

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA  
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH



ABDELHAMID IBN BADIS UNIVERSITY – MOSTAGANEM  
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

**The Religious Role of Promoting Extremism in the United States**  
A Case Study of the Nation of Islam Under the Leadership of both Wallace Fard  
& Elijah Muhammad (1930-1975)

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Master Degree in Literature and interdisciplinary approaches

**Submitted by**

Benaired Housseem Eddine

**Board of Examiners:**

**Examiner: Mrs. Abdelhadi Nadia**

**Examiner: Ms. Rezga Zahra**

**Supervisor: Mrs. Aïssat Djamila**

2022/2023

## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this work to my father, who contributed in this work by agreeing to remove the television from my room, which influenced my ability to focus and concentrate. Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to my mother, who greatly supported my efforts by preparing gallons of tea and coffee, providing me with the necessary energy and sustenance to work late into the night and conduct this research.

## **Acknowledgment**

Al Hamdulillah for giving me the power and will to complete this work.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Mrs. Aïssat Djamila for her invaluable contribution as my supervisor. Her guidance, patience, and understanding were instrumental in shaping and improving this work. Furthermore, I am grateful for her role as a teacher, as she is one of the best I have ever had in my educational journey.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Mrs. Abdelhadi and Mrs. Rezga for graciously accepting to examine, and evaluate my work.

Lastly, I am immensely thankful to Lean, who tirelessly dedicated their time and effort to read my drafts and assist me in organizing my thoughts and ideas throughout the entire research process. They provided invaluable support during crucial moments, offering guidance and encouragement when I needed it most. Their unwavering presence made a significant difference in the successful completion of this work.

## **Abstract**

There are many factors that contribute to the promotion of extremism throughout the world. Among these factors, religion has been identified as one that can play a significant role. This research aims to uncover the role of religion as a tool for promoting extremism by examining the case of the Nation of Islam (NOI) and its extremist promotion within the United States. This dissertation will focus on the Nation of Islam under the leadership of Wallace Fard Muhammad and his successor Elijah Poole Muhammad by providing a historical background of the group and its ties to Islam while highlighting the differences between the mainstream Islamic teachings and beliefs and those of the NOI. The aim of this work is to shed light on the extremist beliefs and practices promoted by the group in the United States while using religion as a cover. Through this research, the use of religion as means to promote extremist beliefs and practices by Nation of Islam becomes more apparent as the curtain is drawn on the core extremist teachings of the group and its outcome.

### **Key Words**

– Extremism      – Promotion      – Religion  
– Nation of Islam      – Islam

## Table of contents

Dedication .....	I
Acknowledgement.....	II
Abstract.....	III
Contents .....	IV
General Introduction .....	1

### Chapter One: Historical background

Introduction .....	5
1- Religion.....	6
1.1- Religion in the United States .....	6
1.2- Black Americans and Religion .....	7
2- Islam in the United States .....	8
2.1- Islam within the Black American Community .....	9
2.2- The Nation of Islam's History.....	10
3- Understanding Extremism .....	12
3.1- Forms and Manifestations of Extremism in the United States .....	12
4- Intersection of Religion, Race and Extremism.....	13
5- Extremist Groups in the United States.....	14
6- The Religious Promotion of Extremism Within the Black American Community....	15
6.1- Nation of Islam's Religious Extremism Promotion.....	15
Conclusion.....	17

### Chapter Two: Nation of Islam & Extremism

Introduction .....	18
1- Islam.....	18
1.1- The Expansion of Islam.....	19
1.2- Islamic Groups .....	20

2- The Nation of Islam .....	20
2.1- Origins and Foundation .....	21
2.2- Famous Leaders .....	21
2.2.1- Wallace Fard Muhammad .....	21
2.2.2- Elijah Muhammad.....	24
2.2.3- Malcolm X .....	24
2.3- The Group Ties to Mainstream Islam.....	25
3- Extremist Beliefs and Practices of The Nation of Islam.....	25
3.1- Examples of Nation of Islam’s Extremist Beliefs.....	26
3.2- Extremist Practices by the Nation of Islam.....	28
Conclusion .....	30

**Chapter Three: The Nation of Islam’s Extremism Promotion Through Religion**

Introduction .....	31
1- Comparison Between Sunni Islam and the Nation of Islam .....	31
1.1- Difference in Beliefs.....	32
1.2- Critics of Nation of Islam.....	34
1.2.1- Islamic Critics.....	34
1.2.2- Non-Islamic Critics.....	35
1.2.3- Former Members Critics.....	35
2- The Nation of Islam’s Use of Religion to Promote Extremism.....	37
3- Factors Contributing to the Appeal of Extremist Ideologies among African Americans.....	38
4- Significance of Studying Religion in the Nation of Islam’s Extremism Promotion.....	39
Conclusion .....	40
General conclusion .....	41
Works Cited List.....	42

## General Introduction

Religion is often defined as a set of beliefs, practices, and values that relate to the sacred or supernatural. It typically involves a belief in a higher power, and an organized system of worship or rituals designed to connect individuals to the divine. Religion can also include moral codes or ethical principles that guide behaviour and provide a sense of meaning or purpose in life. It may involve social structures such as mosques, churches or temples and a community of believers who share the same beliefs and practices.

Throughout history, humanity has practiced different religions, with many regions of the world initially sharing a common faith and beliefs. However, advancements in transportation and navigation have facilitated greater contact between nations and cultures, leading to an increased religious diversity. An example of this is the United States of America which had a long diverse history with religions and religious groups, mainly influenced by factors such the various forms of immigration, colonization, slavery and social and political movements<sup>1</sup>. One of the first religious groups that arrived in America were the Christian Puritans who established the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the early seventieth century. They were followed by other Christian denominations such as the Quakers who established their own churches and played a significant role in shaping American culture and society.

Not only Christian communities, but also Jewish comm

unities were established in the seventieth century by groups like Sephardic Jews. This, while the presence of Islam was only seen within the enslaved Africans brought to the Americas during the transatlantic slave trade. Although, The United States saw

---

<sup>1</sup> Social and political movements are collective efforts by groups of people to bring about social or political change. These movements can have a significant impact on the development and evolution of religions and religious groups, as they often challenge traditional power structures and beliefs. Social and political movements can also influence the way religious groups respond to issues such as civil rights, gender equality, and social justice. (Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion)

an increase in the non-Christian religions such as Buddhism. Christianity, Islam and Judaism remain the three major religions in the country.

Along with diverseness of religions in the United States, the country saw an emergence of new groups religious groups especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Many of those groups were spearheaded by Black leaders. Among those new groups was the Nation of Islam (NOI) also referred to as the Lost-Found Nation of Islam, an Islamic group founded by Wallace Fard Muhammad in 1930. After the mysterious disappearance of its founder, the NOI gained wider recognition and influence under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad who took over as a leader in 1934. Under his guidance, the group grew in size and became a significant force within the Black American society, particularly during the civil right sera in the 1950s. However, the group embraced a form of black nationalism that called for the establishment for a separate black state within the United States and started promoting the idea of the supremacy of black people. The Nation of Islam's message of black supremacy and separatism led to controversy and criticism with some accusing the group of promoting black extremism, hate, and intolerance towards white people. An example of this is the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) labelling the group as a subversive organization and having its leaders targeted with surveillance and other measures in the 1960s. In addition to the accusations of promoting extremism, the Nation of Islam has faced criticism from Muslim organizations and scholars who accused the group of opposing Sunni Islam and promoting false interpretations of Islamic sources of legislation, namely the Quran and Hadith.

The accusations against the Nation of Islam regarding extremism raise important questions about the meaning and implications of extremism. Extremism can be defined as the holding of extreme and radical views that are perceived as a threat to social or political stability. According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) - which is a civil rights organization based in the United States that tracks and responds to instance of hate and extremism-, extremism is “the belief and support for ideas that are far outside the mainstream of a political or social ideology<sup>1</sup>” and “often involve a willingness to do harm to others who are perceived as threats to the movement or its

---

<sup>1</sup> Mainstream ideology refers to the dominant and widely accepted beliefs, values, and practices within a particular society or culture. It typically represents the status quo and reflects the perspectives of those in positions of power or influence. Cambridge Dictionary



goals”. Extremism, however can have various forms and can be religious, racial or political, as it also can be a combination of more than one form. For instance, Racial extremism is a form of extremism that is usually driven by the belief in the superiority or inferiority of a particular race or ethnicity. This resembles to the religious extremism to a considerable extent which is a form of extremism that is driven by the belief in the correctness of a particular religious ideology or interpretation despite it being wrong or refutable. While political extremism is a form of extremism that is driven by the belief in the superiority of a particular political ideology or system to the point of excluding or suppressing other political views.

Given the definition of the term “extremism” and its popular forms it is important to examine the beliefs and actions of groups like the Nation of Islam to better understand their relationship with different forms of extremism. That being said, this research paper aims at analysing the extremist elements of this group in the United States, tackle the way the group promoted some forms of extremism to the Black American community, while also taking in consideration the Muslim scholars’ accusations for the group of opposing Sunni Islam as well. This specific group was chosen as a case study over other religious groups due to multiple reasons, one of them being the historical significance of this group as it has a long and still lasting history in the United States, it has also played an influential role in shaping Black Nationalism, Black Identity, and even Islam in the US. Lastly, I have always been deeply interested in the history of the Nation of Islam, this interest has motivated me to dedicate this research paper to better understand and learn more about their long-standing history as one of the major Islamic groups in the United States.

Finally, the dissertation will explore the origins and beliefs of the NOI, as well as its historical and social context while focusing on both, W.D. Fard and Elijah Muhammad’s leadership between 1930 and 1975. It will also examine the methods and tactics used by the group during his leadership to promote some extremist ideologies, the impact they have had on the society, and their role of promoting extremism in the United States.

On these grounds, this paper aims at answering the following questions:

- 1- Was the Nation of Islam promoting extreme ideologies, extreme ideologies, beliefs and practices during Wallace Fard and Elijah Muhammad's leadership? What were they?
- 2- To what extent does the groups beliefs differ from mainstream Islam beliefs?
- 3- Did the Nation of Islam under the leadership of Elijah and Fard use religion to promote extremism within the Black American society? If yes, how?

