a close friend of Malcolm X and trying to influence him ideologically. Neither was given a chance to face his accusers. Elijah Muhammad stated to his son, "Malcolm X is not facing his accusers either."⁸²

After the excommunication Malcolm X was invited by his friend, the heavy weight world champion Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali), to spend some time with him on the sixth anniversary of his wedding with Betty. However, soon he began to feel that the end of his relation with the NOI had come and that he would remain suspended from all activities of the organization. He also heard rumours of assassinating him by some members of the Nation. As a result, he announced on March 8, 1964, that he left the NOI and was on his way to establish his own organization, the Muslim Mosque, Inc., which had principles based on true Islam. Another political body would also be established: the Organization of Afro-American Unity. About fifty former Black Muslims were the members of the new organization. It had its headquarters in Harlem and was a nonreligious organization meant to unite Afro-Americans for a constructive programme for attaining human rights. It was an all black organization initially and had as a final objective to create a society where there could be an honest black and white brotherhood. Malcolm declared his intention to work with whites and asked for their

financial support. He also urged them to fight racism in their communities to achieve brotherhood of all races. He believed that black and white brotherhood could not be achieved before blacks could achieve their solidarity as a racial group.

In April, 1964, Malcolm X performed his *Hajj*. In this pilgrimage he began to change his view about the doctrine of the NOI and about Islam and Muslims in the world. In Arabia, he was embarrassed in the airport for being unable to perform prayer and for not having practised the five pillars of Islam, though he was a “Muslim” minister. During pilgrimage he was impressed by the genuine brotherhood between Muslims from different nationalities and colours. There was an absence of colour consciousness. There, he was well received by the King of Arabia and met with scholars who explained to him true Islam. He also read vastly about this religion.

In May 1964, he travelled for eighteen weeks in Africa where he met with many African heads of state. He met with kings and presidents such as King Faisal of Arabia, President Jamal Abdennasser of Egypt, President Julius K. Nyerere of Tanzania among others. This convinced him that the Islam of Elijah Muhammad was unorthodox and so he converted to true Islam. During the *hajj* he consolidated his knowledge of Islam and the practice of its pillars.

In June 1964 Malcolm X returned to the USA only to find that dissension was still happening in the family of Elijah Muhammad. This Malcolm X interpreted as a sign of the nonconformity of the religion of the leader of the NOI. A few days after his arrival, Hassan Sharrieff, Elijah’s grandson was excommunicated from the Nation as a hypocrite for deviating from the doctrine of Elijah Muhammad. Then, in January 1965, Akbar Muhammad, Elijah’s son who had studied Islamic law at Al-Azhar University in Egypt, was expelled from the Nation for refusing to denounce Malcolm X and Wallace Deen Muhammad. Instead, he praised them then took his wife and returned to live in Egypt. Malcolm was convinced that true Islam unites people rather than separates them as Elijah Muhammad preached.

After his return from Mecca, Malcolm X returned as a Muslim not a Black Muslim and felt that all men were human beings to be judged on their deeds, not their colour. He viewed that the Islamic nations eliminated racism from their societies. His international travels and observations of other societies and means of production convinced him that capitalism and racism were related. This economic system consolidated racial inequality for material gain. He also came to the conclusion that it was not the white man per se who was evil, but the American political, economic, and social system that nourishes racism in the white man.

The other development in the thinking of Malcolm Shabazz concerned his attitude towards Black Nationalism. When he toured Africa he met with Egyptians, Algerians, Moroccans, Iraqis and others who were Africans but not black. If he followed Black Nationalism as a political ideology he would be separated from millions of Muslims in the world. He adopted then Pan – Africanism to solve the problem of African Americans. Malcolm Shabazz was convinced that the solution to the African American problem was to internationalize it. It should not be perceived as a domestic issue, where the African American seek the solution of his problem from the same officials, institutions, and organizations that were oppressing him. Malcolm Shabazz linked the African American struggle in the USA with Africa culturally and philosophically.

He eventually came to liken African Americans in their plight with blacks in South Africa. He viewed the race problem in the USA as a denial of human rights, not only a violation of the civil rights. Consequently, he wanted to take the case of the African Americans to the United Nations and accuse the USA formally of denial of human rights domestically.⁸³ He wanted to make it a Third World case, expecting the Chinese brothers and Latin Americans to vote for a resolution in their favour. However, this could not be achieved as he was soon assassinated. The motive of his assassination might be this new trend in his thinking and action.

The assassination happened on February 21, 1965, at 2:00 P.M. in the Audubon Ballroom in New York City. Malccolm Shabazz had a speaking engagement before an audience of about five hundred. Immediately after greeting the audience with “*Assalamo alaikom,*” a fight started in the eighth row. He pleaded to stop it and not get excited. At this moment three men

in the first row stood and started to shoot him. Bullets hit him in the head and the chest. He was rushed to hospital and pronounced dead at 3:00. Assistant Chief Inspector Joseph Coyle, in charge of Manhattan North Detectives, described what had happened as a “well-planned conspiracy.” Three men were arrested thereafter: Talmadge Hayer, 22; Thomas 15X, Johnson 30; and Norman 3X Butler, 26. They were all members of the Nation of Islam, which created the suspicion that the NOI murdered him. Wallace Deen Muhammad commented on the suspicion by saying, “I don’t believe that the Nation of Islam planned the assassination of Malcolm X. I believe outsiders assassinated Malcolm X and members were used.”⁸⁴ Hayer confessed the killing but the other two did not. They were arrested because they matched the descriptions given by eyewitnesses, and they denied the murder up to this day. Hayer incriminated them only to return on his accusations in 1978 and name four others living in New Jersey. All the three Black Muslims arrested after the murder were imprisoned for life, but they served only 15 years. All of them would later convert to true Islam and change their names. Hayer is now called Majahid Abdul Halim, Norman Butler is Muhammad Abdul-Aziz, and Thomas 15X is Khalil Islam.

El Hajj Malik Shabazz influenced the Nation of Islam with many changes between 1952 and 1964. He even visualized the ultimate form of the movement of becoming more like a true Islamic religious organization.

To sum up this chapter, it could be said that in this stage of the development of the Nation of Islam (1952 – 1964) Malcolm X joined it and influenced it with his sincerity, dynamism, and activism and contributed to the recruitment of most members and the establishment of most temples and news organs. His overzeal and the trust of Elijah Muhammad in him led him to gain national and international influence. He also sought to change the political direction of the organization towards more action in the home and world politics, which led his leader to excommunicate him. Malcolm X knew that he would never get reinstated and decided to leave the organization in March 1964. A year later, he was assassinated by three Black Muslims, though Mr. Elijah Muhammad denied the implication of his organization.

The Nation of Islam was a well organized and structured protest movement with programmes and institutions. These and their functions will be briefly summed up in the following paragraphs as they were more apparent during the period when Malcolm X took command of the movement.

To improve the life of Black Muslims, the NOI set a number of goals. These could be summed up in achieving freedom for blacks, since their emancipation had not been in practice. In addition, it had to get justice, equality of opportunity, establish a separate state for blacks, provide equal education, and end undue police brutality towards blacks; It would also have the government exempt them from taxes since their forefathers, the former slaves, had bled for the development of the country.

To make black independence from the white “devils” concrete and to reach the original Black Nation nobility of status, Elijah Muhammad devised an economic programme. It called for Black Muslims to pool their physical and financial resources together in order to provide jobs for Black Muslims and capitals for black entrepreneurs. The latter were encouraged to employ Black Muslims. These were called upon to work hard and honestly, save their money, and buy black. Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X worked with their followers in the 1950s and 1960s to set up businesses and so the NOI acquired groceries, restaurants, hotels, planes, ships, farm lands, buildings, etc. until it became a sort of a financial empire. This was reflected in the improvement in the living conditions of this group, and a shift from the lower to the middle class during the sixties.

As Black Muslims considered themselves descendants of the Black Man, the Original Man who ruled the planet earth, the NOI developed a strict moral code to be observed by all adherents. Yet, this morality was not related to religion, and was a ritual to be practised by Black Muslims as members of a “divine nation.” To begin with, this morality included praying five times a day, in a different manner from the Islamic prayer. As to food, they were forbidden a number of them like pork, rice, eggs, and corn bread, and had to eat one meal per day to save money and avoid overweight. Black Muslims had to work hard and this required healthy nutritional habits. They were also forbidden extra-marital immoral relations, and their

women were asked not to wear revealing dress and cosmetics. Marriage had to be strictly within the same group and divorce was not welcome, though sometimes permitted. The Black Muslim had to be self-reliant, sober, thrifty and devoted to his family. As to the youths, they were cared for in a way as not to allow delinquency. Even criminals were regenerated. The NOI set up three temples in prisons and the number of rehabilitated ex-convicts was high, though the secret nature of this organization did not allow for statistics of any kind to be disclosed.

The majority of members of this organization in its early time (1930 – 1934) came from the rural South in search of better economic opportunities. In the North they found relatively a better life and a margin of liberty, which sharpened their hostility to the southern whites. The same pattern of black migration to the industrial North continued until 1959. Thereafter, most adherents came from the North and southern urbanities. 80% were males aged between seventeen and thirty-five. Most of them came from the most disinherited black social classes, with a high percentage of illiteracy. Only a limited number of black intellectuals joined the movement. Almost the majority of them had Christian, Protestant backgrounds. Ex-Garveyites and Moorish Science Muslims living in ghettos joined, too. Elijah Muhammad recruited his followers among lower-income labourers, factory workers among ghetto residents. Women were recruited as well, and were assigned roles in the temples and in educating the children. Ex-convicts, drug dealers, hardened criminals were allowed to join the movement where they were told that it was the white “devil” who had caused them to be in that particular situation. The latter were rehabilitated and made decent reliable members, like Malcolm X. They stopped smoking, drinking, robbing, etc.⁸⁵ Although the economic situation improved for the majority members in the 1960s, they still preferred to live in the black slums.

The Nation of Islam did not trust the educational system of the whites, who had always led the blacks to ignorance, poverty, oppression, and repression. Members believed that those educational programmes had been conceived for the purpose of keeping the Negro in his place, not improving his living conditions. Hence, Elijah Muhammad set up a system of schools, which he called the University of Islam. Black Muslims’ children received an intensive educational programme, providing them with a better level than that offered by white

schools.⁸⁶ In addition to the common subjects taught by public schools, they were given lessons in Astronomy, Chronological History, Spook Being Displayed for 6,000 Years, etc.

Added to white distrust in matters of education, Black Muslims believed that they were not safe from the white devil, specially his brutal police, which led Fard to establish the Fruit of Islam to ensure security. This organization was created to protect the vulnerable small number of adherents at the beginning from the white “unbelievers” and the police. This in time became the most autonomous body within the NOI. It ensured security and discipline, but in the 1960s it became a repressive tool in the hand of the leadership. It inspired fear and was used to punish any hint of disagreement with Elijah Muhammad.

Black Muslims were also concerned about communication in order to reach black masses in North America, and used to this effect every possible communication means. At first, Elijah made mass rallies in different cities, then he started his own papers like *Islamic News* (1959), *Muhammad Speaks* (1960), *Salaam* (1960). Most of them were achieved through Malcolm X. Then he used the radio and the television in the early 1960s. Especially featuring in the television, was Malcolm X, who made passionate televised debates that drew the publicity to the movement and filled its ranks with members. Other newspapers also wrote about the NOI both for informing the public and attempting to expose it and discourage people from joining it, as they considered it a hate organization.

The Black Muslims’ movement had relations with other groups of the American communities. Among these, there were the blacks outside the movement, who did not approve of it as its negative aspects were publicized. It was considered an extremist organization that preached hate and had a strange philosophy. Black leaders feared its threat to undermine what had been achieved by the Civil Rights Movement. Besides, the black press in its majority wrote about Black Muslims for the sake of information, not adoption and encouragement.

The movement had an attitude towards Jews in the USA, whom it considered as hypocrite parasites who sucked the blood of blacks in the ghettos by means of commerce. It accused the Jews of exploiting both whites and blacks by setting them against one another while selling to them their Jewish goods. The NOI also caught the attention of real Muslims in the USA, who

rejected it because of its false Islam and its extreme racial doctrines and intensive hate towards whites. They refused to identify with this organization, which distorted the image of Islam in North America. In addition to these groups, the whites in America tended to ignore the NOI and did not retaliate to its hostile philosophy and diatribes against them.

In the end, it could be said that intense activity of *El Hajj* Malik Shabazz in the Nation of Islam was the catalyst of change towards *Sunni* Islam that would eventually come with Wallace Deen Muhammad. In the next chapter, the change will be traced till the end of the organization.

¹ MARSH, op. cit., p. 49.

²PEMENT, op. cit.

³DYSON op. cit., p.4.

⁴Black Legionnaires were members of the Black Legion, which was organized for the purpose of intimidating and oppressing Catholics, Jews and Negroes. "Doom for Black Legion," *New York Herald Tribune*, 1 October 1936.

⁵Kenneth, B. CLARK, *King, Malcolm, Baldwin: Three Interviews*, Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, 1985, p.34.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷DYSON, op. cit., p.4.

⁸*The Autobiography of Malcolm X with the Assistance of Alex Haley*, New York, Grove Press, Inc., 1964, pp. 117-118.

⁹ MARSH, op. cit., p. 50.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹CLARK, op. cit., p. 36.

¹²DYSON, op. cit., p.6.

¹³ MARSH, op. cit., p. 52.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹⁵BEYNON, op., cit., pp. 894-896.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁷LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., pp. 90-91.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 91.

²⁰*Ibid.* See also MARSH, op. cit., p. 43.

²¹MARSH, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

²²*Ibid.*

²³*Ibid.*, p.81.

²⁴Edward E. CURTIS IV, "Islamizing the Black Body: Ritual and Power in Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, 2002, Vol. 12, p. 175, California, The University of California Press,

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 176.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 82.

²⁷LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p. 21.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 22.

²⁹There are no statistics concerning whatever aspect in the Nation of Islam, because the movement shrouded its activities in total secrecy, as it feared whites to weaken and destroy it.

³⁰LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., pp.23-24.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 27.

³²*Ibid.*

³³ Quoted in ESSIEN-UDOSEN, op. cit., p. 253.

³⁴LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p. 127.

³⁵ESSIEN-UDOSEN, op. cit., p. 256.

³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 257.

³⁷LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p. 128.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 262.

³⁹ ESSIEN-UDOSEN, op. cit., p. 262.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 263.

⁴¹This is the only reference to authentic Islamic prayer practice by the NOI.

⁴²*The Autobiography of Malcolm X with the Assistance of Alex Haley*, op.cit., p. 439.

⁴³LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p. 128.

⁴⁴ BEYNON, op. cit., pp. 894-896.

⁴⁵CURTIS IV, op. cit., p. 174.

⁴⁶LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p. 201.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁴⁸See Vibert L. WHITE, Jr., *Inside the Nation of Islam : A Historical and Personal Testimony by a Black Muslim*, Gainesville, Florida, University Press of Florida, 2001.

⁴⁹LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p. 131.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 133.

⁵¹Martin Luther King, Jr., (1929-1968) was a black Baptist who led the Civil Rights Movement in the US from the mid-1950s up to his assassination in 1968. He agitated for ending legal segregation of blacks in the South and other portions of the US. He promoted nonviolent tactics such as the massive March on Washington in 1963 to achieve civil rights. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, op. cit.)

⁵²Ralph David Abernathy (March 21, 1926 –April 17, 1990). In 1948, he became a Baptist minister and in 1955 he met Martin Luther King, Jr., and organized with him the Montgomery Bus Boycott. In 1957 Abernathy, King, Bayard Rustin, and Shuttlesworth founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to organize nonviolent protest. He was secretary-treasurer while King was the president. In 1968, when King was assassinated, Abernathy became the president. In 1977 he resigned from the movement and became a Baptist pastor in Atlanta. (Wikipedia)

⁵³Quoted in LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p. 137.

⁵⁴LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., pp. 143-144.

⁵⁵The NAACP was one of the most important interracial civil rights organizations in the 20th century. It was established by William Edward Burghardt DuBois and a group of Progressives in 1909. The aim of the organization was to achieve through peaceful and lawful means, equal citizenship rights for all American citizens, by eliminating segregation and discrimination in housing, voting, schools, the courts, transportation, recreation, etc. (WEXLER, op.cit., p.9)

⁵⁶It refers to the case by which Oliver Brown sued the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, for not allowing his little daughter to go to a nearby white school while she was forced to go a dangerous way to an all black school. After the first loss of the case, the NAACP encouraged Brown to appeal to the Supreme Court. On May 17, 1954, the court ruled that separate educational facilities were inherently unequal. This ruling desegregated schools in the US ever since. (*Ibid.*, p. 38)

⁵⁷Quoted in LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p. 147.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 149.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

⁶⁰*Ibid.*

⁶¹The National Urban League was a non-profit, non-partisan, civil rights and community-based movement that advocated on behalf of black Americans and against racial discrimination. It was the oldest and largest community –based movement in the US empowering black Americans to enter the economic and social mainstream. (Wikipedia Encyclopaedia) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Urban_League

⁶²LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p. 153.

⁶³CORE was founded in Chicago in 1942 by a group of college students and led by James L. Farmer. It was the first black civil rights organization to use Gandhi's peaceful resistance tactics. It had black and white membership. Its activists spread to the South to help blacks register to vote. In 1947 it sent a group of black and white people to the South to do reconciliation to end segregation in interstate travel. (Michelle KNOVIC SMITH, *Protest and Patriotism*, Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution, p. 23.) See also http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/encyclopaedia/c/co/congress_of_racial_equality.htm

⁶⁴ The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was a black student organization created by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Martin Luther King's Organization, to continue the sit-in movement, which aimed at desegregating lunch counters effective February 1, 1960. (WEXLER, op. cit., p.)

⁶⁵Rosa Parks was a seamstress and former Montgomery NAACP chapter secretary, who sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott on December 1, 1955. It was the longest bus boycott called to by the Civil Rights Movement. (*Ibid.*, p. 79)

⁶⁶Sit-ins were a new form of nonviolent protest against segregation of lunch counters. Black students started the movement on February 1, 1960. They went to lunch counters and asked for sandwiches, but were not served because of their black colour. This attracted more students to sit in and wait until closure time of the counter. This received wide media coverage and the movement spread to the South and yielded the desegregation of the lunch counters by the end of the 1960s. (*Ibid.*, p.109.)

⁶⁷LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p. 161.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁶⁹LINCOLN, op. cit., p. 164.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p. 166.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁷²Quoted in LINCOLN, op. cit., pp. 169-170.

⁷³*Ibid.*

⁷⁴CURTIS IV, op. cit., p. 183.

⁷⁵Quoted in LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., pp. 169-170.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p. 172.

⁷⁷Quoted in LINCOLN, *The Black Muslims in America*, op. cit., p. 175.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, p. 178.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*

⁸⁰MARSH, op. cit., p. 56.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁸²*Ibid.*, p.59.

⁸³*Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁸⁵ John Howard, "The Making of a Black Muslim," in *Soul*, edited by Lee Rainwater, Aldine Publishing Company, 1970, pp. 86-87.

⁸⁶ Sonsyrea TATE, *Little X: Growing Up in the Nation of Islam*, New York, HarperSanFrancisco, 2000.

CHAPTER FOUR

STABILITY, CHANGE, AND DISMANTLEMENT, 1965 – 2003

This last chapter in the thesis will explore the period following the assassination of Malcolm X in an attempt to trace the changes that happened to the organization in all respects, mainly the change in doctrine. This will be through trying to answer the following questions. What was the official reaction of the NOI leadership to the assassination of *El hajj* Malik Shabazz? Did the Muslim Mosque members retaliate to the murder of their short-lived leader? Could the new organization survive after the loss of its founder? How did the NOI under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad survive the threatening conflicts between his followers and those supporters of the late *El Hajj* Malik Shabazz? The other questions are: How was the relationship between the Nation of Islam and the US Government? Did the FBI prepare any secret programmes to eliminate the Black Muslims? Did this authority play any role in the assassination of *El Hajj* Malik Shabazz? Did the FBI contribute to the transformation of followers of Elijah Muhammad from Black Muslims to merely Muslims? What kind of Islam did Warith Deen Muhammad convert the Black Muslims to? What about the authenticity of his Islam? Why did Louis Farrakhan leave the new “Islamic” organization and establish a new one based on the same principles of the old Nation of Islam? How did the movement end?

To begin with, the consequences of the aftermath of the assassination of *El Hajj* Malik Shabazz will be considered. Observers expected the conflict between his followers and supporters still within the NOI and the Black Muslims would turn into a holy war. The reason behind such fear was that the confessed murderer and his accused accomplices belonged to the NOI, which would suggest that the organization was the instigator. For protection, Elijah Muhammad was placed under heavy guard in his residence in Chicago. The police and the Fruit of Islam put tight surveillance around the University of Islam and *Muhammad Speaks* newspaper. On February 23, 1965, the Harlem Mosque No. 7 was

firebombed. Another Mosque was firebombed in San Francisco, which created an atmosphere of fear and expectation. However, no other incident of revenge happened, the fact that quietened the spirits.

The Organization of Afro American Unity (OAAU) was weak, for one year of age was not sufficient to establish a bureaucracy that would carry on the ideals of its founder after his death. He was everything for the movement. It became almost nonexistent after him.

On February 26, 1965, the NOI held its annual Savior's Day in Chicago and Elijah Muhammad gave a speech in which he disclaimed Malcolm's murder and blamed it on his deviating from the NOI doctrine and moving away from the organization. He stated, "We didn't want to kill Malcolm and we didn't try to. It was his foolishness, ignorance, and his preachings that brought him to his death."¹

During the same convention, Malcolm's brothers Wilfred and Philbert denounced their brother and pledged allegiance to Elijah Muhammad. They also refused to attend Malcolm's funeral. Feeling the seriousness of the situation, Wallace Deen Muhammad, who had been excommunicated, rejoined his father and asked for forgiveness. He came to support his father morally, for he was convinced that the NOI was not involved in the assassination. However, this reinstatement was short-lived, for he was soon excluded again. The cause of this new act was his constant refusal of the God image which his father gave to Fard, the founder of the NOI.

Wallace remained out of the NOI until his readmission in 1969. He had no right to communicate with the members of his family. Even when he was accepted back this time, he did not regain his minister's status until after the death of his father in 1975.