It is hypothesized that Wallace Fard and Elijah Muhammad were promoting extremist beliefs and ideologies by using religion as a tool, and that the Nation of Islam's core beliefs and practices totally differ from what mainstream Islam teaches.

To facilitate the exploration and resolution of the raised questions, this research will be divided into three major chapters. Each chapter will delve into distinct aspects of the research, ensuring a well-structured and organized analysis. The first chapter will shed light on the historical background of key elements in the research, such as religion and extremism. Meanwhile, the second and third chapters will primarily focus on providing answers to the questions that this research aims to address.

# **Chapter One**

## **Historical background**

### **1-Introduction**

This chapter is devoted to introducing the reader to the history of both religion and extremism in the United States and how they have intersected throughout history, particularly within the Black American community. Using the funnel technique, the first part of the chapter will be dedicated to the definition of the term ‘Religion’ and its historical background. Then, from broad to specific, the chapter will go from religion in the United States to religion within the Black American community. The next section will specifically focus on the history of Islam in the United States and its relation to the Black American community. Finally, the section will conclude with a specific Islamic group which is the case of study’s group, the Nation of Islam. The second part of the chapter will start by raising the question of what is extremism and seeks to answer that question. Then, it will tackle the popular forms and manifestations of extremism in the United States while giving examples of religious extremist groups. This section of the chapter will conclude by briefly discussing the religious promotion of extremism within the Black American community. this introductory chapter aims to familiarize the reader with the historical background of the key elements that will be explored in the subsequent chapters. By providing this contextual foundation, readers will gain a comprehensive understanding of the topics to be discussed and their significance within the broader context. This chapter serves as a stepping stone, preparing readers for the in-depth exploration that lies ahead.

# **1- Religion**

Religion can be defined as a set of beliefs, practices, and experiences that arise from a search for the sacred, and that contribute to one's sense of identity, meaning, and purpose (Partridge 2018). A religion may encompass a belief in a single God, multiple gods, or a non-personal divine force.

## **1.1- Religion in the United States**

The history of religion in America is replete with diversity, encompassing various religious traditions and movements emerging and evolving over the course of the country's history. The first European colonizers who settled in what is now called the United States brought their own religions and religious traditions that were mostly Judaic and Christian. This had an impact on the indigenous peoples of North America, as many of these peoples had their own spiritual practices and beliefs which were then suppressed and appropriated by the European colonizers. Not only that but many Native Americans were forced by those colonizers to convert to Christianity as the destruction of traditional spiritual practices and artefacts was a common occurrence in the early days of American colonization (Crawford 2008).

Another important aspect of the religious history of America is the transatlantic slave trade<sup>1</sup> when millions of Africans were captured, enslaved and brought to the United States. Many of those Africans embraced Christianity throughout time, this was due to Christianity being introduced to the enslaved Africans by their slave owners, Christianity also offered a sense of community through its churches which became important gathering places for the Africans. However, many of them retained their traditional spiritual practices while embracing Christianity. This led to the to

---

<sup>1</sup> The Transatlantic slave trade was a system of human trafficking that involved the transportation of millions of Africans from their homelands to the Americas and the Caribbean between the 16th and 19th centuries. It was a lucrative trade that was driven by the demand for labor in the Americas, where European colonizers had established large-scale plantations and other enterprises. The enslaved Africans were forcibly removed from their homes and transported across the Atlantic in brutal conditions, where they were subjected to inhumane treatment and forced labor. The Transatlantic slave trade had a profound impact on African societies, as well as on the economic and social development of the Americas and the Caribbean. It is estimated that between 10 and 12 million Africans were forcibly transported during the Transatlantic slave trade. (UNESCO)

the development of distinct African American religious traditions such as Black churches: which combine elements of both Christianity and traditional African spiritual practices. Although many Africans in America converted to Christianity, few maintained their original religious beliefs such as some traditional African religions including Animism, ancestor worship and others, in addition to religions like Islam and Judaism.

## **1.2- Black Americans and religion**

The history of religion within the black Americans ties back to the history of the black Americans themselves. A lot of African Americans had their own religions and religious beliefs before being brought to the Americas. And according to the African American Policy Review, many African people brought their own traditional spiritual practices with them to the Americas during the transatlantic slave trade. These traditions, such as those of the Yoruba and the Congo, often blended with various forms of Christianity that were introduced by European colonizers and slaveholders, creating unique religious traditions such as: Vodou, also spelled Voodoo which is a syncretic religion that combines elements of African animism<sup>1</sup> and ancestor worship with Catholicism and other Christian traditions. Or candomblé<sup>2</sup>, and Santeria<sup>3</sup> which are also combinations between African religions and Christianity that are still practiced by Black Americans today (African American Policy Review).

---

<sup>1</sup> African animism is a religious and spiritual belief system that is commonly practiced in various parts of Africa. It is characterized by the belief that all natural objects, such as animals, plants, rocks possess a spiritual essence life force. This spiritual essence is believed to be capable of interacting with human beings, and is often the focus of religious rituals, offerings, and prayers. ("African Religions: A Very Short Introduction" by Jacob K. Olupona)

<sup>2</sup> Candomblé is a syncretic religion that blends traditional West African beliefs with Roman Catholicism and other Christian traditions. It is based on the veneration of orixás, which are deities or spirits that represent various forces of nature, such as the ocean, the wind, and the thunder (Murphy, Y. (2012). Candomblé. In The Continuum Companion to Religion and Film)

<sup>3</sup> Santeria is a religion that combines elements of traditional Yoruba religion with Roman Catholicism and other Christian traditions brought to the Americas by European colonizers. (González-Wippler, M. (2007). Santería: The Religion: Faith, Rites, Magic. Llewellyn Worldwide.)

While Christianity has been the dominant religion among Black Americans because of the influence of the slave holders, other religions such as Islam had a small yet significant presence throughout the history of the United States.

## 2. Islam in the United States

Islam is one of the world’s major religions in entire world, as the adherents of Islam constitute the world's second largest religious group. A projection by the PEW Research Center suggest that Muslims numbered more than 2 billion followers in 2023. In the United States, Islam is the third largest religion after Christianity and Judaism with an estimated 4 million Muslims living in the country as of 2021, while it is also one of the fastest growing religions. Reports and data analysis suggest that the Muslim population in the United States is projected to more than double the size from 4 million in 2021 to 8.1 million by 2050. This has been supported by the fact that Muslims are America’s youngest faith community in a study made by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) in 2022 shown in (Figure 1)

### Muslims are America’s Youngest Faith Community

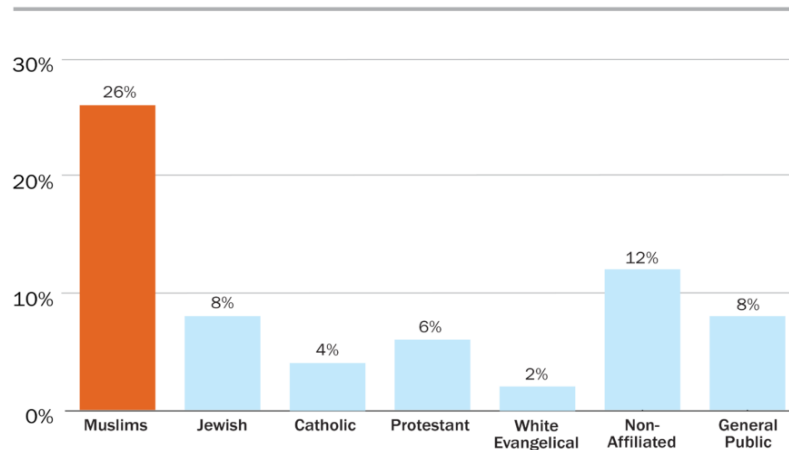


Figure 1: What is your age? (% 18-24 shown) Base: Total respondents, 2022.

Figure 1: Muslims are America’s Youngest Faith Community (“American Muslim Poll: A Politics and Pandemic Status Report”. Institute for Social Policy and Understanding. 2022)

The Muslim community in the United States is also known for being the most ethnically diverse faith community with individuals coming from various ethnic, cultural and national backgrounds including African Americans, Asians, Arabs, Europeans, Hispanics and even Native Americans. Furthermore, Studies like the one made by the ISPU (Figure 2) show that Black Americans account for more than a quarter (28%) of the total Muslim population in America which. However, this is not surprising given the historical roots of Islam in the country.

### Muslims Most Ethnically Diverse Faith Community

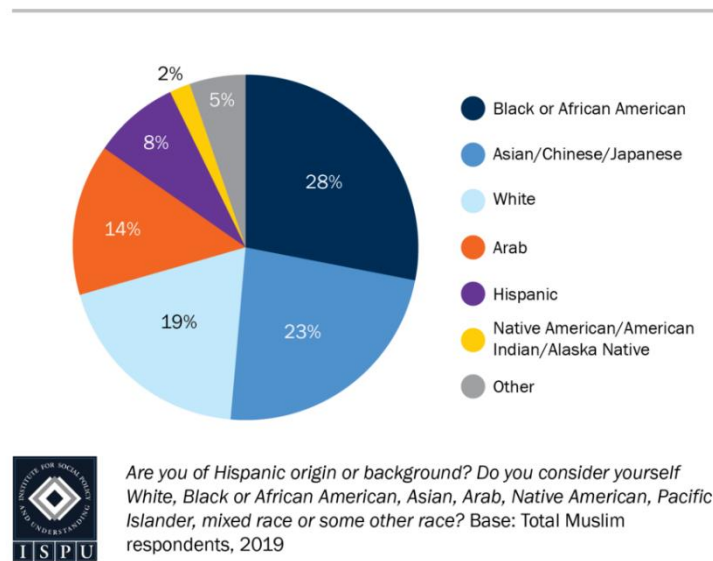


Figure 2: Muslims Most Ethnically Diverse Faith Community (“American Muslim Poll: A Politics and Pandemic Status Report”. Institute for Social Policy and Understanding. 2022)

## 2.1- Islam within the Black American Community

The history of Islam in the United States goes back to the seventieth century. To when the first enslaved Africans were brought to the Americas by the European colonizers. These enslaved individuals were mainly from West and Central Africa, where Islam was already well-established, places like The Sahel region which encompasses parts of Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Sudan, where Islam was introduced through trade and commerce as early as the seventh century. Islam had a limited presence in the United States during the first

centuries of slavery, as it was only practiced by a small population of African enslaved people. Some of the Africans have converted to Islam from Christianity during that period as a form of revolution since a lot of slave holders were using Christianity to justify their racial discrimination towards those enslaved people. Aminah Beverly McCloud, a professor of religious studies and director of Islamic World Studies program at DePaul argues that Islam was a source of resistance for enslaved Africans against their oppressors (Aminah 1995).