In the 1970s the Nation of Islam under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad continued to prosper despite the conflict among his family, the defections following the murder of *El Hajj* Malik Shabazz, and the ailing leader. The membership increased to reach approximately one million. The NOI also acquired 15,000 acres of farmland, thousands of heads of cattle and sheep, poultry and dairy farms, warehouses and cold storage facilities,

hundreds of tractors, planes, the Guaranty Bank and Trust Company, apartments, wholesale, and retail businesses. Besides, it established seventy- six mosques in the USA and abroad in Bermuda, Jamaica, Trinidad, Central America, England, Ghana, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. According to the NOI estimation, its businesses enterprises were valued at \$85 million by the late 1970s.² The members were leading a better life than the former Black Muslims since the beginning of the Nation up to the late 1950s. Nevertheless, this stability and material prosperity was not to last for long. Change and transformation and conflict and rift were waiting, and the FBI was working undercover to undermine this organization and render it a purely religious one, away from stirring blacks and causing unrest and disorder to the government. In the subsection below, the undercover activities of the FBI and the Bureau of Special Services (BOSS) will be examined.

I. The Organization and the U.S. Government Counterintelligence Programme

Activities of the NOI came early to the attention of the FBI and the police when a follower of W. D. Fard killed his roommate in a ritual sacrifice in Detroit, Michigan, in 1935. This incident set the FBI agents on the Black Muslims ever since. The Black Muslims were more targeted by the FBI undercover activities than any other single group in the late 1930s. The Security Index of this agency reflects clearly this interest. It contains a list of prominent dissidents to the US government since 1939 and it is topped by 673 members of the NOI followed by communists numbering 476³. In fact, the history of the Bureau of Investigation, as it was called in the beginning, became linked from the time of its founding in 1908 with the history of the blacks in America.⁴ The word “Federal” was not added until 1935. The Bureau received directives from the White House and the Justice Department to avoid protecting the civil rights, and was at the same time ordered to start spying on blacks. After a series of attacks on blacks, the Department of Justice announced that it had “no authority... to protect citizens of African descent in the enjoyment of civil rights generally.”⁵

A long time after its establishment when J. Edgar Hoover was associated with the Bureau in 1919, the Department of Justice cited wartime security needs to justify the

violation of the blacks' civil liberties, infiltrated their movements, and spied on their activities, leading, thus, to their intimidation. In fact, even before Hoover, Bureau agents visited black neighbourhoods earlier in 1917, immediately after the Congress made the war declaration on Germany. Their mission was to assess the blacks' attitude towards the draft and to investigate the possibility of subversion against the government. Rumours reached the Bureau that German agents were organizing an army of Mexicans and blacks to fight a rear-war against the USA to win back the territories which the United States had taken from Mexico in the Mexican-American war.⁶ The FBI believed that traitors, spies, and saboteurs had provoked the race riots in a score of cities in 1917 as well as the Red Summer of 1919.⁷ Another reason that dictated the FBI behaviour vis-à-vis the blacks was its belief that second-class citizens would have only second-class loyalty and dismissed all black citizens as subversive. No black dissident was allowed to challenge his second-class citizenship. Hoover proposed repression of such dissidents under the cover of law and order. Subversion meant to him race riots, miscegenation, and any black political activity. He came to equate "the Negro question," as the Bureau called it, with subversion. This was the attitude of this institution towards blacks, an unfriendly one.

Thus, by the mid-thirties when a follower of Elijah Muhammad plunged a knife into the heart of another follower in their room so that the victim would become a "savior of humanity", the FBI started gathering intelligence on the movement. This was apparently for the objective of preventing the repetition of such a dramatic incident. However, recent studies and FBI secret files revealed that the Bureau also gathered intelligence on the political activities of the NOI.

The FBI agents were trying to discover communist propaganda activities among black movements, but this proved negative. Another thing that the government feared was the influence of the Japanese propaganda against the US among the blacks. This was not without reason. In the 1930s a Japanese agent by the name of Major Satakata Takahashi⁸ established the Black Dragon Society in order to win sympathy for the Japanese cause among blacks. He won a little degree of sympathy among Black Muslims, who started to wish that the Japanese would come and defeat the US army. The contacts which he

developed with the NOI during the leadership of W.D. Fard came to an end when he asked the Black Muslims to swear allegiance to the Japanese government. Whatever contacts with him were limited and Takahashi ended by being expelled from the USA. Rightly, Takahashi made an attempt to exploit the disillusionment and disenchantment of blacks towards their government.

Later during the Second World War, the FBI spied on Black Muslims to see if there were any antidraft propaganda. Effectively, a number of adherents refused the draft in the US army, because they believed “*Allah*” taught them they were neutral citizens registered in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, and consequently, they had no stake in the war. They viewed it as a white man’s war in which the blacks had no interest. They believed that “*Allah*” had taught them not to fight people who did not fight them, which was the case of the Germans and the Japanese. Elijah Muhammad himself failed to register and was tried and sentenced to five years’ imprisonment, which he served from 1942 to 1946 in the Federal Correction Institution at Milan, Michigan. His son, Emmanuel Karriem, was sentenced to five years. After the Second World War, FBI intelligence on the NOI slackened until about 1957 when this agency resumed its spying activities on the NOI. That year, a thorough investigation of the W. D. Fard’s unresolved identity question had begun. To begin with, the agents interviewed his supposedly former common-law wife, Hazel Barton, as well as the wife of Erdmann Beynon who had made the first scientific investigation on the NOI in 1937. Nonetheless, after years of investigation, the agents found nothing as to his identity and his mysterious disappearance.

The most intensive FBI activities took place in the 1960s, when it became convinced that the NOI was a hate group which might eventually become violent and harmful to the US communities. Before that, in the late 1950s, J. Edgar Hoover’s interest in Elijah Muhammad’s movement was the result of what he termed “their violently anti-white rhetoric” and their verbal support for the Mau Mau⁹ and the Viet Minh¹⁰ in Northern Vietnam. This federal agency sought to get the NOI on the list of subversive organizations in the Department of Justice, and to incite the latter to imprison the leaders for conspiring to violate the Smith Act and the Selective Service Act¹¹. On December 31, 1956, J. Edgar

Hoover requested authorization from Attorney General Herbert Brownell to install technical surveillance on the residence of Elijah Muhammad. He explained his motives by stating that the followers of Elijah Muhammad were taught not to follow the laws of the USA; and that allegations had been received that they might resort to violence to carry out their avowed goal of destroying non-Muslims and Christianity. The Department of Justice, however, refused this matter and accepted only to wiretap Elijah Muhammad's home telephone in Chicago and his winter residence in Phoenix, Atlanta. Subsequently, on January 4, 1957, taps were installed at his house in Chicago. Later, more technical surveillance and microphones were installed in his homes. Added to this, the FBI placed informants in strategic positions, which provided this agency with excellent information on the NOI activities, membership, policies, business, and other programmes. The Bureau used these data to organize its counterintelligence over a long period.

In fact, the NOI was not the only movement targeted by the FBI to spy, monitor, and render ineffective. Several other civil rights groups were subject to the COMINFIL (communist infiltration) and COINTELPRO (counterintelligence programme) to purge communist party members and others from "legitimate mass organizations." The Bureau executed its "COINTELPRO" to counter the NOI, the black civil rights movement and other organizations in achieving their goals. The "COINTELPRO" was the FBI secret programme to undermine the popular upsurge of the Civil Rights movements and others that swept the country during the 1960s.¹²

Although the name "counterintelligence program" meant fighting foreign enemy spies, in reality, it was directed against what the FBI termed radical political opposition inside the USA. At first, the Bureau used traditional modes of repression such as exposure, blatant harassment, and prosecution for political crimes. When these failed to counter the growing insurgency of black protesters for the obtaining of the civil rights, it ignored the law and secretly used force and fraud to sabotage the civil rights constitutional political activities. The methods used for their programme ranged from surveillance and amounted to criminal actions like the infamous ones committed by the CIA abroad.¹³ The FBI ordered its field offices to devise schemes to misdirect, discredit, disrupt, and otherwise neutralize specific

individuals and groups. It set close local coordination between local police and prosecutors. It approved two thousand individual operations, which could be sorted into three types of methods:

1. *Infiltration*: The mission of the Bureau's agents and informers was not confined to spying, but extended to discredit the leaders of the organizations and disrupt their activities.
2. *Other forms of deception*: The agents and the police led a psychological war from outside by disseminating bogus publications, forging correspondence, anonymous letters, and telephone calls, etc.
3. *Harassment and other methods*: Intimidation, violence, eviction, job loss, break-ins, vandalism, grand jury subpoenas, false arrests, frame-ups, and physical violence were threatened, instigated, or directly employed to frighten activists and disrupt their movements.¹⁴

These FBI undercover activities were directed against all popular movements in the USA during the 1960s, the era that witnessed a great number of them. Nonetheless, COINTELPRO was most intensely directed against black movements from the most moderate ones like the NAACP to the most radical like the Black Panther Party¹⁵. The cause of this attitude could be found in the racism of the police, FBI agents, and the lack of blacks' material resources to fight back, along with the tendency of the media and the whites in general to ignore attacks on blacks. The other cause was what the blacks represented for the government. They were highly militant and possessed a large domestic base and international support. Their long-time suffering and militant experience developed in them the ability to galvanize the whole of the popular upsurge of the 1960s like communist agitation, the counterculture of the youths who challenged the mainstream culture and tradition. Yet, not only communist and extremist black agitators were on the list of the FBI. The list of wanted people to neutralize extended to include even the pacifist activists like Martin Luther King, Jr., David Dellinger,¹⁶ and Philip Berrigan¹⁷.

For example, the agents worked to get King to commit suicide. The Bureau spent years in practising surveillance on the nightly activities of King by watching him, breaking into

hotel rooms to install microphones in the hope of discovering damaging information on his sexual behaviour. After recording long segments of his sexual acts, which Hoover described as “obsessive degenerate sexual urges,” they attempted to use them to expose King and neutralize him as a spokesman for the black civil rights. This culminated when William C. Sullivan, an officer from the FBI, mailed a tape on which segments of King’s sexual acts were recorded to the latter and accompanied it with a letter in which he incited him to suicide. Sullivan wrote, “You better take it before your filthy, abnormal self is bared to the nation.”¹⁸ This was, however, a failure as Coretta King, his wife, opened the envelope and played the tape to discover a plot against her husband. Then she called him by phone and he came with some of his assistants and listened to the tape. The plot was disclosed. This failed to bring King to suicide or to break his marriage.

As to the adherents of the NOI or former ones who eventually became dissenters, Malcolm X was an important target of the FBI. The Bureau was aware of his threat because of his position as a national and international figure. His growing influence as an able, respectable, and visionary spokesman against the Vietnam War, colonialism, apartheid, and being an advocate of world peace created the Bureau’s desire to get rid of him and, therefore, decapitate the black movements. He also meant to bring the case of African Americans to the United Nations to get an indictment of the United States because of its violation of the African American human rights. After his visit to Africa and the Middle East, which was monitored by the CIA in all its details, he got the support of Ghana, Saudi Arabia, and President Ben Bella (Algeria), among others.¹⁹ In a debate with his friend, the writer Louis E. Lomax, in May 23, 1964, he said, “ We cannot expect help from our brothers in Africa as long as civil rights is an issue. I propose we lift the issue of civil rights to the level of human rights by bringing it before the United Nations.”²⁰ This was among the principal causes that called for his elimination. In addition, they saw it a necessity to prevent the “rise of a black Messiah” among blacks in the USA. Malcolm X was assassinated by three Black Muslims who hated him. Talmadge Hayer, the main hit man, confessed his assassination and claimed during the trial proceedings, that he was promised several thousands of dollars from a non-Muslim to murder Malcolm X. In 1977, Hayer confessed to Nuriddin Faiz, a Muslim prison *Imam*, that he had lied in his first declarations,

and that Johnson and Butler were innocent. Besides, he gave the names of four Black Muslims living in New Jersey, who had participated in the murder. Defence Attorney William Kunstler took the information from Nuriddin Faiz , including addresses, detailed descriptions, and occupations of the claimed accomplices. He attempted to reopen the case, but in 1978 Judge Harold Rathway refused the trial, ruling that Hayer's testimony was not enough evidence to reopen the case. Kunstler pleaded the District Attorney of New York, but the latter rejected his request as well. He then petitioned the House of Representative in 1979 via the Congressional Black Caucus. Attorney Kunstler believed that the FBI and the New York City police played a supporting role in Malcolm's death.²¹ The question here is: Who benefited from the elimination of Malcolm X? Was the motive only the hate which certain followers of Elijah Muhammad nourished against him as a result of his departure from the NOI and his bitter criticism of his former mentor and "father?" From memos to top FBI officials, it has been revealed that the FBI and the New York Police Department's super secret elite undercover unit, BOSS hated Malcolm X and waged a fierce secret campaign to undermine him and the Black Muslims²². They riddled the Nation of Islam and Malcolm's OAAU (Organization of Afro-American Unity) with informants and police agents. They reported on all his speeches and private talks and dogged his tail when he travelled to Africa and the Middle East.

The FBI was well informed about the death threats against Malcolm X coming from the Nation of Islam. During a European tour, the respective authorities of Britain and France did not allow him to leave the airports of London and Paris for fear that he would be assassinated in their countries. Malcolm himself knew that his life was threatened and that the FBI and the local police had taken a see-no-evil, hear-no-evil attitude towards the threats he had been subject to. He wrote a letter of protest to the then Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, and said in it "The government had no intention to help or protect my life."²³ He then told friends and reporters that there were forces bigger than the Muslims that wanted to kill him.

His bodyguards, who seemed to protect him on the day of his assassination, included undercover FBI agents. The most famous picture of Malcolm's assassination was the one

published by *Life* magazine which showed his bodyguard, Gene Roberts, administering him artificial resuscitation. This operation was medically contraindicated in the case of a wounded chest, like that of Malcolm X that was full of wounds caused by bullets. It would cause air bubbles that provoke a cardiac arrest and death. Gene Roberts-it was later revealed-was an undercover agent for BOSS.²⁴

Although there is no evidence that the FBI or the New York police had a direct hand in the murder of Malcolm X, it could not be separated from the fierce war waged by the FBI against him or any other “Black Messiah” in the 1960s. It is known that before his murder, he had worked out a constructive programme for domestic social and economic change, and had developed from a race-baiting demagogue to a leading social critic after his leaving the NOI. This was not to be tolerated, for he was someone who caused unrest among the black community in America.

Mattias Gardell²⁵ wrote that the FBI discovered a tension growing between Malcolm X and some top ministers among the leadership and Elijah Muhammad as a result of Malcolm’s fame as a national representative of the NOI. The Bureau capitalized on this tension and developed it to destroy either the movement or Malcolm X. In 1960, this federal agency obtained information through its informants and the technical surveillance that Elijah Muhammad had engaged in extramarital affairs with eight of his secretaries. Four of them became pregnant: Sisters Evelyn, Rosary, Rosella, and Lavita. The golden opportunity offered itself to the FBI to expose Elijah Muhammad, damage his reputation, break his marriage, and disrupt his organization. To execute this plan, the Bureau mailed unmarked letters written on commercial stationery to Clara Muhammad, his wife, Wallace Deen Muhammad, Malcolm X, and other top ministers in the NOI. The letters were, of course, anonymous. This plan was almost without effect on the movement. Clara Muhammad started to hate some secretaries but remained faithful to her husband until her death in 1972. The followers seemed not to care about the extra-marital sexual life of their “Messenger,” whom they believed was divinely inspired and commissioned. The FBI did not believe the result. Its officers forgot that the followers came from black ghettos, where morals were not necessarily the same as those of white, middle-class America. In the black

ghetto, men boasted of being lady-killers to prove their masculinity.

Failing to destroy Elijah Muhammad, the FBI decided to use these data to further the tension between Malcolm X and his leader. Malcolm expressed his shock over learning that the “Messenger” was a betrayer, an adulterer, and a dupe. What really caused Malcolm’s mental turmoil was that he had recommended two former girlfriends to Elijah Muhammad, Sisters Evelyn and Lucille who became pregnant. What hurt Malcolm most of all was the discovery that Sister Evelyn, whom he planned once to marry and recommended to the “Messenger” as secretary had been disrespected and himself betrayed. Malcolm had the courage to confront his mentor with the news which the latter did not deny, but made the pretext that he was like prophets Lot, who lay with his own daughters and David who took the wife of another one. This is not true in Islam; no prophet committed adultery. Probably, the FBI knew about Malcolm’s affection towards Sister Evelyn, the reason why they chose to mail him an anonymous letter with recordings of Elijah Muhammad’s secret extramarital activities. Malcolm talked about it to other top officers in the NOI, a sign that was interpreted as a personal power buildup. FBI informants participated in circulating this false notion and apparently achieved their aim by causing Elijah Muhammad to excommunicate Malcolm X initially for three months.

The FBI fuelled the flames of hostility within the fold of the NOI. In a memo dated February 7, 1964, they suggested a move that would widen the rift between these two leaders, and leading to Malcolm’s exclusion from the NOI. When Malcolm X made his comment on the assassination of President Kennedy describing it as a “case of chickens coming home to roost,” Elijah Muhammad found in it a good opportunity to suspend him as National Representative. In March 1964, he extended his suspension to an unlimited duration. Malcolm’s reaction consisted in the establishment of Muslim Mosque, Inc.

Some time later, Malcolm X began verbal assaults on Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. He accused the organization of deliberately holding back the black revolution. He then accused the Nation of conspiring with the right wing of white Americans. He also said that what Elijah Muhammad was teaching was an insult to the entire Muslim world. The

“Messenger” was portrayed as a corrupted man, more interested in money, wealth, and sex than black progress. Six days later, Malcolm was assassinated.

In the same atmosphere of social and racial unrest shaking America in the 1960s, the Nation of Islam was a target for the FBI. The latter made a plan to infiltrate the organization and disrupt it and render it without impact on the black community. A letter from the director of the FBI sent to all field offices dated August 25, 1967 shows this agency’s plan to deter the NOI.²⁶ The director also sent another letter to all field offices on January 7, 1969 with the same objective.²⁷ He ordered the offices to open immediately a file under the caption: Counterintelligence Program –Black Nationalist-Hate Groups, Internal Security. This aimed at collecting intelligence on this group and waiting for a specific operation or technique for implementation later on. The purpose of this counterintelligence endeavour was to expose and disrupt the hate-type organizations or even neutralize them. In the director’s words, it was:

... to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalist, hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supporters, and to counter their propensity for violence and civil disorder.²⁸

The plan for secret intervention on behalf of the Bureau is explicit in this letter. It was not a mission confined to intelligence and prevention, but rather one of disrupting, misdirecting, or neutralizing leaderships, spokesmen, and supporters. The FBI was not satisfied with this, it went even further as to cooperate with the local news media in order to publicize the NOI and neutralize it with this method. The letter further states:

The pernicious background of such groups, their duplicity, and devious manoeuvres must be exposed to public scrutiny where such publicity will have a neutralizing effect.²⁹

Even the recruiting of new youthful adherents was to be discouraged and the personal conflicts of the leaderships as well as the organizational conflicts between the NOI and other black groups were to be exploited for the goal of neutralizing them. It can be read:

Efforts of various groups to consolidate their forces to recruit new or youthful adherents must be frustrated. No opportunity should be missed to exploit through counterintelligence techniques the organizational and personal conflicts of the leaderships of the groups and where possible an effort should be made to capitalize upon existing conflicts between Black Nationalist organizations.³⁰

Further, it states the eventual cooperation of the news media and the sources available to

the Seat of Government for the common goal of disrupting the NOI and other Black-Nationalist groups:

When an opportunity is apparent to disrupt or neutralize black -nationalist, hate-type organizations through the cooperation of the local news media contacts or through such contact with sources available to the Seat of Government ...careful attention must be given to the proposal to insure the targeted group is disrupted and not merely publicized.³¹

The FBI resorted to one of its old methods in utilizing cooperative journalists to channel derogatory information about the NOI. In December 1968, the special agent in charge in Chicago furnished William Jones, the *Chicago Tribune* journalist, with the data gathered by the Bureau about the fraudulent aspects of the Nation and its economic programme. The article appeared on January 26, 1969, with the title "Black Muslims Set Their Sights on the Supremacy of Capitalism." The article, which was meant primarily to expose the NOI to its followers and the general public, had contrary effects. It contributed widely to the publicization of the organization and filling its ranks with more recruits. This led Elijah Muhammad to write an open letter to this newspaper to thank them for mentioning his organization. This method had two edges. In another instance, it got the damaging effect sought by the FBI. In Miami the FBI division furnished Richard Whitcomb from Channel 7 of WCKT-TV in January 1969 with material to produce a documentary film aiming at defaming the NOI and hampering its future activities. He was requested to expose and ridicule the Nation of Islam's moneymaking schemes, which consisted in milking the members in order to fill Elijah Muhammad's coffers. The programme that was aired in October 1969 under the title "Fear of the Secret Dark," showed the leaders of this organization as people with questionable character who lived in luxury through the money collected from the members. It was in the eyes of the Bureau an exemplary success. In the following weekly meeting of the NOI in Miami, the attendance by visitors dropped by 50 percent.

The director of the FBI further commissioned his officers to prevent the black leaders from spreading their philosophy publicly or through the mass media. The officers were also called to expose the pernicious past of the black leaders among whom those with immoral backgrounds, criminal records, and subversive activity, and to determine evidence of misappropriation of funds by the latter.

The targeted black organizations were the Student Nonviolent Committee (SNCC), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC),³² Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM),³³ and the NOI. Particular attention was to be given to extremist leaders like Stokely Carmichael,³⁴ H. “Rap” Brown,³⁵ Elijah Muhammad, and Maxwell Stanford.³⁶

The aforementioned FBI letter included all groups of black movements. Yet, on January 7, 1969, another letter originating from the FBI director had as its sole object the Nation of Islam. In this one, the FBI director admitted that this group did not advocate violence, but thought that the potential threat stemmed from preaching hatred of the white race and racial separatism and that it had the largest Black Nationalist newspaper being used by black extremists.