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, a significant number of free African Americans started converting to Islam. These early converts often faced persecution and discrimination from white Americans who viewed them as a threat to the dominant Christian culture. Some of these early converts were sailors who were exposed to Islam while traveling abroad, and others were individuals who were attracted to the religion's message of equality and justice.

The number of African American Muslims was constantly increasing after the abolition of slavery in 1865 and the migration of large numbers of African Americans from the South to the North. This was a time of great social and economic upheaval, as African Americans struggled to adapt to their new freedom and build a new life. Many found solace in Islam, which offered a sense of community and spiritual guidance. Richard Brent Turner, an African American historian, stated that Islam was an attractive alternative to the Christianity of their former masters which many of them viewed as the religion of the oppressors (Turner 1996).

## **2.2 - The Nation of Islam's History**

In the early twentieth century, Islam started spreading among African Americans through some religious and political movements, such as the Nation of Islam (NOI). Founded in 1930 by Wallace Fard Muhammad. The Nation of Islam attracted a large following, particularly among African American men. This fame and attraction were due to the groups multifaceted mission to serve Black Americans in political, social, and religious realms. In addition to its religious teachings, the organization was known for its commitment to activism and community empowerment. According to Essien-Udom in his book "The Nation of Islam: An American Millenarian Movement" the Nation of Islam was not only a religious organization but also a political and social one that advocated for the rights of African Americans (Essien-Udom 1962).



Although the Nation of Islam was highly regarded among Black Americans, its reputation within the white community was not as favorable. Due to some controversial statements and decisions made by its leader Elijah Muhammad of embracing forms of

Black Nationalism<sup>1</sup>, Black supremacy<sup>2</sup>, and calling for the establishment for a separate Black state within the United States in 1962, the group went as far as being deemed a hate group<sup>3</sup> by organizations such as Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)<sup>4</sup>. The group leaders have been accused of promoting Black extremism and extremist ideologies to the Black American community especially during the leadership of Elijah Muhammad which lasted more than forty years from the disappearance of the group's founder in 1934 until his death in 1975. These accusations gave the NOI a bad reputation which led the FBI to target the group's leaders and figures with surveillance and other security measures in the 1960s.

The Nation of Islam was not the first group to be labelled as an extremist organization or to have extremist ideologies in the United States. The country has had a long history of various extremist groups, sects, and organizations some of which continue to exist to this day. To better understand this, we need to go through the historical background and the history of extremism in the United States.

---

<sup>1</sup> Black nationalism is a political and social movement that seeks to empower and liberate people of African descent from oppression and discrimination by promoting a sense of shared racial identity and advocating for self-determination and autonomy. Black nationalists often focus on building Black-owned businesses and institutions, fostering pride in Black culture and history, and advocating for political and economic empowerment. Some Black nationalists also espouse separatist or nationalist ideologies, advocating for the creation of a separate Black state or territory. (Britannica)

<sup>2</sup> Black supremacy is a term used to describe the belief or ideology that Black people are inherently superior to other racial or ethnic groups. Black supremacy is often associated with extremist or fringe movements that promote racial separatism and advocate for the exclusion or subjugation of other groups based on their race or ethnicity. (Southern Poverty Law Center)

<sup>3</sup> A hate group is a group or organization that promotes and advocates for hateful or discriminatory ideologies and beliefs, often directed towards a particular race, ethnicity, or religion. (Anti-Defamation League)

<sup>4</sup> SPLC is an organization that monitors hate groups and extremists in the United States

### **3- Understanding Extremism**

Unlike other “-isms” such as terrorism, imperialism, racism, fascism, communism, extremism doesn’t have a core kernel which would guide a person to its meaning. This is due to the fact that the term "extreme" is too broad and ambiguous to be easily encapsulated in a specific context while discarding the others. However, there are some standard definitions of the word such as Peter Coleman’s definition. According to him: “extremism be defined as activities (beliefs, attitudes, feelings, actions, strategies) of a character far removed from the ordinary. In conflict settings it manifests as a severe form of conflict engagement” (Coleman 2014). Nevertheless, the term “extremism” remains a relational concept which mostly makes sense in relation to another concept, mainly because of the root of the word: “extreme”. The definition of the word extreme can be subjective as well, since the answer of the question “What is extreme?” would vary from a one’s perspective to another depending on each individual’s perception of what is considered normal and abnormal. So, in order to answer the question objectively, one needs a universal benchmark, something that is normal, ordinary or mainstream when compared with the extreme.

#### **3.1- Forms and Manifestations of Extremism in the United States**

Extremism is a complex phenomenon that can take on many forms. One of the three of the most commonly discussed forms of extremism in the United States are religious, racial, and political extremism. Extremism can take a religious form when there is a belief in some extreme, far from mainstream, interpretation of a particular religion. While political extremism usually refers to individuals or groups who hold extreme right or left political views. Most of those groups and individuals seek to achieve their goals through non-democratic means and on the expense of silencing any other political opponents (Nussbaum 2012). Whilst racial extremism is an ideology based on the belief that one race is superior than another, and that the social order in society should be based on that ideology. These forms of extremism can be interconnected as some of the extremist groups and organizations in the United States espouse a combination of these ideologies.

## **4- Intersection of Religion, Race, and Extremism**

Over the course of time, there has been a complicated relationship between religion, race and extremism, where some interpretations of major religious teachings such as Judaism, Islam and Christianity have been used to justify extremist acts and ideologies for example, as David Brion Davis noted in "Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World" the Bible was used to justify the practice of slavery. Europeans interpreted the story of Noah's son Ham to associate black people with the supposed curse of Ham, thereby justifying their enslavement (Davis 2006). Davis also noted that many slaveholders selectively cited some of the New Testament passages to support their claim that slavery was justified by God. As he wrote, "By selectively citing New Testament passages instructing slaves to obey their masters, plantation preachers convinced many slaves that God sanctioned their enslavement" (Davis 2006). The relationship between religion and extremism is more complex and nuanced than it may seem at first glance. Because of the importance and sacredness of religion in many people's lives, a lot of extremist groups found it as an effective tool to spread their ideologies. Extremists often selectively use religious passages and some interpretations convince others that their extreme views are sanctioned by God or a higher power, this approach significantly helps them gain support from individuals who would otherwise reject their extremist beliefs and fight against their extremist acts. In many cases, extremist groups use religion to justify their violent actions and beliefs, while they also present themselves as defenders of the faith, claiming that they are fighting against those who are corrupting or undermining religious values in order to recruit new members. By doing so, they can easily attract individuals who are deeply committed to their faith and who are looking for a way to express that commitment in a meaningful way. Along with religion, extremists also use race as a mean for attracting and manipulating other individuals into following them. They often target people who feel marginalized or discriminated because of their race and offer them a sense of belonging by promoting extremist ideologies that center around their racial identity.

While there are many factors that contributed to the rise of extremism in the United States, the role of religion can't be ignored, as there are several groups and organizations who used different tactics in order to promote extremism through both

racial and religious beliefs in the country and within the black community in particular.

## **5- Extremist Groups in the United States**

Throughout the country's short history, the United States had several extremist groups. While some of those groups were outside and against the Black American society like the infamous Ku Klux Klan others were within and with the Black American society such as the Black Hebrew Israelites and the Nation of Islam.

The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) is a white extremist group that was founded in the aftermath of the 1863 American Civil War. The group's ideology is based on the belief that European white people are superior to those of other races such as Jews and African Americans. The group has been known for using terror tactics including lynchings, bombings, and intimidation to further their agenda. This group and other groups with a similar extremist ideology went as far as starting the eugenics movement<sup>1</sup>, which sought to "improve" the white race through forced sterilization<sup>2</sup> and other means (Stern 2016).

On the other side, Black Americans also had some extremist groups within their society namely the Black Hebrew Israelites which is a religious extremist Black American group founded in 1886 by Frank S Cherry. The group has a negative reputation due to the extreme actions of some of its members, this is why it had a limited impact on the black American society. Another reason is because the Black Hebrew Israelites tended to isolate themselves and adhere strictly to their biblical

---

<sup>1</sup> The eugenics movement was a social and political movement that emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and aimed to improve the human gene pool through selective breeding and other means. It was based on the idea that certain human traits, such as intelligence and morality, were hereditary, and that by encouraging the reproduction of people with desirable traits and discouraging the reproduction of those with undesirable traits, the quality of the human race could be improved. (Lombardo, Paul A. *Three Generations, No Imbeciles: Eugenics, the Supreme Court, and Buck v. Bell*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008.)

<sup>2</sup> Sterilization refers to the process of rendering a person or animal incapable of reproducing by removing or blocking their reproductive organs or other means. In the context of eugenics, sterilization was often used as a means of preventing individuals with "undesirable" traits from passing on their genes to future generations. (Lombardo, Paul A. "Eugenic Sterilization Laws." *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, edited by Stephen G. Post, vol. 1, Macmillan Reference USA, 2004, pp. 776-778)

interpretation and ideology. While other groups that held and promoted extremist views and ideologies like the Nation of Islam had a much significant impact on the American society. The religious group founded by Wallace Fard Muhammad in 1930 is one of the most popular religious groups within the African American society, in fact it is one of the historically significant among African Americans, and indeed in American history.

## **6- The Religious Promotion of Extremism Within the Black American Community**

The promotion of extremism is not unique to a specific country or a society. Nevertheless, in the United States, religious groups have played a significant role in shaping and promoting extremism in the country and within the Black American community in specific. Various groups and organizations have tried promoting extremism and extremist ideologies throughout history, for one reason or another. While there have been instances where some groups have attempted and sought to promote extremist ideologies within the black American community using religious methods, many have been shut down. However, groups like the Nation of Islam have been able to promote their ideologies while remaining relevant in the public eye, which may explain their continued popularity.