The director thought that the NOI appeared to be the personal fiefdom of Elijah Muhammad and expected a power struggle to take place after his death. He then called upon his officers to be ready to destroy the organization through factionalism or change its philosophy to a strictly religious, self-improvement one:

The NOI appears to be the personal fiefdom of Elijah Muhammad. When he dies a power struggle can be expected and the NOI could change direction. We should be prepared for this eventuality. We should plan how to change the philosophy of the NOI into one of the strictly religious and self-improvement orientation, deleting the race hatred and separate nationhood aspects.³⁷

What the FBI director expected and wished did really happen to the NOI after the death of Elijah Muhammad in 1975. His son, Warith Deen Muhammad, the new Supreme Minister of Islam, proceeded to turn it into a strictly religious organization much closer to Islam, and devoid of race hatred and separatism. As to whether this change was the working of the FBI infiltrated agents or a mere coincidence to the wish of this federal agency, there is no information yet. The FBI archives made a great number of deletions on the texts pertaining to this subject so that it is unexpected to make a clear judgment.³⁸

After considering the study of the potential leaders of the organization, their strengths, weaknesses and the methods to be used to turn or neutralize them, the director considered the alternative of changing its philosophy or destroying it. He wrote in a secret letter to the field bureaus:

The alternative to changing the philosophy of the NOI is the destruction of the organization. This might be accomplished through generating factionalism among contenders for Elijah Muhammad's leadership or through legal action in probate court on his death. Chicago should consider the question of how to generate the factionalism necessary to destroy the NOI by splitting into several groups.³⁹

As to factionalism, it took place in 1978 when Louis Farrakhan would separated from the organization that Warith Deen Muhammad led and which received the new appellation of the World Community of Al-Islam in the West. Farrakhan would take with him a number of followers much less than that which would remain with Warith D. Muhammad, and would resuscitate the old NOI with most of its original philosophy. Later, more and smaller splinter groups established smaller organizations with more or less the same name of the NOI. The World Community of al –Islam in the West (WCIW) adherents became simply Muslims like all Muslims throughout the world, without an umbrella organization. However, the Nation of Islam as resurrected by Farrakhan is still active and well publicized, which still leads many Americans to confuse Islam for what this organization represents. The other organizations are small and weak, but they still exist.

After highlighting this evolution of the NOI, occurring after the execution of the Counterintelligence programmes, a return to the FBI letter on this question is made. The director ended his letter with considering the possibility of bringing legal action against the NOI in probate court, by studying the various soft points in the organization. The Bureau had to find out whether Elijah Muhammad had a will or not, whether the NOI was incorporated and where its bank accounts were. In whose name were the NOI assets, mosque buildings and business? He also wondered if the Chicago field office had a "confidential source" in probate administration to make the tying up of the NOI in probate court possible.

To follow up the evolution of the counterintelligence programmes in this scrutiny, it should be mentioned that Hoover terminated them officially in 1971, with the clause "except in exceptional instances." The following year, he died on May 2. The termination came as a result of the attack of a group of Americans called the Citizens' Commission to Investigate the FBI on an agency in Media, Pennsylvania, on March 8, 1971. The citizens

got away with a thousand pieces of FBI secret reports and sent them to the press to create an embarrassing scandal to this agency and the Federal Government.

When the general public learnt about the counterintelligence methods, they started to wonder why the Government resorted to them to neutralize dissidents in an officially free and democratic nation. Following this scandal, the public started a debate in the press. Some of the opinions ended by blaming it on Hoover personally, stressing that he had too much power. However, the answer was not here, for he was one in a team.

David J. Garrow⁴⁰ argued that the FBI was combating a cultural threat, and that the agency was a mere reflection of mainstream American cultural values and society. He said that “the essence of the bureau’s social role has been not to attack critics, communists, blacks or leftists per se, but to repress all perceived threats to the dominant, status-quo oriented political culture...the Bureau was not a deviant institution in American society, but actually a more representative and faithful one.”⁴¹

In this logic, the NOI philosophy was a threat to “Americanity” or the civil religion of the Republic of the United States. Garrow believes that it was the idea that America was a melting pot to which immigrants with various religions and denominations came, and that the latter were supposed to substitute their old identities with the American one. Americans still see America as the fulfilment of mankind’s ambition to create a better world, away from totalitarian repression. He sees that Americanity is the sacred expression of the America Dream⁴², preaching all the values, norms, and ideals of the American way of life. Americans saw Totalitarianism during the Cold War as Communism, but Islam has recently gradually replaced it.

Islam was not incorporated in the American way of life. Initially, the inter-Protestant divisions were transcended and in the late nineteenth-century Roman Catholicism was accepted as Christian. Later on, after the Second World War, Judaism was in turn accepted, forming thus a Judeo-Christian culture. Islam, however, remained alien to this American culture. African Americans entered America as slaves and Muslim Arab immigrants from

Greater Syria entered in 1860 and kept a low profile, as they knew the traditional Christian antagonism to Islam. The Islamic presence did not contribute to Americanism. On the contrary, Islam along with communism were seen as “cultures of evil.” As a result, African Americans and Muslims found themselves placed in a position that was opposed to the American Dream. That was why agents of the FBI carefully selected from conservative, white American males saw in the NOI their personal foe. They were defending the American tradition from the “Islam” of the NOI.

Finally, it could be said that the FBI sought to turn the NOI into a strictly religious, racial hate free organization or destroy it in order to protect the US communities. Moreover, the racism of the FBI staff could also be cited as a motive for the struggle against the NOI. Anyway, four years after the termination of the Counterintelligence Programmes, the Black Muslims entered a new phase of their evolution. Warith would make them undergo a mass conversion to Islam. However, when a number of his unusual statements were scrutinized it became clear that they were heresies anathema to real Islam.

II. Islamization

Whether it was the working of the FBI or a logical development in the itinerary of the NOI, it became a purely religious organization, throwing away the dangers it represented to the FBI and the American communities. The change or evolution from the Lost-Found Nation of Islam with its strange mixture of false beliefs to the World Community of al-Islam in the West with its “Islamic” belief was a radical, smooth one. It was supposed to be a conversion to real Islam, the last message of *Allah* with which He entrusted His Prophet Mohammed Ibnu Abdellah (PBUH) to lead mankind from the darkness of heathenism to the light of truth, to worship the One God, *Allah*. However, very recently a list of Warith’s statements became available from a website and after scrutiny it became clear that they were contrary to the teachings of real Islam.⁴³ These statements put him out of Islam.

The radical change in the ideological orientation brought about by Warith Deen Muhammad occurred immediately after his nomination at the head of the Nation of Islam a day after the death of his father, Elijah Muhammad, on February 25, 1975. Before his

death, his father authorized him to lead the movement towards true Islam and to relinquish the doctrine brought by W. D. Fard.⁴⁴ The conflict with his father over the true Islamic teachings and Fard's doctrine had lasted over fourteen years.

Warith was born on October 30, 1933, to Clara and Elijah Muhammad. According to the teachings of the NOI, his birth was foretold by W. D. Fard, who named him Wallace Delaney Muhammad⁴⁵ and predicted his succession to his father at the head of the organization. This happened at a time when his father had just been nominated by Fard to preside over the Black Muslims' movement. After completing his high school, he began to work in the NOI hierarchy. In 1958, Elijah Muhammad appointed his son as minister of Temple No. 11 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. There, he started to introduce the members to true Islamic practices such as prayer and reading the *Qur'an*. This was unprecedented in the temples of the NOI. Nevertheless, he carefully avoided doubting his father's leadership or divinity.⁴⁶

In 1961, W.D. Muhammad evaded military draft and received the sentence of three years' imprisonment. He served it in Sandstone Federal Correctional Institution, during which period he began to read books on true Islam and noticed contradictions between this one and what his father taught as Islamic theology. Before his release, he decided not to teach again that his father was the messenger of *Allah* and that W. D. Fard was God incarnated. His knowledge of Islam led him to a rift with his father and to leave the NOI in 1963, after his release in February that same year. At that time, the FBI put the NOI under strict surveillance. Besides, the media attacked his father for leading a hate group and fathering children in an immoral way. Warith Deen Muhammad and Malcolm X read the Bible and the *Qur'an* in search of justifications for his father's extramarital practices in order to defend him. They brought him the texts to understand his sinful acts and attempt to associate them with prophecy. Elijah Muhammad was pleased. After the silencing of Malcolm X in 1963, he was excommunicated by his father for failing to denounce the latter and for influencing his religious thinking. During his excommunication, he was not allowed to contact family members, including his mother. Meanwhile, his wife and child received harassment by the NOI members who considered them traitors. Consequently, Wallace was

almost run over by a car during this period. However, after the assassination of Malcolm X in 1965, he returned to the organization but was soon out of it until 1969. In the same year, he was once more suspended for his views judged as dissident. Once again, he rejoined it later only to be suspended another time in 1971. Later in 1974, he was reinstated permanently into the NOI and he began to teach in the temples before his appointment at the head of the organization.

Wallace told an audience that God had ordained his succession. On the day of his nomination, he received impressive support from the important leaders of the NOI. Louis Farrakhan, the National Representative, and Raymond Sharrieff expressed their allegiance and Jesse Jackson⁴⁷ praised the late Elijah Muhammad and described him as “the father of black consciousness.” Professor Muhammad Sharrieff from the Norfolk State College predicted that the NOI would grow even more viable and stronger in the future. The only hint of discontent on that day came from the *Chicago Tribune* which noted that Herbert Muhammad, his brother, did not make a speech. Herbert later showed his disapproval of Wallace’s nomination. The overriding impression from the Savior’s Day was that the Nation of Islam was unified. It had, in fact, survived the most crucial time since its foundation. The FBI and many observers expected an explosion of the organization after the death of Elijah Muhammad, as a result of strife for leadership.

The choice of Wallace was not inappropriate given the change in the doctrine and activities of the Nation of Islam in the 1970s. The rhetoric incriminating whites and qualifying them as the “devil” slackened, and the call to study the *Qur’an* was more frequent. Besides, the desire to make the Black Muslims’ contacts with other communities better was growing. As C. Eric Lincoln said, “...by the close of Elijah’s seigniory, the NOI was no longer exclusively a community of the poor, the fallen and the *déclassé*”.⁴⁸ The economic situation of the Black Muslims improved and they shifted into the middle-class. Lawrence H. Mamiya⁴⁹ sees that the transition from Black Muslims to Muslims was in a great part due to the new socioeconomic status of the followers. The membership was no more totally drawn from the extremely poor. The new situation called for a new doctrine. This made the choice of Wallace more acceptable, for the leadership knew about his

“Islam” and his disfavour of qualifying whites as devils as well as his openness towards the government and the general society. He was the man prepared for the mission of the conversion, which happened with hundreds of thousands of people, the largest operation of its kind in the history of the USA. It is to be noted that according to Clifton E. Marsh, the number of membership in the 1970s attained one million.

In his first years, he undertook a series of conceptual changes, which affected both the character and the structure of the NOI. He began with the doctrine by introducing what he conceived was Islam to the members. He invited them to observe the Islamic practices such as testimony, prayer, fasting *Ramadhan*, offering the *Zakat* (alms giving), the *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca). He also invited them to follow the exemplary morals of Islam and to learn Arabic and study the *Qur'an* for themselves. As the doctrine of his father was not in conformity with Islam, he started to undermine it. Beginning with the status of his father, he told the members that he had not meant to say he was a prophet in the *Quranic* sense. Elijah Muhammad rather received ideas from a wise man, called W.D. Fard, who had brought solutions to the problems of blacks in North America. He showed them that Fard could not be God in person, and his father could not be a messenger either. He told them, too, that the doctrine devised by Fard and guarded jealously by his father was necessary for the hard times that the blacks had experienced, and that the new era of the 1970s did not require that ideology and had better get rid of it. Further on, he explained to them that there was no place for racial superiority in Islam, for all people were equal.