### **6.1- Nation of Islam's Religious Extremism Promotion**

One the most prominent examples of the use of religion in promoting extremist ideologies within the Black American society is the 1930 founded religious group, the Nation of Islam. While the Nation of Islam has undergone significant changes since its founding, it has been associated with extremist rhetoric and actions at various points in its history, mainly under the leadership of its 2nd leader Elijah Muhammad starting from 1934. During that period, the group espoused a form of black nationalism and promoted the idea of a separate black state within the United States. The group sought to empower Black Americans this is why it started promoting racial pride through its teaching. However, these ideologies were often tied to some extremist views and actions, As Michael Muhammad Knight noted in his book, The Nation of Islam's teachings have been criticized of promoting a narrow and exclusionary view of Islam that is incompatible with mainstream Islamic beliefs (Knight 2006). Furthermore, the groups focus on racial identity and separatism has

been used to justify the demonization of other groups, particularly white Americans and Jews. In the Nation of Islam, Jews came to be seen as the epitome of evil, the embodiment of all that was despised in American society. According to NOI ideology, Jews controlled the American media and were the primary purveyors of the ideology of white supremacy (Chireau 2000).

The civil rights movement spanned from 1954 to 1968 and led by prominent figures such as Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and Malcolm X was a pivotal moment in the American history marked by a wave of social and political activism aimed at ending racial segregation and discrimination against African Americans, throughout this era the Nation of Islam's extremist beliefs and tactics underwent significant changes as the group has faced a lot of criticism for their exclusionary and discriminatory practices, and pressure by the growing demand for racial equality, this forced the NOI to adapt to new challenges and shift their focus towards community building and self-sufficiency, such as establishing their own schools and businesses. That era had a remarkable impact on the NOI beliefs and tactics and played an important role in shaping their strategies ultimately leading to their decline in popularity in the years following the 1960s.

Along with the civil rights movements, throughout Elijah's leadership the Nation of Islam has been accused of spreading and promoting extremism to the Black American community by various groups and organizations including some United States governmental institutions like the FBI. This makes the group a very important stop on the path to researching the religious role of promoting extremism in the United States in general and within the Black American community in specific. While speaking about the promotion of extremism, an important key aspect is the fact that there are levels of extremism, as it is rare that people will go directly to killing or enslaving others without a process of radicalization taking place beforehand. This process often involves the promotion of extremist ideologies by groups or individuals seeking to influence others, as Peter Neumann argued: extremist ideology can act as a powerful motivator for individuals to take violent action, particularly when combined with a sense of victimhood and a perceived threat to one's identity (Neumann 2019). This is why studying the religious beliefs and ideologies of this group while making comparison with its origins and with the mainstream Sunni Islam is such an important task to both know how they have used such ideologies in order

to promote extremism and how did such promotion of extremist ideologies affect the Black American society.

## **Conclusion**

As it has been demonstrated, the role of religion in promoting extremism within the Black American community has been a contentious issue throughout history. While there have been various groups and organizations attempting to promote extremist ideologies through religious, many have been shut down due to their radical views and exposed tactics, whilst other groups like the Nation of Islam have been able to remain relevant in the public eye, which can be attributed to their ability to adapt to new challenges and changing times.

The Nation of Islam, founded in 1930, is one of the most well-known religious groups in the Black American community. However, the group's teachings and actions have faced criticism on multiple occasions for promoting a narrow and exclusionary view of Islam that is incompatible with mainstream Islamic beliefs and also for promoting extremist views and ideologies. As the group's focus on racial identity and separatism has been used to justify the demonization of other groups. That being said, and despite the groups' controversial history, the Nation of Islam played a significant role in shaping the Black American community and in creating its history which ultimately influenced the larger American society.

Studying the religious role of promoting extremism within the Black American community is crucial to understanding how such ideologies were used to influence and radicalize individuals, leading to violent actions. Examining the origins, ideologies, and tactics of a popular group that has been accused of extremism such as the Nation of Islam while comparing them with mainstream ideologies such as Sunni Islam provides insights into the ways extremist ideologies can be used to manipulate individuals and influence society.

## **Chapter Two**

# **Nation of Islam & Religious Extremism**

### **Introduction**

This chapter is structured into three primary sections, the first is to introduce the reader to Islam, its teachings and how it emerged in order to link the first part with the second which is the Nation of Islam, and then it sums up by going deeper to answer some of the research questions mainly about the forms, beliefs and practices of extremism within the black American religious group. This chapter's aim is to come to an answer to the previously raised question of the main extreme ideologies, beliefs and practices of the Nation of Islam during Wallace Fard and Elijah Muhammad's leadership.

### **1- Islam**

If you refer to Arabic language dictionaries, you will find that the meaning of the word Islam is submission, humbling oneself, and obeying commands and heeding prohibitions without objection, sincerely worshipping Allah alone, believing what He tells and having faith in Him.

All the religions on earth are called by various names, either the name of a specific man or a specific nation. Christianity takes its name from Christ; Buddhism takes its name from its founder, the Buddha; the Zoroastrians became well known by this name because their founder and standard-bearer was Zoroaster. Similarly, Judaism took its name from a tribe known as Yehuda (Judah), so it became known as Judaism. And so on. Except for Islam; for it is not attributed to any specific man or to any specific nation, rather its name refers to the meaning of the word Islam. What this name indicates is that the establishment and founding of this religion was not the work of one particular man and that it is not only for one particular nation to the exclusion of all others. Rather its aim is to give the attribute implied by the word



Islam to all the peoples of the earth. So, everyone who acquires this attribute, whether he is from the past or the present, is a Muslim, and everyone who acquires this attribute in the future will also be a Muslim. (Al-Munajjid 2007)

## **1.1- Expansion of Islam**

Islam, the religion founded by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in the 7th century in the Arabian Peninsula, quickly spread throughout the Middle East and beyond. Over the centuries, Islam has become one of the largest and most influential religions in the world, with over 1 billion followers.

One of the key factors in the spread of Islam was the military expansion of the early Islamic caliphate. After the death of Muhammad ﷺ in 632, his followers, known as the companions, established a caliphate based in Medina, which rapidly expanded through conquests of neighboring territories. The early caliphs Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali conquered the Sassanid Empire and the Byzantine Empire. Additionally, they also conquered much of the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa. Another important factor in the spread of Islam was trade. Muslim merchants established trading networks across the Indian Ocean, connecting the Middle East with East Africa, India, and Southeast Asia. Through these trade networks, Islam spread to new regions and societies, often peacefully and gradually. Islam also spread through missionary activity. Moreover, Muslim scholars and teachers traveled to new regions to spread the message of Islam and educate local populations about Islamic beliefs and practices. These efforts often resulted in the conversion of large numbers of people, particularly in regions where Islam had not yet taken hold (Ibn-Kathir 1361).

Today, Islam is the second-largest religion in the world with a profound impact on the world's history and culture shaping the development of many societies and influencing everything from art and architecture to politics and philosophy. As Islam has expanded over the centuries, various groups with different beliefs, practices, and cultural backgrounds have emerged in different regions of the world where Muslims live. These groups have often been shaped by local customs, historical circumstances, and social and political contexts.

## **1.2- Islamic groups**

Following the death of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in 632 CE, the Muslim community experienced a number of divisions and disagreements over issues such as, different interpretations of religious texts, the role of religious authorities and much more. These divisions along with the expansion of Islam paved the way to the emergence of new Islamic groups. Nowadays Islam is mainly represented by two major sects, Sunni and Shi'a while Sunni Islam being majority of Muslims worldwide. Sunni, also called 'Ahl al-Sunnah' for adhering to and following the Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ Sunnah. Sunni Islam is also characterized by its emphasis on the importance of following the example of the Prophet Muhammad, and its belief in the legitimacy of the first four caliphs who succeeded him. Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali (al-Juhani 1999). Sunni Islam has always been used as a benchmark by Islamic scholars and non-Islamic researchers because it represents the mainstream Islam.

In many countries beyond the traditional heartlands of Islam, including in the Western world, numerous Islamic groups and movements have emerged that differ from the path of Sunni Islam. Such groups often arise from various social and political factors. One example is the Nation of Islam, founded in 1930 by Wallace Fard.

## **2- The Nation of Islam**

The Nation of Islam is a religious and political group that was founded in the United States in 1930. It was established with the aim of improving the spiritual, mental, social, and economic condition of African Americans and other marginalized communities. The organization has been significantly influential in the African American community. They have also been involved in various social and economic programs, including education, job training, and drug rehabilitation. While the organization has been controversial due to some of their beliefs and statements made by their leaders, they have continued to be a significant force in the African American community (Evanzz 1999).

## **2.1- Origins and Foundation**

The founder of the NOI, Wallace Fard Muhammad, arrived in Detroit in the late 1920s and began preaching a message of self-improvement and racial pride to African Americans in the city. Fard's teachings resonated with many African Americans who were tired of the systemic racism and oppression they faced on a daily basis. The Nation of Islam gained mainstream public attention in Detroit in November 1932 when one of its members, Robert Karriem, "sacrificed" his friend James J. Smith, a NOI member, by plunging a knife into his heart. Press reports tried to link this crime to his involvement in the Nation of Islam (Beynon 1938). However, the movement continued and after converting an estimated eight thousand Detroit blacks to the Nation of Islam, the group's leader Fard disappeared in early 1934. This is when one of Fard's earliest followers Elijah Poole, who later changed his name to Elijah Muhammad took the leadership of the group and became Fard's successor.

## **2.2- Famous Leaders**

### **2.2.1- Wallace Fard Muhammad**

Wallace Fard Muhammad is a mysterious persona whose alleged birth is 1877, according to the Nation of Islam's official records, Elijah Muhammad, Fard's successor, claimed that his leader, Fard, was born in Mecca, Saudi Arabia to a black father and white mother on February 26, 1877, And after studying in London and at the University of Southern California, Fard, who was on a divine mission, arrived in Detroit on July 4, 1930 to introduce to the city's African Americans his teachings about their origins began preaching to African Americans in the city. This paved the way to his foundation of the Nation of Islam. Despite Elijah's claims, there has been a long debate about the true identity of the NOI's founder. Along with the FBI, many other parties including media such as journals and newspapers have accused Fard of faking his identity. Journals such Harvard Divinity School claimed that Wallace Fard Muhammad and Wallace Dodd Ford were the same person. Ford was incarcerated in San Quentin Prison in California from 1926 to 1929. The FBI backed up this claim by making an announcement that photographs and fingerprints of Wallace Dodd Ford purportedly from San Quentin prison matched those of the Fard who was arrested in

Detroit in the 1930s (Bowen 2013). However, this announcement was criticized by the NOI, the major criticisms of this evidence that has been brought up by the group is that no one outside the government has seen proof that these two pieces of evidence. Elijah Muhammad, who succeeded Fard in the group's leadership went as far as offering one hundred thousand dollars for the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner newspaper, a newspaper that claimed Wallace Fard was indeed Wallace Dodd Ford with an alias. Elijah said: *"I, Elijah Muhammad, told the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner on Monday, July 29, 1963 that my followers and I would pay the newspaper \$100,000.00 to prove the headline charge ("BLACK MUSLIM FOUNDER EXPOSED AS A WHITE") made against us; that we are following one Wallace Dodd with many aliases including the name, Fard; that he is the man I am representing to my people as being Master Fard Muhammad"* (Figure 3).

Regardless of his unknown origins, many African Americans were drawn to Fard Muhammad's teachings, which offered a message of hope and empowerment to those who had long endured systemic racism and oppression in the United States. Fard's teachings emphasized self-improvement, self-reliance, and the importance of taking control of one's own life, resonating with those black Americans who sought to rise above the injustices they faced. Which led to the group's growth in popularity and influence in the African American community.

However, Fard Muhammad's time as leader of the Nation of Islam was not very long. As he disappeared under mysterious circumstances in 1934, and little is known about his fate. Some members of the NOI believe that he was a prophet or messiah who was taken up into heaven, while others believe that he was killed or imprisoned (Bowen 2013).

Despite the mystery surrounding his life and disappearance, Fard Muhammad's influence on the NOI and on the African American community has been significant. The organization he established persists in advocating for black self-reliance and black nationalism, albeit undergoing transformation under subsequent leaders such as Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X, and other influential figures.

Dedicated to Freedom,  
Justice and Equality for  
the so-called Negro.  
The Earth Belongs to Allah

# Muhammad Speaks



Vol. 2--No. 24

AUGUST 16, 1963

15c—OUTSIDE ILLINOIS 20c

## Nation Of Islam Offers Hearst



Beware  
of  
Phony  
Claims

# \$100,000 To Prove Charge

By Elijah Muhammad

1. Elijah Muhammad, Messenger of Allah, told the Los Angeles "Herald-Examiner" Office on Monday, July 29, 1963, that his followers and I will pay the Los Angeles "Herald-Examiner" Newspaper \$100,000.00 (one hundred thousand dollars) to prove the headline charge ("BLACK MOHLEM FOUNDER BEX P-O-S-E-D AS A WHITE") made against us; that we are following one Wallace Dodd with many aliases including the name, Ford, that he is the man that I am representing to my people as being Master Fard Muhammad (Allah in Person) who appeared among us in Detroit, Michigan, in 1931 and is the same person (Wallace Dodd).

The Los Angeles "Herald-Examiner" also printed his prison history as San Quentin Federal Penitentiary on a charge of peddling dope, and that he admitted he was teaching us.

If he (Dodd) was teaching for money in those panic days in Detroit, he did not get it from us. Mr. Dodd, undoubtedly, must have been teaching the white people if he received any money at all, because we did not have any.

WE DID NOT pay Mr. Ford any money to teach us and there are many who will verify this statement who are yet alive. We could hardly pay the rest of a ball in those days.

Sometimes they (the Be-

(Continued on page 2)



The Phony



The Savior

At left is the dug-up convict, Wallace Dodd, alleged by the sensation-seeking and anti-Negro white Hearst newspaper to be founder of the Nation of Islam in North America. At right, however, is the real and rightful Master Fard, of Mecca, who gave all to black people in America before returning to Mecca. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad has not only offered to confront the phony imposter invented by the Hearst press, but has exposed the deceit and has offered to pay \$100,000 if they can prove their fraudulent claims. (See Mr. Muhammad's Column)

Figure 3. Picture of newspaper headline. Adapted from "Nation Of Islam Offers Hearst \$100,000 To Prove Charge" by Elijah Muhammad. Muhammad Speaks, August 16, 1963.

### **2.2.2- Elijah Muhammad**

Elijah Muhammad was an influential religious and political figure who served as a leader of the Nation of Islam (NOI) from the 1930s until his death in 1975. While his beliefs and teachings were controversial and at times divisive, his impact on the African American community and on American society as a whole cannot be ignored. Elijah was born in Georgia in 1897, he then moved with his family to Michigan as a child. He came to the NOI in the early 1930s and quickly rose through the ranks becoming the organization's leader in 1934 following the disappearance of its founder, Wallace Fard Muhammad (Evanzz 1999).

Under Elijah Muhammad's leadership, the NOI grew in membership and influence, with a message of black self-reliance and nationalism that appealed to many African Americans. Elijah Muhammad emphasized the importance of education, self-improvement, and discipline, and he encouraged his followers to build their own businesses and institutions, including schools and farms. In addition to his charismatic personality as a leader, Elijah was a prolific author, and his writings played a significant role in spreading the message of the Nation of Islam.

### **2.2.3- Malcolm X**

El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, commonly known as Malcolm X was an influential African American Muslim minister and civil rights activist. He was born Malcolm Little in 1925 in Omaha, Nebraska, and spent much of his childhood in foster care and various institutions. He joined the Nation of Islam in prison in the late 1940s, and he shortly became one of its most prominent and controversial members of the group. After his release from prison in 1952, Malcolm X became a leading spokesperson for the NOI, advocating for the group's ideologies such as black nationalism, self-reliance, and the separation of black and white Americans. Due to his leading personality Malcolm attracted a large following and gained national attention for his fiery speeches and provocative statements, which often criticized white Americans and the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King Jr. After going to the Saudi Arabia for Hajj in 1964, Malcolm X's views evolved, especially after seeing the sense of brotherhood between Muslims of different colors, he eventually broke with the

NOI and its leader, Elijah Muhammad, when he came back from Hajj. He then embraced Sunni Islam and traveled to Africa and the Middle East, where he began to advocate for a more inclusive and universal approach to civil rights and human rights (Ashour 1966).

Malcolm X was assassinated in 1965, at the age of 39, but his legacy as a powerful and controversial figure in the struggle for civil rights continues to resonate to this day.

### **2.3- The Group Ties to Mainstream Islam**

The Nation of Islam (NOI) is a religious and social movement that emerged in the United States in the early 20th century. It is important to note that the beliefs and practices of the Nation of Islam are distinct from mainstream Islam, and the two have had limited ties and contact over the years.

The teachings of the Nation of Islam included the belief that Elijah Muhammad was a prophet, the superiority of the black race, and the need for black separatism. These beliefs were not in line with mainstream Islamic teachings, and the Nation of Islam has often been criticized by mainstream Islamic scholars and organizations for these beliefs

### **3- The Extremist Beliefs and Practices of the Nation of Islam**

The Nation of Islam is a group which has gone through various stages and has had controversial beliefs at different points in its history. That being said, the group's first couple stages under the lead of Wallace Fard and Elijah Muhammed were the group's most controversial stages. During those initial stages, the group promoted a unique blend of a mixture of beliefs and ideas adapted from Christianity the Qadiani<sup>1</sup> translation of the Qur'an, and numerous Messianic Depression-era cult leaders such as Marcus Garvey and Father Divine (Palmer 1998).

---

<sup>1</sup> The term "Qadiani" is a derogatory term used by some individuals to refer to the Ahmadiyya, which is a religious movement within the Islamic community. The Ahmadiyya community believes in the prophethood of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who they consider to be a subordinate and non-law-bearing prophet after Prophet Muhammad.

### **3.1- Examples of Nation of Islam's Extremist Beliefs**

During the Nation of Islam's early stage, Wallace Ford imparted the foundational principles and pillars of the NOI's beliefs to his followers, among these devoted followers was Elijah Poole, who held a prominent position as one of the closest disciples of Ford. Following the mysterious disappearance of Ford, the group saw a significant growth in population and membership, this is when Elijah started writing letters and books in which introduced the new group members to the group's teachings and elaborated its doctrine and beliefs. However, some of those beliefs were extreme, radical and often separatist.

Elijah Muhammed was one the famous black leaders advocating for separatism and calling for the establishment of a separate state dedicated to black people. This was revealed multiple times in his writings as he expressed his support for the separation of his people from what he called 'their enemies' which is the white people, emphasizing the importance of preventing his people from being entangled in their enemies' downfall, even if it meant sacrificing his own life in this bold endeavor to protect them through the plain and simple Truth of God and Power (Elijah 1974). While he also mentioned: *"The time is now ripe that they should have no fear, only the fear of Allah, who is in person among them to save them from their enemies. By all means, they must be separated from the white race"* (Elijah 1965).

Along with his separatist ideology, as also denounced Christianity to be a religion backed by the devil by claiming that his God said: *"Christianity was a religion organized and backed by the devils for the purpose of making slaves of black mankind."*

(Elijah 1965). In addition to that, Elijah promoted the belief and doctrine that white people are the devil, and that they are inferior to darker people because according to him, the white race was not created by the God of Righteousness. The white race is not a created people, they are instead, made people. They were made by Yakub, an original Black Man. When speaking about Yakub, Elijah said: *"Yakub, the father of the devil, made the white race, a race of devils -- enemies of the darker people of the earth. The white race is not made by nature to accept righteousness. They know righteousness, but they cannot be righteous. Jesus made this clear when he was trying to reform the white race (devils) two thousand (2,000) years ago."* (Elijah 1974).



Elijah wasn't the only NOI member showing hatred and promoting extremist beliefs as one of the most famous figures of the group, Malcolm X has done so as well.