For many years, Elijah Muhammad had insisted on demanding from the US government a territory to establish a country for his followers, because blacks were denied their rights of citizenship such as employment, decent housing, education, and protection by the state. As long as the situation remained the same, Black Muslims abstained from voting, running for office, etc. When Warith came to lead the movement, he relinquished this demand, which, in his opinion, was futile and unrealistic. Moreover, in his vow to give a better image of his organization and to make it acceptable to the government and society in general, he called upon his followers to salute the flag, participate in voting, and join the military. Warith taught his followers to defend the USA at war like any other citizen, and

that if they believed they were not convinced with that war, they should keep this between themselves and God.⁵⁰

The other change was the lifting of the ban on Malcolm X and restoring him to his place of honour due to him by the NOI. Thanks to his efforts and charisma, the NOI grew from a small group to a nationwide organization, with tens of thousands of members and tens of temples in the 1950s. Thus, he renamed the New York City Mosque “Malcolm X Shabbaz Mosque No. 7.” It is to note here, that it was Louis Farrakhan, who had reconstructed this mosque after being firebombed in 1965 in retaliation to Malcolm X’s assassination.

The other change undertaken was in the name of the group of his followers. Instead of Black Muslims or blacks or African Americans, he called them *Bilalians*, in honour of Prophet Mohammed’s (PBUH) companion, Bilal Ibnu Rabah, who was himself a former slave. Bilal was the first one asked by the Prophet (PBUH) to call for prayer. So, he was the first *muezzin* in Islam. With this appellation, Warith sought to show that the Africans had a role in the very beginning of Islam and were proud of it. Subsequently, the press organ of the NOI *Muhammad Speaks* became from November 1975 *Bilalian News*.

This was not to please *Sunni* Muslims, who criticized him increasingly by pointing out that Islam was not the religion of a particular race.⁵¹ This caused him later to change the name of his organization to a more universalistic one. Yet, in the 1980s he made another attempt to put his own stamp on Islam among the African –Americans. He claimed the right to interpret the texts of the *Qur’an* and the *Sunnah* in view of the particular historical circumstances in which African-American Muslims lived and practiced.⁵²

Besides, Warith made a change in the dress of the membership and decor of the NOI buildings. Mosques took their Arabic names and became *masjids* and were decorated with Arabic calligraphy, instead of the former slogans of hostility towards Christianity and America. Seats were replaced with carpets and the worshippers had to sit on the floor. The *masjid*-goers were not searched for arms as was the habit with the old NOI, but were requested only to leave their shoes at the door. The *Bilalians* could now wear any dress

provided that it was clean, neat and not degrading to Islam. He allowed women to wear pants and not to cover their heads, except when attending Muslim functions.⁵³

Under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad, women played a subordinate role to men, but with his son they were made equal and sometimes placed in administrative positions higher than men's ones. Women still retained a special class for their education. The former Muslim Girls' Training (MGT) became the Muslim Women's Development Class (MWDC). The MGT under Elijah Muhammad aimed to train the Muslim girls the principles of keeping their homes, rearing their children, and taking care of their husbands. Now they received an education that encouraged them to develop their mental capabilities to confront life in general, not just to keep the household. Having studied the role of women at the beginning of Islam, Warith became convinced that they were equal to men and had to be treated as such.

When it came to the economic aspect of the Nation of Islam, he proceeded to the separation of business from the spiritual. Under the leadership of his father, the organization owned businesses and operated them, but with him the matter was different. He sold the unprofitable businesses and paid long-term debts and tax obligations, amounting to \$6 million. He shifted the management of businesses from the *imams* of *masjids* as was the use during the time of his father and leased them to members of the organization, and even to people outside it. They had to manage the income and the operation freely, but had to give a share of the profits if they made any to the organization. Farms, buildings, fleets of tractor-trailers, etc. were let in this way.

Another important change consisted in the abolition of the Fruit of Islam that was under the command of Captain Raymond Sharrieff, Elijah Muhammad's son-in-law, in 1977. This specially selected body, comprising all able-bodied males constituted a civil police force of the former Nation of Islam. When this paramilitary organization was created, its goal was the defence of the weak Black Muslims as well as the preparation for the "final Battle of Armageddon," but the leadership ended by using it as a means of repression and imposing undue discipline among the adherents. The FOI members punished those

members, who did not sell their quota of *Muhammad Speaks*, for instance. They punished those who drank wine or stole or did another mischief. However, they severely punished those members who showed a sign of disagreement with the leadership or doctrine of the NOI. In certain instances, they even killed members. The Fruit of Islam members became a means of repression and a source of terror. In the case of Warith Deen Muhammad, they represented a threat for the doctrinal and structural changes he was undertaking. As they were commanded by Raymond Sharrieff who was not pleased with the change in the direction of the movement, their danger was not to be neglected. Thus, Warith abolished them to get rid of their potential threat and their unfitting to the new context. The FOI was no more needed in an Islamic religious group.

The conversion of the NOI members into “Islam” and the openness of the new organization to the American society as well as to the international Islam made it more acceptable both at home and abroad. Soon, support came from Arab countries. During his visit to the USA in October 1975, Anwar Sadat, the late Egyptian President, had a private talk with Warith in Chicago. Subsequently, the Egyptian government awarded the organization twelve scholarships to enable its students to study in Egyptian universities.⁵⁴

At home, the first economic benefit of this openness happened when the organization was awarded a \$22 million contract to produce pre-cooked food for the US military later in February 1979. This helped create 400 jobs for the members in Chicago.

Given the new reality, Warith changed the name of the organization from the Nation of Islam to a more convenient appellation: the World Community of Al-Islam in the West on October 18, 1977. The new appellation came to reflect the intent of the organization as a religious community that comprised whites and blacks, Caucasians and Orientals alike. He opened his organization to whites among which some joined it.

In the WCIW, the *masjid* became the basic organization unit with the *imam* as the highest-ranking position. It counted 138 *imams* situated in the USA and abroad like in Barbados, Jamaica, Bermuda, and the Bahamas. Power was put between the hands of the local *imams*; each one had complete authority in his mosque. This was a decentralization of

the power, which previously had been autocratic and centralized in Chicago, with the “mosques” having only marginal authority.

The other event of note at the top of the WCIW was the resignation of Warith Deen Muhammad as spiritual leader on September 12, 1978. He became what he called an ambassador-at-large. He explained his new role as consisting of travelling and speaking on behalf of the organization, both at home and abroad. The wish to go out to the broader community and contribute to fighting its evils and make known that contribution was the reason behind this decision. He said that both Christians and Muslims were on that same social front fighting the same evils. In his new role, he gave public speeches and interviews.

Following his resignation from the spiritual leadership, the governing of the WCIW fell to a council of six *imams* democratically elected. They had equal power nationally, but each one had total power in his region. Each *imam* led a *masjid*.

The first name change of the organization was not enough for Warith Deen Muhammad; he changed it a second time into the American Muslim Mission (AMM) in April 1980.⁵⁵ He explained that the *Quranic* term for mission was *Da-wa*.⁵⁶ So, he made it in line with the new role of the now religious group that is to call people in the USA to Islam. Besides, instead of being a Muslim community in the West it was meant this time to become part of the wider community of Islam worldwide. It was an extension of the larger Muslim community, doing a specific mission in the USA. Added to this, another change affected his press organ the *Bilalian News*, which became *American Muslim Journal*.

Later, in 1985 Warith dismantled the council of *imams* of the American Muslim Mission and requested them to incorporate each *masjid* independently. Consequently, each one became autonomously led. This meant a dismantling of the whole organization.

Local *imams* had autonomy to guide their communities as they chose, although they never really exercised it, remaining committed to the leadership of Warith and his guidance in reading and understanding the *Qur'an*.⁵⁷ But not all the *masjids* agreed with this dissolution. Most of them affiliated themselves to another organization, which came to

succeed the disbanding of the American Muslim Mission. This new one was the Muslim American Society (MAS) which established its headquarters at Calumet City, Illinois. Another organization with the same name was also founded in Falls Church, Virginia. The first MAS organization changed its name to the American Society of Muslims (ASM) in 2002.

Warith shifted from his former neutral position from the Arab world issues. Recently, he became critical of the US support to Israel. He also came to better understand the sufferings of the Arab world resulting from colonization, the establishment of the state of Israel on Muslim land in 1947, and the remaining emotions from the Crusades. The problem of Kashmir was also cited. All these, he explained, made Muslims throughout the world bitter towards America and her allies. He said in an interview:

...all of these struggles are on the minds of Muslims and especially for Muslim leaders, we can't just look at what happened on the 11th of September and isolate it from all these other things. What we have is a damaged psyche of the Muslim world and of most of the Islamic leaders... I mean that these troubles in the world that have been used by them in their thinking to say: 'This is why we don't have peace in the world. It is because Christianity fought against us in the Crusades. It is because in colonial days, they imposed their life on us in our countries under a colonial state. And because of what they did in the Middle East to establish Israel over there on us and take Jerusalem as its capital.' All of these things are on their minds. With these things on their minds, naturally they are becoming more bitter and more bitter...⁵⁸

Due to his hate to be contained by an organizational structure and by disagreement with other members of the leadership whom he said failed to make effort to promote *Sunni* Islam, Warith stepped down from the last organization, the American Society of Muslims in 2003.

III. Warith in Matters of *Aqeedah*

Although it was Warith Deen Muhammad who had converted hundreds of thousands of Black Muslims into Islam, about twenty of his statements reveal that his "Islam" was in contradiction with the real Islamic faith (*Aqeeda*) and *fikh* (Islamic jurisprudence). Some of them are outright blasphemy. His heretical statements could be traced back briefly in his life and education. Their seeds could be found in his early education at the NOI University of Islam, where the religious syllabus was in conformity with his father's teachings. In short, he was schooled in the NOI close to his father and had even served as minister in

temples. He himself taught the false Islam into which his father had misled a great number of disinherited blacks. At first, Warith did believe in the version of Islam which his father reared him in and did not doubt its veracity. As indicated before, he was imprisoned from 1961 to 1964 for evading military draft. At prison, he read books on real Islam and knew that his father's version was wrong. However, when he explained the *Qur'an* to his followers in 1975, he tended to interpret the *Quranic* verses with symbolism. Warith saw certain stories containing the miracles of prophets and messengers of *Allah* as "symbols," not real ones. For example, he saw as unrealistic the story of how Prophet Moses hit the water of the Red Sea with his stick to part water and expose the land to walk on with the Israelite in their escape from the Pharaoh. Warith said:

Moses, being pursued by Pharaoh's army, struck the water and the Red Sea parted, so the Book says, and Moses and his people walked across on dry land...Brother and sister, you will never convert intelligent people to religion today with unrealistic symbolical stories like that.⁵⁹

This shows his lack of good understanding of Islam. A Muslim has to believe everything said in the *Qur'an* or the *Sunna* of Prophet Mohammed Ibnu Abdellah (PBUH). The story was not symbolic. *Allah* related it as having truly happened. Warith seemed here to be under the effect of the Bible and its use of symbolism. *Allah* says as to this story in verse 50, from *Surat Al-Baqara*:

And remember We divided the Sea for you and saved you and drowned Pharaoh's People within your very sight.⁶⁰

Another statement by Warith made in 1975 is a blasphemy in Islam. In *Muhammad Speaks* of May 23, 1975, he wrote that he was "the manifestation of God":

Yes, I myself am an Immaculate Conception. You say, "This man is crazy." No, I'm not crazy. ...I can truly say that My physical father was not My father. I have never had a physical father. You say, "Who is your father?" Speaking in the language of the New Testament, My father is God...I am the manifestation of God...All praise due to Allah.⁶¹

With this declaration, he put himself right out of Islam. It also indicates that he was still in line with some teachings of his father, who declared that God would come after his death. Warith thought he was fulfilling this 'prophecy.' A similar declaration shows that he still maintained the same un-Islamic beliefs. In 1976 he claimed that he received divine revelation. He wrote in a book entitled *Lectures of Imam Muhammad*:

The Book (Bible) says that there is another kind of water (sweet water) which is not salty, that comes from above that is divine revelation. The water that God gives is divine revelation And He reveals it to His prophets...I am baptizing you with the water that God has given me. It is the water of revelation, of divine knowledge.⁶²

This is contrary to Islamic faith which teaches that the Prophet Mohammed Ibnu Abdellah (PBUH) was the last messenger and with him all revelation (in Arabic ‘*wahy*⁶³’) ceased. Warith here was fundamentally in opposition to Islam. In 1979, he declared himself what he termed ‘*Masih-Mahdi.*’ He said:

...I am Masih-Mahdi, I am the Christ-Mahdi believe it or not! ...You know, for a long time people have been hoping to fulfill the prophecy. The prophecy of the return of Christ or the return of the son of Mary and the presence of a Mahdi who would bring the religion to its original purity...⁶⁴

Once more this statement is not compatible with the Islamic faith. For this, he proclaimed himself ‘*the mujaddid,*’ which means in Arabic someone who renews religion. In the *Bilalian News* of February 15, 1980, he said that he did not accept all the *hadiths*:

If you want all the hadiths, then you should leave this community because I am telling you, right now I don’t accept all the hadiths. They have made too much trouble and confusion in the Muslim society.⁶⁵

Besides, he saw that Christians did not need to convert to Islam. He said:

I feel that some Christians are living very good lives. They have very good morals, they have a very good sense of direction and I wouldn’t want to disturb that for them. As long as they are doing well I’d like to see them continue to do well.⁶⁶

This is not in accordance with Islam. If Christians maintain their faith, Islam would not consider them good worshippers of *Allah*. They would still be considered as non-believers. For the *Qur’an* states clearly that any person who followed a religion other than Islam would not gain acceptance of *Allah*. In *Surat Al -Imran*, verse 85, one can read:

If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good).⁶⁷

Another example of Warith’s heresies is when he stated that he received word from heaven that those who did not follow him were dogs. That was what he said in an issue of the *American Muslim Journal*, dated March 2, 1983.

The word has come down from heaven follow Imam W. Deen Muhammad. Either do that or wear the dog collar and eat dog biscuits.⁶⁸

To sum up his heretical statements, it can be said that he claimed that God curses those who desire plural marriage. In addition, he stated that Messenger Mohammed Ibnu Abdellah (PBUH) was not a messenger to *Jinn* and angels, but to human beings only. Moreover, he denied the existence of the *Jinn* and saw that Muslims should not invite non-Muslims to enter Islam. Once he even approved of homosexuals in a public radio

programme. Furthermore, he declared that all non-Muslims were inwardly Muslims: the Jews, Christians, Buddhists, communists, Hindus, etc. These are only examples, not all the heresies he declared.

IV. The Splinter

Not all members of the World Community of Al-Islam in America accepted the change in direction and doctrine of the former Nation of Islam. Many resisted the change and longed for the old ways. The most remarkable among those was Louis Farrakhan, who gradually became dissatisfied with the moderation of the organization and lack of discipline as he declared. The lack of black racism, nationalism, and separatism did not please him. He believed that the WCIW was devoid of a strong political message to take care of the needs of the still disinherited blacks. He believed that the socioeconomic and political context, which called for the existence of the old NOI and where it flourished, did not really improve. His discontent with Warith Deen Muhammad culminated in his leaving the organization in 1976.

Farrakhan used to be the National Representative of the NOI and one of the most trusted advisors of Elijah Muhammad. Thus, he felt himself compelled to “rebuild” the old NOI. Then, in 1978, with a few supporters, he decided to rebuild it. He put this into execution, and in 1981 he publicly announced the restoration of the NOI. By the Savior’s Day of 1981 the number of his followers reached six thousand.⁶⁹ He worked to restore the old tenets of the NOI such as the Yakub myth, the Ezekiel Wheel, the reference to Elijah Muhammad as a messenger, and to Fard as God in person. At the same time, he accused Wallace of being a “cheap hypocrite” who had plunged the Nation into darkness; a “thief who stole the house and the affection of the people for his father for himself.”⁷⁰ He then created a press organ and called it *The Final Call*, which still publishes a list of wants and beliefs of the older organization. The new name of the Nation of Islam remained just like the older one. Most of the members of the new Nation of Islam were new joiners, not dissidents who had defected from the WCIW.

Louis Farrakhan still retains the old system of belief of the NOI during the time of Elijah Muhammad, though he mixed it with some of the *Sunni* Islam. These tenets make it un-Islamic, for Islam is not to take some principles and leave the others out. To retain a strong base of principles that are blasphemous to Islamic belief puts the new Nation of Islam out of real Islam.

Voting was one of the attitudes that the new Nation of Islam changed. In 1985, the candidacy of Jesse Jackson, a black, for the leadership of the Democratic Party pushed the organization to call its members to register in order to vote for Jackson. Previously, Black Muslims did not register for voting and did not present their candidacies, believing that the system of government belonged to whites and that there was no use voting for the “devil.”

Louis Farrakhan is currently the leader of this organization and lives in the former home of Elijah Muhammad, near the campus of the University of Chicago. He is reputed for his fiery rhetoric, which calmed recently possibly as a sign in the change of direction of his organization, and may also be due to the seriousness of the advanced prostate cancer with which he was diagnosed a few years ago, but is now in remission.⁷¹

As a conclusion to this chapter, the Nation of Islam went through a crucial stage because of the conflict between Elijah Muhammad and *El Hajj* Malik Shabazz and the assassination of the latter by three Black Muslims. The FBI and press observers expected a war between the supporters of the assassinated leader and those who remained loyal to the hierarchy of the organization. About two fire bombings in the NOI mosques happened but no more were registered. Hundreds of members defected the organization, but this did not affect the general progress being made. The two organizations established by *El Hajj* Malik Shabazz were insufficiently organized and they soon became useless.

When Malcolm X was excommunicated by Elijah Muhammad in 1963 after his comment on the assassination of President J. F. Kennedy, Wallace Deen Muhammad had the same punishment for siding with him and influencing his thinking with some true Islamic ideas. When *El Hajj* Malik Shabazz was murdered, Wallace returned to his father and was accepted back in the organization. However, this did not last long, since he conflicted with

his father as before about the image of God which Elijah Muhammad bestowed on Fard. Wallace got impregnated with the knowledge and practice of true Islam. These ideas would later in the 1970s alter the ideological direction of the Black Muslims towards true Islam.

In the meantime, the NOI as an organization continued to enjoy stability and progress so that it came to own considerable businesses such as banks, planes, ships, tractors, dress shops, hospitals, apartments, etc. The standard of living of its members improved and they enjoyed upward social mobility by shifting to the middle class. However, under this apparent stability and progress change and danger were on their way to the organization.

To start with, the FBI spied over the movement to detect pro communist sentiments, subversion, dissension and the possibility of inciting blacks to agitation. Viewed as second class citizens, blacks were seen as not loyal to the USA, and trouble on their part was expected. Therefore, the FBI devised top secret plans to disrupt and destroy the NOI, or turn it into a strictly religious organization. This happened, to the wish of the FBI, when Elijah Muhammad died and Warith, his son, succeeded him in 1975. He converted the NOI into what he thought was real Islam. Later, it turned out that the Islam he gave his followers retained heresies that undermined that "Islam." Warith disbanded the organization so that his followers would be Muslims at large like other Muslims in the USA. He dismantled the financial empire, which he inherited from his father to separate the economic side from the spiritual one.

Louis Farrakhan was dissatisfied with the movement led by Warith and left to establish another one by the name of the NOI. He re-established its old heterodox ideology and mixed it with some tenets of real Islam. This organization is still active and is well publicized in the American media.

In 2003, Warith resigned from his last structured Muslim organization, which is the American Society of Muslims.

¹ MARSH, op. cit., p. 67.

² *Ibid.*, p. 68.

³ Mattias GARDELL, *Countdown to Armageddon: Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam*, London, Hurst & Company, 1996, p.72.

⁴ O' REILLY, op. cit., p.9.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ The Mexican-American War (April 1846-February 1848) ended with the victory of the USA over Mexico. It stemmed from Mexican anger at the US annexation of Texas in 1845 and from a dispute over whether Texas ended at the Nueces River or the Rio Grande. The land that the USA acquired by this was 500,000 square miles. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, op. cit.)

⁷ The Red Summer of 1919 refers to the summer and fall of 1919, in which race riots exploded in a number of cities in both the North and South. It was a national frenzy of clashes, massacres and lynchings throughout the North and the South. All were started by whites and blacks had to fight back. (Jim Crow Stories : http://www.pbs.org/Wnet/jimcrow/stories_events_red.htm)

⁸ FBI office memorandum from SAC, Chicago to FBI director, CG-100-33683, dated 30 October, 1957.

⁹ The Mau Mau was a militant nationalist movement that originated in the 1950s among the Kikuyu people of Kenya. It advocated violent resistance to British domination in Kenya and promoted the independence of Kenya. (The Encyclopaedia Britannica, op. cit.)

¹⁰ In full VIET NAM DOC LAP DONG MINH HOI, English League for The Independence of Vietnam, organization that led the struggle for Vietnamese independence from French rule. It was formed in China in May 1941 by Ho Chi Minh. (*Ibid.*)

¹¹ The Selective Service Act set up the Selective Service System, the first peacetime conscription in US history. The Act passed the US Congress on May 18, 1917 and gave the President the power to draft soldiers. The Selective Service Act required that men between the ages 21 and 30 register with local draft boards. (The age was later changed to 18-45). (Wikipedia Encyclopaedia, op. cit.)

¹² COINTELPRO Revisited –Spying & Disruption, Brian Glick, <http://www.whatreallyhappened.com/RANCHO/POLITICS/COL.../cointelpro-methods.htm>.

¹³ According to Steve Kangas, CIA operations abroad followed the same script. If US business interests abroad are threatened by a popular or democratically elected leader and is supported by his people, the CIA, on behalf of American business, mobilizes opposition by identifying with the right-wing groups (usually the military) offering them support to be put in power. The CIA works with them to overthrow the leader by using propaganda, stuffed ballot boxes, purchased elections, extortion, blackmail, sexual intrigue, false stories in the local media about opponents, infiltration of parties, kidnapping, beating, torture, intimidation, economic sabotage, death squads, intimidation, and even murder . This is one example only. (Steven KANGAS, “ *Timeline of CIA Atrocities*,” www.serenidipity.li/cia/cia_time.htm)

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Black Panther Party For Self-Defense was originally an American black revolutionary party founded in 1966 in California by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. Its original purpose was to patrol black ghettos to protect residents from acts of police brutality. The Panthers eventually developed into a Marxist revolutionary group that called for arming all blacks, the exemption of blacks from the draft and from all sanctions, the release of all blacks from prison...The party was disbanded by the early 1980s. (The Encyclopaedia Britannica, op. cit.)