In 1962, France witnessed the worst single-aircraft disaster and the first single civilian jet airliner disaster with more than 100 deaths. It is when Air France Flight 007 crashed while on take-off from Orly Airport. 106 of the flight attendants were associated with Atlanta's art association month-long tour in Europe and were heading back home to Atlanta. The crash occurred during the civil rights movement in the United States. Leaders and activists like Martin Luther King Jr. and Harry Belafonte announced cancellation of a protest in Atlanta as a conciliatory gesture to the grieving city. However, Nation of Islam leader, Malcolm X speaking in Los Angeles expressed joy over the deaths of all white group from Atlanta by saying: *"I would like to announce a very beautiful thing that has happened...I got a wire from God today...well, all right, somebody came and told me that he really had answered our prayers over in France. He dropped an airplane out of the sky with over 120 white people on it because the Muslims believe in an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But thanks to God, or Jehovah, or Allah, we will continue to pray, and we hope that every day another plane falls out of the sky."* (Branch 1999). Malcolm didn't stop here, as Los Angeles mayor denounced him as fiend, and the disagreement of civil rights figures such as Martin Luther King, he added: "the messenger should have done more". This was mainly due to the promotion of hatred against all white men by the NOI group.

Furthermore, the groups have a specific book which is considered a sacred text within the Nation of Islam and is highly regarded by its followers. The book is supposedly a collection of lessons given by 'Master Fard Muhammad' to his servant Elijah Muhammed. The book contains several teachings, rules of instruction, facts and lists of mathematical problems to be solved by the members. The book's content goes as far back as early 1930s.

Within the lines of mathematical problems, some extreme ideologies and beliefs are hidden, in chapter IV Lost Found Muslim Lesson NO. 1 Fard was asked fourteen questions, the ninth question was: "Why does Muhammad make the Devil (Whiteman) Study from thirty-five to fifty years before he can call himself a Muslim son? And wear the greatest and only Flag of the Universe? And he must add a sword on the upper part of the Holy and Greatest Universe Flag of Islam?". Fard's answer was: *"So that he could clean himself up. A Muslim does not love the Devil regardless to how long he*

*studies. After he has devoted thirty-five or fifty years trying to learn and do like the original man (Blackman), he could come and do trading among us and we would not kill him as quick as we would the other Devils - that is, who have not gone under this Study. After he goes through with this Labor from thirty-five to fifty years, we permit him to wear our Holy Flag. The sword is the emblem of Justice and it was used by the original man in Muhammad's time. Thus, it was placed on the upper part of the Flag so that the Devil can always see it, (so he will keep in mind that any time he reveals the Secrets, his head would be taken off by the sword)."* (Muhammad 1957).

In the following question he was asked: "Why did Muhammad and any Muslim murder the devil? What is the Duty of each Muslim in regard to four devils? What Reward does a Muslim receive by presenting the four devils at one time?" and he answered: "*Because he is One Hundred Percent wicked and will not keep and obey the Laws of Islam. His ways and actions are like a snake of the grafted type. So Muhammad learned that he could not reform the devils, so they had to be murdered. All Muslims will murder the devil they know he is a snake and, also, if he be allowed to live, he would sting someone else. Each Muslim is required to bring four devils. And by bringing and presenting four at one time, his Reward is a button to wear on the lapel of his coat. Also, a free transportation in the Holy City (Mecca) to see Brother Muhammad.*" (Muhammad 1957).

The promotion of these extremist beliefs, particularly targeting white people, has led to the engagement of extremist practices by members of the group throughout the history of the NOI.

### **3.2- Extremist Practices by Nation of Islam Members**

Extremist teachings often contribute to extremist actions. When individuals are exposed to extreme ideologies and indoctrinated with radical beliefs, extremist actions such as violence and terrorism are the inevitable consequence. This was the case within the Nation of Islam; as many group members started implementing what they were taught. The first incident goes back to 1932 when one of the earliest group members, Robert Karriem Harris was convicted of murder in Detroit, whose victim was another NOI follower James J. Smith who was slayed with a silver dagger. Upon his arrest, Harris stated that the murder had been a sacrificial rite. Harris also managed to drag few other people under the police spotlight with him by his confessions, including Wallace Fard, who was the group's leader at that time. According to both papers who covered this incidence, the Detroit News and the Detroit Free Press, Fard had been charging members to change their given names to aliases with Arabic names

and requiring that they get a ten dollars membership card printed from the company he was working for as a salesman. Fard then ended up spending time for observation in the psychopathic ward before disappearing in 1934 (HEAD OF CULT 1932). The NOI members who were accused and involved in the murders believed in the teachings given by Fard such as human sacrifices. Fard, as mentioned in Supreme wisdom, the book which contains most of the group's teachings, taught his followers that one needs to sacrifice for whites to return to his home Mecca, also himself, or his loved ones if Allah (Fard) requires it.

The Voodoo Murders were the first yet not the last incident led by NOI members. After the disappearance of Wallace Fard in 1934, Elijah Muhammad took lead over the group. Under his leadership several acts of violence and terror was recorded including the assault of the former Boston leader of the group Aubrey Barnett, and the murder of Kenneth Morton in 1964 after their decision of quitting the group. The year after, an ex-member Benjamin Brown who left the Nation to establish a masjid was also shot in front of his masjid. This was followed by a series of unsuccessful attempts on assassinating the famous former national spokesman for the group Malcolm X, after he made Hajj and renounced Elijah's organization. It didn't take long until Malcolm was assassinated in New York City in February of the same year, 1965. These internal were followed by external ones between 1973 and mid-1974 in the city of San Fransisco, as some of the group members revived the 1930's Nation teachings by killing, robing, assaulting, and sexually abusing a total of twenty-three persons, leaving fifteen dead. The incident was later known as the "Zebra Serial Killings". Elijah Muhammad's followers were led by the belief that godhood could be achieved by murdering and terrorizing non-blacks (Palmer 1998).

## **Conclusion**

Ultimately, the Nation of Islam demonstrated a profound prevalence of extremism throughout its history by encompassing various forms that spanned from beliefs to enacted practices and unfortunately, acts of violence. This trajectory underscores the huge influence of extreme ideologies within the organization as well as the potential consequences that arise when such ideologies are fully embraced. By examining the ideologies, actions, and regrettable instances of violence that characterized the Nation of Islam, a comprehensive comprehension emerges regarding the intricate nature of extremism, and extremist promotion within this specific religious group.

# **Chapter Three**

## **The Nation of Islam's Extremism Promotion Through Religion**

### **Introduction**

This chapter serves as a conclusory chapter for the research, it will be divided into multiple sections in which there will be a comparison between Mainstream Islam and the Nation of Islam, criticism from various sources, an analysis of the role religion has played in the promotion of extremism within the black American group and the black American society, factors that contribute to the appeal of extremist ideologies among African Americans and finally the significance of such research. The aim of this chapter is to answer the remaining unanswered questions that were raised in the first part of this research paper and to pave the way to a general conclusion that would sum up the research.

### **1-Comparison between Sunni Islam and the Nation of Islam**

Islam is a global religion which is embraced by millions of individuals, from different countries, colors and origins. Many groups and branches have affiliated with Islam throughout history, while some of them have ceased to exist, many still exist and have a significant impact to this day. The major branches of Islam, which is considered as mainstream Islam, is Sunni Islam. The Sunni Islam traces its roots back to the early days of Islam during the Prophecy of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his companions. Sunni Islam adheres to the holy book of Islam, the Quran and the Hadith which consists of the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and the Athar which is mostly the sayings of his companions .ﷺ As mentioned by one of the major four scholars of Islam, Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his book *Foundation of Sunnah* "The Fundamental Principles of the Sunnah with us are: Holding fast to what the Companions of the Messenger of Allah were upon." (Ahmad 845). Despite Sunni Islam being the major

mainstream Islamic branch, there are several other branches and groups that emerged throughout the Islamic history. Groups like the Nation of Islam, which had the most prominent presence within the United States. Founded in 1930, the group gained most of its popularity by spreading its message and beliefs within the black American society. Primarily focused on uplifting black individuals, the Nation of Islam developed its unique set of beliefs and practices. Distinguished from Sunni Islam, also referred to as orthodox or mainstream Islam, the Nation of Islam diverges on various practical and ideological points.

### **1.1- Difference in Beliefs**

Despite its Islamic affiliation, the Nation of Islam encompasses many differences in its beliefs compared to mainstream Islam. Some of these differences happen to be in the core beliefs of the religion itself. A clear distinction becomes evident by comparing the teachings and beliefs of the NOI and Sunni Islam.

One of the main books that encapsulate the fundamental beliefs of Sunni Muslims around the world is the book of The Tahawiyyah Creed. Written in the ninth century, this book is considered as one of the Sunni authoritative books of creed, as Muslim scholars and theologians have historically endorsed it and it continues to be studied and referenced in Islamic educational institutions. A comparison between the Tahawiyyah Creed and Message to the Blackman in America, Elijah Muhammad's book which contains most of the NOI beliefs, shows some key differences. For instance, Imam al-Tahawi started his book by speaking about monotheism, as he said: *"We say about the oneness of Allah, believing in the guidance of Allah, that Allah is one without any partner."* He also added *"There is nothing like Him, He is the eternal without a beginning and enduring without end, He will never perish, nor come to an end, He does not resemble any created being, He is living and He never dies, always sustaining and never sleeping."* (al-Tahawi). On the other hand, Elijah has mentioned several times in his book that there are multiple gods that were present throughout humanity's history as he said: *"The Black Nation is self-created, while the white race is made by one of the gods of the Black Nation"* Elijah also believed that God cannot be anything else other than a man as he argued: *"God must be a man and not a spook"* (Elijah 1965) and that God (Allah) is the former NOI leader, Wallace Fard Muhammad. Elijah said: *"We believe that Allah (God) appeared*

in the person of Master W. Fard Muhammad, July, 1930, the long awaited "Messiah" of the Christians, and the "Mahdi" of the Muslims." (Elijah 1973). Elijah also claimed to be the Messenger of his god Fard, while Sunni creed is based on the belief that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the seal of the prophets and messengers. Elijah's statements contradict the creed of Imam al-Tahawi regarding the nature of God specifically in relation to His oneness, incomparability, and eternal existence. Imam al-Tahawi's creed affirms the belief that God is singular, beyond any resemblance to created beings and eternal without a beginning. However, Elijah's belief in W.D. Fard as God contradicts these principles as he asserts that God is a man with a beginning. Furthermore, Elijah's belief in multiple gods deviates from the monotheistic belief in one God upheld in the Tahawiyah.