¹⁶ David Dellinger (August 22, 1915 – May 25, 2004) was a renowned pacifist and and activist for nonviolent social change, and one of the most influential American radicals in the 20th century. He was most famous for being one of the Chicago Seven, a group of protesters whose disruption of the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago led to charges of *conspiracy and crossing state lines with the intention of inciting a*

riot. The ensuing court case was turned by Dellinger and his codefendants into a nationally –publicised platform for putting the Viet Nam War on trial.(Wikipedia encyclopaedia, op. cit.)

¹⁷Philip Berrigan (October 5, 1923 – December 6, 2002) was an internationally renowned peace activist, Christian anarchist and Roman Catholic priest. Along with his brother Daniel Berrigan, he was for a time on the FBI Ten Most Wanted Fugitives list for actions against war. (*Ibid.*)

¹⁸GARDELL, op. cit., p. 75.

¹⁹Karl Evanzz, *The Judas Factor*, Glasgow, Caledonian International Book Manufacturing Ltd, 1998, pp. 237-238.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 239.

²¹MARSH, op. cit., p. 64.

²²*Ibid.*

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴Brian REDMAN, “*Conspiracy Nation*, ” Vol.1, No. 90,
<http://www.theconspiracy.us/9408/0027.html>

²⁵GARDELL, op. cit., p. 78.

²⁶FBI letter to SAC, Albany, dated August 25, 1967.

²⁷FBI letter Director (100-448006), to SAC, Chicago (157-2209), dated 7 January, 1969.

²⁸FBI letter SAC, Albany, dated August 25, 1967.

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹*Ibid.*

³²Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was an organization of black churches and ministers which, under the leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr., formed the backbone of the Civil Rights Movement in the US during the 1950s through the 1960s. It was founded in 1957 after the Bus Boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, during 1955 and 1956. It was closely associated with King. (MSN Encarta Encyclopaedia : http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopaedia_76158053/Southern_Christian_Leadership_Conference.html

³³Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) was a black secret movement with the objective of building a revolutionary cadre among dispossessed urban ghetto dwellers. To this end, RAM infiltrated civil rights organizations and encouraged a shift toward Marxism and revolutionary Black Nationalism. (The Black Power Movement, Papers of the Revolutionary Action Movement, 1963-1996.
<http://www.lexisnexis.com/academic/2upa/Aaas/RAM.pdf>

³⁴Stokely Carmichael (1941-1998), also known as Kwame Ture, was Trinidadian-American black activist and leader of SNCC and Black Panther Party. He later became a black separatist and Pan-Africanist. He was jailed because of the March Against Fear started by James Meredith and carried on by him after the assassination of the latter. After his release, he gave his “ Black Power ” speech to urge black pride and independence. Black Power became a rallying cry for young African Americans across the country.
(Wikipedia Encyclopaedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stokely_Carmichael

³⁵H. “Rap” Brown (1943-) joined SNCC and became national director after Stokely Carmichael left it in 1967. In 1968 he abandoned his pacifist beliefs and joined the Black Panther Party. He had extremist views. In the early 1970s, he was captured in armed robbery and jailed. After his paroling in 1976, he converted to Islam and changed his name to Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin. In 2000, he was found guilty of murder and imprisoned for life.(http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USA_rap_B.htm

³⁶ Maxwell Stanford was a black militant student from Philadelphia, who joined the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) with Malcolm X in 1963. He influenced both the National Student Youth movement and the Students for a Democratic Society in the early 1960s with a vision of radical Black Nationalism. He fused the thought of Robert F. Williams on armed self-defense with the philosophy of Malcolm X on black self-determination. To this, he added a Marxian revolutionary philosophy.
<http://www.lexisnexis.com/academic/2upa/Aaas/bpower.asp>

³⁷ FBI letter, SAC Chicago (157-2209), Director FBI (100-448006), 7 January, 1969.

³⁸ GARDELL, op. cit., p.72

³⁹ FBI letter, SAC Chicago (157-2209), Director FBI (100-448006), 7 January, 1969.

⁴⁰ David J. Garrow is the author of *Bearing the Cross* (Marrow), a Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Martin Luther King, Jr., and *Liberty and Sexuality* (California), a history of America's reproductive rights struggle. David Garrow, The Nation, http://www.thenation.com/directory/bios/david_j_garrow

⁴¹ Quoted in GARDELL, op. cit., p. 93.

⁴² The American Dream is the idea held by many in the USA that through hard work, courage, and determination one can achieve financial prosperity. These were values held by many early settlers, and have been passed on to subsequent generations. What the American Dream has become is a question under constant discussion, and some believe that it has led to an emphasis on material wealth as a measure of success and/or happiness. (Wikipedia Encyclopaedia, op. cit.)

⁴³ See "Wallace Deen Muhammad in Matters of *Aqeedah*"

http://www.allaahuakbar.net/wallace_deen_mohammed.htm

After the discovery of the list of Warith's heresies, the title of this thesis was changed.

⁴⁴ MARSH, op. cit., p. 68.

⁴⁵ Susan McKee : "Warith Deen Mohammed."

http://home.att.net/~net_spmckee/people_muhammad.html

⁴⁶ "Warith Deen Mohammed, " By Far This Faith

http://www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/people/warith_deen_mohammed.html

⁴⁷ Jesse Louis Jackson, Sr., (October 8, 1941 -) is an American politician, civil rights activist, and Baptist minister. He was candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1984 and 1988.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesse_Jackson.

⁴⁸ LINCOLN in VAUGH, et.al., op. cit., p. 223.

⁴⁹ Lawrence H. MAMIYA, "From Black Muslim to Bilalian: The Evolution of a Movement," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, June 1982. (PDF online version)

⁵⁰ MARSH, op. cit., p. 71.

⁵¹ Edward E. Curtis IV, *Islam in Black America: Identity, Liberation, and Difference in African –American Islamic Thought*, New York, State University of New York Press, 2002, p. 108.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ These two permissions are contrary to the teachings of Islam.

⁵⁴ "Wallace Deen Muhammad , " <http://www.discoverthenetwok.org/>

According to the same source the organization was backed by Saudi and United Arab Emirates' money.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ McCLOUD, op. cit., p. 77.

⁵⁸ "Wallace Deen Muhammad , " <http://www.discoverthenetwok.org/>

⁵⁹ Quoted in "Wallace Deen Muhammad in Matter of *Aqeedah*,"

http://www.allaahuakbar.net/wallace_deen_mohammed.htm

⁶⁰ قال تعالى: (وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمْ الْبَحْرَ فَأَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ) البقرة: 50

⁶¹ Quoted in " Wallace Deen Muhammad in Matter of *Aqeedah*" op. cit.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ الدعوة

⁶³ الوحي

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ قال تعالى: (وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ) آل عمران: 85

⁶⁸ Quoted in “Wallace Deen Muhammad in Matter of *Aqedah*” op. cit.

⁶⁹ Arthur I. Magida, *Prophet of Rage: A Life of Louis Farrakhan and his Nation*, New York, St. Martin’s Press, 1997, p. 130.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ “Louis Farrakhan,” Wikipedia, op.cit.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the problem of a group of blacks in the racially hostile, white society in the United States of America from 1930 to 2003. It is the Nation of Islam or Black Muslims, which was established as a reaction to the Negro dilemma, that is being rejected by the white society and rejecting their own image of Negroes. This consisted of the heritage of slavery and the negative stereotypes and stigma that the whites had made of them. The Nation of Islam was founded by Wallace Dodd Fard, an ex convict and drug dealer who presented himself to the Negroes of the Paradise Valley ghetto as a silk peddler who had come from the city of Mecca, the “homeland” of the blacks. Gradually, he claimed to be a prophet who had come to save the Negroes in North America from the white man. He first established a “temple of Islam” and started recruiting members until they reached about eight hundred by his disappearance in 1934. This movement set to itself goals and programmes to achieve black independence from the constraints of white society. It established schools, temples, journals, businesses such as groceries, restaurants, hotels, rental buildings, planes, trailers, etc. For the security of the members, it established the Fruit of Islam, a paramilitary organization of young male adherents. To top this, the NOI created a belief system to boost up the low morals of blacks. According to this system, blacks were told they were a “divine” nation of gods, who originated from the “Black Man” the “creator of the universe.” The white man was made by a black scientist called Yakub from the gene of the Black Man. Consequently, the blacks were superior to whites, who were evil and incapable of doing good. Black Muslims were also told that they were in a “mentally dead” state because of slavery imposed on them by the white man for more than three centuries in America, and that they would be “resurrected” when they knew who they were by Fard’s teachings. They were made to wait for a “Battle of Armageddon” in which they would destroy the “white devil” in the USA and rule it in peace and happiness. Fard and then Elijah Muhammad, his successor, labelled this system of belief “Islam”. Yet, when scrutinized, it became evident that this system was not real Islam. It was rather in complete opposition to it, for it deified Fard and made Elijah Muhammad a “messenger” and preached racism and black superiority. The movement borrowed

from Islam a few practices such as the prohibition of hog, alcohol consumption, smoking, committing adultery, wearing revealing dress by women, and being clean, etc. However, the rest was anathema to Islam, such as the negation of the existence of life after death, paradise, hell, angels, destiny, praying, fasting, etc. In fact, Fard resorted to claiming Islam to cement the cohesion of the group and to gain the legal status of a religious sect in order to escape governmental harassment.

This movement grew under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad from 1934 to his death in 1975, especially when Malcolm X joined it in 1952. The latter's charisma, dedication, and fiery rhetoric drew thousands of new recruits to the NOI in the 1950s and early 1960s. Due to the hard work and thrift of the group, the members improved their living conditions and shifted from low to middle class in the mid-1960s and 1970s. By the time Elijah Muhammad died, the group was ready to discard the old belief system of the NOI and embrace the Islamic teachings as introduced by Warith Deen Muhammad. Hundreds of thousands converted to Islam and the old racist philosophy with its hatred towards whites was ended. The members under the leadership of Warith became simply Muslims and part of the universal Islamic community.

Some of the members were dissatisfied with the new direction of the movement like Louis Farrakhan and left to rebuild the "old" NOI with most of its racist philosophy and religious heterodoxy. This group is still active and widely publicized in the US media.

In 2003, Warith resigned from the last Islamic organization and remained an "*imam* at large". He declared that reason behind this move was the inability of the other officials to conform to *Sunni* Islam.

The present scrutiny undertook to study the circumstances of the appearance of this movement, and to show who was really the founder of this pseudo-Islamic movement. He was a mysterious impostor, who dealt in drugs and led an immoral life. How could such a person found a real Islamic movement? This is not possible. Besides, when the tenets of the NOI system of belief were examined, it was found out that they were rather contrary to Islam. Then, an itinerary of the evolution of this movement towards real Islam was made. However, at the end it was discovered that numerous statements by Warith were contrary to Islam. It is believed here that the followers of Warith received their "Islamic" education from him, which casts doubts as to the authenticity of their

religion. Here it is suggested that further research be made to verify the conformity of this group's Islam, for information and orientation of the members of the group towards true *Sunni* Islam.

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