In addition to the Nation of Islam's beliefs contradicting Sunni creeds, some beliefs affirmed by Elijah Muhammad go against Qur'an itself. For instance, Elijah argues: *"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."* By (devils) Elijah means the white race as he stated in many of his writings. This belief goes against what is in the Quran which is "Allah is the creator of all things" (Quran 39:62). Furthermore, Elijah affirmed in the Testimonials of Faith of the NOI in his book Fall of America that resurrection is a mental process while there are multiple verses in the Quran which state that resurrection will be real and physical in the day of judgment, in Surah Al-Qiyamah, meaning "The Resurrection" Allah stated: "Do people think We cannot reassemble their bones? Yes 'indeed'! We are 'most' capable of restoring 'even' their very fingertips." (Quran 75:3-4). Moreover, Elijah has declared that he had chosen the month of December as a fasting month for his followers as a replacement for the month of Ramadhan. he stated: *"I have chosen (for quite a few years) the month of December for my followers to fast instead of the month of Ramadan"*. While in the Quran Allah said: "The month of Ramadhan [is that] in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion. So whoever sights [the new moon of] the month, let him fast it" (Quran 2:185).

By these statements by Elijah Muhammad has demonstrated the fundamental contradictions between the beliefs of the Nation of Islam and mainstream Sunni Islamic beliefs. As a result, the group has faced significant criticism from numerous Muslim figures and Islamic scholars.

## 1.2- Critics of Nation of Islam

### 1.2.1- Islamic critics

With its distinctive beliefs and practices, the Nation of Islam led by prominent figures such as Wallace Fard and later Elijah Muhammad, have sparked controversy and drawn criticism from Muslim figures and Islamic scholars alike due to its teachings and beliefs which contradicts mainstream Islam in many core beliefs.

Many Muslim figures have criticized the Nation of Islam's beliefs, in fact a lot of them have declared that the group is not part of Islam. When the Indian-born director of the Islamic Society of Orange County in Garden Grove, Muzamil Siddiqi, was asked about the Nation of Islam his answer was: *"the Nation of Islam has nothing to do with Islam, they have their own beliefs."* (Muslims See 1994). And when Salam Al-Marayati, the director of the Muslim Public Affairs Council in Los Angeles was receiving calls from dozens from non-Muslims asking about the The Million Man March, he said *"They call because the march is sponsored by the Nation of Islam, we're Muslims, and they figure we must be connected," "They have no idea there's any difference"*. (Muslims See 1994). Not only this, in fact a lot of Muslim scholars such as Sheikh Khalid Yasin, Sheikh Abdullah Hakim and Sheikh AbdulWahab Saleem all agreed that whoever believes in the core teachings of the Nation of Islam is not a Muslim, as he is a Kafir and a disbeliever by the verses of the Quran. Idris Palmer, a Muslim activist wrote an article discussing this issue in Nida'ul Islam magazine named "The 'Nation of Islam' or Nation of Kufr?" As he quoted some of the NOI leaders' writings which contained their teachings and beliefs and compared it to the Islamic teachings from the Quran and the Sunnah (Palmer 1998). Palmer based his claims on the fact that teachings promoted by the NOI such as the neglect of the day the reality of the Day of resurrection, claiming it to be mental rather than physical, and that the *"so-called Negroes are most in need of mental resurrection; therefore they will be resurrected first."* And that Prayer is not accepted without the mentioning of Elijah's Muhammad name, and the belief in W.D. Fard as a god, clearly contradicts the Islamic sources of legislation such as the Quran and the Sunnah and it is nothing but a heresy. (Palmer 1998).

In an addition to the aforementioned critics, a famous Saudi Islamic scholar Mane' Bin Hammad Al-Juhani voiced his disapproval of the group's beliefs and



practices. In his book the Concise Encyclopedia of Contemporary Religions, Sects, and Parties, Mane' mentioned: *"The Nation of Islam in the West is a religious and intellectual movement that claims affiliation with Islam, but it has long emptied it of its essence and content. In its early days, despite calling for its followers to turn towards the Noble Qur'an, it maintained the idea of continuing to draw from the Torah and the Gospel. In its later phase, it adopted esoteric concepts and asserted that God is not an unseen entity, but must manifest as a specific person, namely "Fard," in whom God has supposedly truly appeared, as they claim. Furthermore, they abandoned the seal of the message with Muhammad, peace be upon him, and proclaimed the descent of a heavenly book upon the blacks. They also replaced fasting in the month of Ramadan with fasting in December."* (Al-Juhani 1999).

### **1.2.2- Non-Islamic Critics**

Muslims were not the only ones who stood in the face of Nation of Islam, as many non-Muslim researchers have pointed out that the beliefs they are upon are far from Islam teachings. Washington Post's Christian editor Karl Evanzz stated in his book *The rise and fall of Elijah Muhammad* "The NOI, a group which has traditionally marketed itself as dedicated to the brotherhood, benefit and upliftment of American blacks, while the Nation and the media continually refer to them as the premier American Islamic organization. However, the historical record of the group tells quite a different story. Over the years, a pattern of rampant deceit, manipulation and violence has prevailed, targeting Muslims, black critics, and even its own following, which dates from the very beginning of the movement." (Evanzz 1999). Karl has then elaborated into saying that the NOI members and leaders' practices are far from Islamic teachings. In addition to non-Muslims, most of the group's ex-members who have discovered the truth and embraced mainstream Islam such as the widely known Malcolm X have both criticized the teachings and policies of the NOI and exposed its leaders.

### **1.2.3- Former Members Critics**

Among the critics the Nation of Islam has faced is its former spokesman's Malcolm X. Malcolm's new life phase has started by reading a book about the teachings of Islam and when he read about the fifth Islamic pillar which is Hajj,

Malcolm was interested in what was written about it so he decided to make Hajj for the first time in 1964 (Tariq). The Hajj was a turning point in Malcom's life as he realized that Islam is actually based on brotherhood between all Muslims rather than racial separation, and of the fact that there are people of every color all praying and practicing Islam together each one next to the other. Malcolm then wrote a letter to his loyal assistants in Harlem saying that he has never witnessed such sincere hospitality and overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is practiced by people of all colors and races here in Mecca. And what he has seen, and experienced, has forced him to re-arrange much of his previously held thought-patterns (Malcolm, with Alex 1966). And this is indeed what happened the year after he came back from Mecca. Malcolm wrote in his letter dated Sept. 22, 1964: "For 12 long years I lived within the narrow-minded confines of the 'strait-jacket world' created by my strong belief that Elijah Muhammad was a messenger direct from God Himself, and my faith in what I now see to be a pseudo religious philosophy that he preaches. But as his then most faithful disciple, I represented and defended him at all levels ... and in most instances, even beyond the level of intellect and reason." "I shall never rest until I have undone the harm I did to so many well-meaning, innocent Negroes who through my own evangelistic zeal now believe in him even more fanatically and more blindly than I did. If Western society had not gone to such extremes to block out the knowledge of True Islam, there would not be such a religious 'vacuum' among American Negroes today into which any religious faker can bring all forms of distorted religious concoctions and represent it to our unsuspecting people as True Islam." Malcolm continued: "I declare emphatically that I am no longer in Elijah Muhammad's 'strait jacket,' and I don't intend to replace his with one woven by someone else. I am a Muslim in the most orthodox sense; my religion is Islam as it is believed in and practiced by the Muslims here in the Holy City of Mecca." (MALCOLM REJECTS 1964) Malcolm didn't stop at calling Elijah a religious faker, he also added in an interview held in England later that year that Elijah Muhammad wasn't only a liar but he is also a fornicator as he fathered seven female Nation of Islam members, while some of them were underage at that time. He also said that after writing his last letters there have been several attempts to assassinate him by the order of Elijah Muhammad, and he would probably be dead within less than a year after exposing Elijah and his followers. Which is exactly what happened as Malcolm was shot dead months later in February 1965.

Malcolm X's life ending was an example of how Elijah Muhammad succeeded in promoting religious and black extremism within his group.

## **2- Nation of Islam's Use of Religion to Promote Extremism**

Religion has played a crucial role in the emergence of extremist groups throughout history mainly because of the extremist interpretations of some religions and religious texts.

Within the Nation of Islam, religion along with race have been the key factor of promoting the groups beliefs and recruiting new members. The orders from the group's leader were mainly delivered via religious speeches and writings. Elijah Muhammed and his former leader Wallace Fard both managed to create what seems like an army of men who were ready to sacrifice their lives for the group. By teaching them that Fard was god himself while Elijah was his prophet and that they had to obey their orders regardless of the consequences or personal sacrifices involved. This combination of religious extremism and charismatic leadership effectively shaped the mindset of the Nation of Islam's members.

Through his books, letters and speeches, Elijah managed to propagate extreme ideologies by making use of his members ignorance of the true teachings of Islam which are rooted in the Quran and the Sunnah. The impact and results of promoting such ideologies were evident within the group itself before extending their impact and violence into the broader white society. Incidents like the Voodoo Murders marked the inception of a long history of hatred and violence. Religion has served as a justification the majority of these crimes and acts of brutality, as the murders were being justified based on the victims' perceived disbelief or status as enemies of their "Islam". Consequently, it comes as no surprise that almost every member who left the group faced either ongoing threats, physical assaults or fatal outcomes. This long-going pattern of religiously driven crimes started from the murder of James Smith in 1932 to the tragic murder of Hamaas Abdul Khaalis' family in 1973. (Palmer 1998)

These acts of murder and crimes against ex-members and outspoken critics of Elijah's group were indisputably fueled by religious motives and beliefs. As the members convicted of these murders like Harris in the Voodoo Murders have openly admitted that their actions were driven by religious and spiritual motivations. While other crimes such as the Zebra serial killings were driven by both racial and religious

beliefs. Because of the marginalization and racial discriminations black Americans faced in the United States, fueling them with extreme religious ideologies and beliefs added fuel to the fire of their longstanding grudge against white Americans who were mostly hated because of the history of slavery between the two. These black extremist ideologies then became a motive for a lot of black Americans with hatred against white people to join the NOI.

### **3- Factors Contributing to Appeal of Extremist Ideologies among African Americans**

The Nation of Islam is a group that emphasizes and capitalizes on the racial inequities and disparities existing between black and white individuals in America. For black youth community, a message advocating for black supremacy over the other races especially the white that subjected them to racial discriminations, holds a certain allure. Many young black Americans joined the group solely based on the surface-level of the beliefs it presents, while remaining unaware about the group's other teachings and religious aspect. Once individuals become members, they find themselves trapped as leaving the group subjects them to threats of being sacrificed or hunted down by the other group members if they do so. In addition to emphasizing on the racial inequities the Nation of Islam provided a platform to the black Americans that emphasizes on black pride, unity and the pursuit of justice. The group was also able to simplify complex social issues into a binary narrative of "us versus them" which also contributed to its appeal. Another factor is the group's charismatic leaders such as Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X who possess powerful oratory and speech skills to effectively communicate a message that resonates with their audience. This also makes their ideology more captivating to those seeking guidance and a sense of identity.

Wallace Fard, the NOI founder, found the black Americans as a fertile ground to plant his extremist ideologies. Because of their sufferings and the painful history of their ancestors many African Americans were ready to fight back against white people. Fard's teaching gave them an additional religious motive along with their racial motive. This explains the acceptance of those extremist ideologies by the black Americans.

#### **4- Significance of Studying Religion in Nation of Islam's Extremism Promotion**

The Nation of Islam is an intriguing yet relatively unknown example of how religion can be manipulated when placed in the wrong hands. While much research has been conducted to fight against practical extremism, only few studies deeply delve into the roots of extremist beliefs which ultimately shape the outward manifestations of extremism.

Often, people's concerns revolve around groups, sects, or individuals going extreme and turning their ideological extremism to real-life. However, what people usually overlook is the fact that nobody kicks off their extremist journey by killing or practicing any physical forms of violence. Rather, the process unfolds gradually, likely by commencing with the dissemination of extremist beliefs that promote a sense of superiority over others, followed by the propagation of hatred towards the targeted races, groups, or individuals, this ultimately leads to the use of theories, studies or faith to justify inflicting harm upon others. The Nation of Islam serves as a case in point, where Islam as a religion was used as a pretext to justify Fard and Elijah's agenda. Leaders within the NOI exploited the ignorance of black individuals concerning the true teachings of Islam, using religion as a disguise to channel their hatred against white people. Another factor was the tension between black and white communities in America, the NOI leaders succeeded at capitalizing on that tension and started indoctrinating those black members who already felt marginalized by the white society by propagating the notion that their perceived oppressors are not only inferior to them but also devilish entities created by Yakub, god's enemy. Along with promoting the belief of human sacrifice by making up religious teachings that encourage sacrificing the white people who are regarded as enemies to earn the reward of being sent back to Mecca, their hometown. The combination of those beliefs and teachings made the perfect chemical equation for pure extremism.

Thus, studying the case of the Nation of Islam is crucial in the context of countering extremism and preventing the rise of groups and individuals who exploit religion to justify the destruction of society by coming up with teachings and interpretations that oppose the origins of all major religions. By unravelling relevant to when it comes to countering extremism and avoiding the emergence of extremist

groups that would destroy society in the name of religion which they made themselves.

## **Conclusion**

The Nation of Islam has faced a lot of critics in its history some of them were from Islamic figures and groups because of their opposition of mainstream Islamic creeds while the others were from non-Muslims. Even former members like Malcolm X have participated in the wave of critics the group was facing.

In their journey, the Nation of Islam leaders were mainly using religion to promote their radical ideologies. Religion has been used as means of convincing the members of some extreme beliefs mainly against white people.

Several factors were behind the appeal of the extremist ideologies the NOI was promoting. Among those factors was the focus of the NOI leaders on emphasizing and capitalizing on the racial inequities and disparities and many other factors. Studying the detailed history of a group like the Nation of Islam is such an important stop in the road of solving the religious extremism dilemma.

## **General Conclusion**

Religion has played an important role in shaping the American society, starting from Christianity during the period of Transatlantic slave trade reaching the emergence of different religious groups, Christian, Judaic and Islamic groups. One of the most significant religious groups that emerged within the black Community was the Nation of Islam which was founded by Wallace Fard in 1930. The group which started as a religious group shortly shifted towards being a racial and religiously extremist group. This is when members of the group started encompassing on the group's extreme teachings and beliefs and committing crimes against white and even black individuals based on their master, Fard, teachings. Following these criminal acts, the group's policies and ideologies have been largely criticized from both the inside Islamic community and the outside non-Islamic communities. The group has been accused of being a heresy and for opposing the core teachings of Islam, as many Muslim scholars have agreed that this group has nothing to do with Islam other than its name. Along with these critics, former members of the group also participated in this criticism wave, members such as Malcolm X who left the group after going to Hajj in Mecca and realising that the teachings of Islam are so different from theirs of the Nation of Islam, and that the NOI were only using Islam as a trojan to pass their extremist ideologies to the black American society. The NOI succeeded at using religion to promote extremism within the black Community because of several factors some of them are based on the urge of some black Americans to fight back against the white people of America while others are based on the lack of self-identity and the sense of brotherhood between black Americans. All in all, the Nation of Islam is group which used Islam to propagate and serve their own agendas, while contradicting its core teachings. The group also used many ignorant African Americans to fulfil the desires of its leaders regardless of the consequences.

Examining a group like the Nation of Islam aids in enhancing efforts to combat the exploitation of religion for the propagation of extreme personal beliefs and ideologies.

## WORKS CITED LIST

- African American Policy Review. "African Diaspora Spirituality." African American Policy Review, vol. 1, no. 1, 2000.
- Ahmad, Ibn Hanbal. Foundation of Sunnah 845. Translated by Aboo 'Abdur-Rahmaan Fawwaaz Ahmad Zumarlee. Tripoli, Lebanon: 15th Shawwaal 1411H.  
أصول السنة للأمام أحمد بن حنبل
- Al-Juhani, Mane' Bin Hammad. *The concise encyclopedia of contemporary religions, sects, and parties*. Dar Ennadwa Al-Aalamia; 1999.  
الموسوعة الميسرة في الأديان والمذاهب والأحزاب المعاصرة للدكتور مانع بن حماد الجهني. طبعة دار الندوة العالمية
- "American Muslim Poll: A Politics and Pandemic Status Report". Institute for Social Policy and Understanding. 2022
- Al-Munajjid, Muhammad Salih. Islam Question & Answer. Question 10446, April 30, 2007.  
إسلام سؤال وجواب، السؤال 10446، للشيخ محمد صالح المنجد
- al-Tahawi, Abu Ja'far Ahmad. Al-'Aqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyah Translated with references to proofs from the Quran and Sunnah by Justin Parrott (Abu Amina Elias).  
العقيدة الطحاوية للإمام أبو جعفر أحمد الطحاوي
- Ashour, Mustafa, Malcolm X: Change with the Magic of Words and Situations. On the anniversary of his assassination, February 21, 1966.
- Beynon, Erdmann Doane, The Voodoo Cult Among Negro Migrants in Detroit, (The American Journal of Sociology, The University of Chicago Press, vol. XLIII, July 1937-May 1938)
- Bowen, D.Patrick, The Colored Genius. University of Denver-Illiff School of Theology, 2013.
- Branch, Taylor. Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963-65. America in the King Years. Vol. 2 of 3. Simon & Schuster, 1999, Page. 14.
- Chireau, Yvonne. Black Zion: African American Religious Encounters with Judaism. Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 129.
- Crawford, Suzanne J. "American Indian Religious Traditions: An Introduction." 12th ed., Waveland Press, 2008.
- Davis, David Brion. Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World. Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Muhammad, Elijah. "Nation Of Islam Offers Hearst \$100,000 To Prove Charge". Muhammad Speaks, Friday, Aug. 16, 1963, Page 1.
- Muhammad, Elijah. Message to the Blackman in America. Secretarius MEMPS Publications, 1965.



- Muhammad, Elijah. *Our Saviour Has Arrived*. Muhammad's Temple No. 2, 1974.
- Muhammad, Elijah. *Supreme Wisdom: Problem Book*. Muhammad's Temple No. 2, 1957.
- Muhammad, Elijah. *Fall of America*. Muhammad's Temple No. 2, 1973.
- Essien-Udom, E.U. *"The Nation of Islam: An American Millenarian Movement."* 2nd edition, Syracuse University Press, 1962.
- Evanzz, Karl. *The Messenger: The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1999
- Ibn Kathir. *Al-Bidaya wa'l-Nihaya*. Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, 2001.
- González-Wippler, Migene. *Santería: The Religion: Faith, Rites, Magic*. Llewellyn Worldwide, 2007.
- "Head of Cult Admits Killing - Says 'Unbeliever' Was Sacrificed to the Gods of His Order." *Detroit News*, Monday, Nov. 21, 1932, Page 1.
- "MALCOLM REJECTS RACIST DOCTRINE; Also Denounces Elijah as a Religious 'Faker' " *New York Time*, October 4, 1964, Page 59.
- McCloud, Aminah Beverly. *"African American Islam."* Routledge, 1995.
- Murphy, Yvonne. "Candomblé." *The Continuum Companion to Religion and Film*, 2012.
- "Muslims See Contrasts With Nation of Islam: Beliefs: Core tenets of Farrakhan's group have historically differed from mainstream Islam's. Publicity of upcoming Million Man March accents distinctions." *Los Angeles Times*, 14 Oct. 1995, Page 8.
- Neumann, Peter. *Radicalized: New Jihadists and the Threat to the West*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019.
- Nussbaum, M. C. *The new religious intolerance: Overcoming the politics of fear in an anxious age*. Harvard University Press, 2012.
- Olupona, Jacob K. *African Religions: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Partridge, Christopher. *Introduction to World Religions*. Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Peter T. Coleman and Andrea Bartoli, *Addressing Extremism*, White Paper. New York: The International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution, Columbia University, p. 1; 2014
- Stern, Kenneth. *"The Ku Klux Klan: A Guide to an American Subculture."* ABC-CLIO, 2016.

- Turner, Richard Brent. *“African American Moslems: New Perspectives on African American Islam.”* University Press of Florida, 1996.
- X, Malcolm, with Alex Haley. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X.* New York: Grove Press, 1966.
- Anti-Defamation League: <https://www.adl.org/research-centers/center-on-extremism>
- ISPU: <https://www.ispu.org/american-muslims-101/>
- Southern Poverty Law Center: <https://www.splcenter.org>
- Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion: <https://oxfordre.com/religion>
- Cambridge Dictionary: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org>
- Unesco: <https://www.unesco.org/en>
- Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com>