

Contributions in Black Studies

A Journal of African and Afro-American Studies

Volume 13 *Special Double Issue*

*"Islam & the African American Connection:
Perspectives New & Old"*

Article 3

1995

The Nation of Islam

Hatim A. Sahib
University of Chicago

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cibs>

Recommended Citation

Sahib, Hatim A. (1995) "The Nation of Islam," *Contributions in Black Studies*: Vol. 13 , Article 3.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cibs/vol13/iss1/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Afro-American Studies at ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in Contributions in Black Studies by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact scholarworks@library.umass.edu.

Hatim A. Sahib

THE NATION OF ISLAM

INTRODUCTION

DR. HATIM ABDUL SAHIB AL-KABI was born in 1917, presumably in Iraq. How or why he arrived at the University of Chicago sometime in the late 1940s is unknown to us. (The U of C Alumni Office reports that he has not been in touch with them in years, and that his last known address was a teacher's college in Baghdad.) Having attained his M.A. at U of C in 1951, Sahib continued his doctoral studies there, producing a dissertation entitled "Social Psychological Analysis of Arab Nationalist Movement in Iraq" some three or four years later. But it is Sahib's remarkable and previously unpublished M.A. thesis—one of the earliest and most detailed studies of the Nation of Islam available—which will be of greatest interest to our readers.¹ Frequently cited by scholars, the most significant chapters of this study are now made more accessible to the public in this issue of Contributions.

That we have chosen to reproduce only six of the nine original thesis chapters is not primarily due to reasons of space. In the original work Sahib's empirical content is often subordinated to debates over methodological concerns—issues which may have been of compelling interest to sociologists a half century ago, but which considerably distract from the subject of the NOI itself. For that reason the following sections have been omitted: an introductory chapter bearing on "The Nature of the Investigation"; a theoretical chapter on "Leadership and Emergence of the Cult," which, in our humble opinion, adds precious little to any understanding of NOI leadership; and a summary chapter setting forth the "Conclusions and Theoretical Implications" of the study. This section, too, may be safely ignored without injury to one's grasp of the material. Of course, those who wish to examine the methodical questions in their original flavor are encouraged to do so. One issue which may prove of greater concern to readers than these abridgments, however, is the fact that the shortened version of Sahib's thesis presented here has been lightly edited—mainly for grammatical reasons but occasionally for errors of fact. While Dr. Sahib was undoubtedly fluent in his native language, the same cannot be said for his writing skills in English. For this reason one can only speculate as to whether the carefree

CONTRIBUTIONS IN BLACK STUDIES 13/14 (1995/1996): 48-160

syntax which often infuses the transcribed interviews of NOI members is mainly the product of the interviewer or the interviewee. Like most theses, Sahib's was hardly intended for publication in its original form, and would have required extensive revision had he submitted it, or sections thereof, to a journal or publishing house. As a general course, to have inserted brackets for the purpose of calling attention to editorial modifications would have rendered sections of the manuscript difficult to read, and for that reason we have usually opted not to do so. After briefly perusing the manuscript, some may wonder if it has been edited at all; one should note that only the more egregious passages have been allowed to fall beneath the editor's scalpel.

In his introductory chapter (omitted from the main text further below), Dr. Sahib describes how he happened upon the of the subject of the Nation of Islam while searching for a topic upon which to write his M.A. thesis:

It was in March, 1950 that Professor E. W. Burgess² suggested that I study a group of Muslim Negroes who have a mosque at 4448 South Wabash in Chicago. After visiting the group many times, I found that they have no records of membership or of any other aspect of the organization aside from the number of members—not more than fifty. Around five of them, on the average, attend the regular prayer and seriously try to learn about Islam. This minority know Islam and follow its teachings much better than the other two groups in Chicago, namely, the Moorish³ and the Asiatics. This is due to the fact that a missionary from Pakistan teaches the group and tries to convert them to one of the Islamic sects which was originated in Pakistan around 1884, by [Ghulam Ahmad]. This sect has five branches in the United States, one in each of the following cities: New York, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Washington, D.C. The group owns mosques in most of these cities. They issue a monthly magazine called *The Muslim Sunrise*, which has been published since 1922.

Although “The Second Successor of the Promised Messiah,” Mirza Bashir Un-din, the head of the sect, currently in Pakistan, told his missionaries to cooperate with me, the lack of records for the members and the consequent impossibility of getting in touch with the majority of them discouraged me from studying the group. Therefore I decided to study the Bahai Temple. While looking for the telephone number of the temple in the Chicago classified telephone directory, I found another group of Muslims listed under the name, “The Holy Temple of Islam.” I called up the temple to learn something about the group and the possibility of conducting a study of the organization. The man who answered the telephone invited me to come to the temple on Sunday and told me that 5,000 Muslims attended the temple. I went to the temple on the following Sunday. Upon entering, I was questioned as to who sent me, my purpose in such a visit, my name, and where I lived. They then

refused to let me attend the service. I left with the impression that this group was a very secret, dangerous society.

I kept inquiring about the group among Arabian Muslims whom I know until one of them told me that he knew a Palestinian man⁴ who teaches in the school which belongs to the group. When I contacted this man and told him my purpose, he encouraged me and promised to help me. He introduced me to the leader and took me to the temple and introduced me to the students of the school. Since then I have continued to strengthen my relationship with the leader and the members of the cult.⁵

Sahib also noted the difficulties

which a man like myself encounters when he tries to begin research with such a group. This situation will be clearly evaluated if one remembers the fact which R. R. Moton has stated, that “the Negro is cautious and secretive and that these characteristics are part of his psychology in his relationship with the white.”⁶ It took me around eight months just to remove the skeptical attitudes of the members towards me and toward what I had in mind. It was of great help in this respect to have an Arabian friend who teaches Arabic in their school and who introduced me to the leader of the group and to some of the followers at the beginning of my study. In time I was able to build up a very intimate friendship with all the members and especially with the leader, to the extent that I was able to interview each member of my sample for at least six hours., following a formal interview schedule. I interviewed the leader himself for thirteen hours and twenty minutes within two days. In order to establish rapport with the group, which has all the essential characteristics of a secret society, I lectured to them many times; I gave the Brothers lessons in practical gymnastics; I lectured to the Sisters, at their request, about how to cook various kinds of Arabian foods; I visited the members in their homes; I made myself available for whatever they required me to do; and I have participated fully in their social life. . . .

Being a foreigner, and an Arabian Moslem, helped me considerably to establish very friendly relationships with the group and encouraged the members to communicate their deepest thoughts and feelings to me without any reserve or suspicion.⁷

Dr. Sahib’s comments on the sources of his data and the selections of his samples are also worth reproducing here:

Source of Data

The primary source of the data was the list of the membership of the temple, which contains 286 members on Chicago’s South Side. The leader himself, who was the founder of the movement [in Chicago], supplied the background data. After a rapport had been established with

him, the leader gave me full freedom to use the records of the mosque, and he spoke to the group at the very beginning, telling them of the necessity of cooperating with me and giving me correct information. "This is," he told them, "a scientific project which has to be based on correct information. Therefore you have to tell Brother Hatim everything faithfully; you have to tell him the truth as if you were sick and you have to tell your physician exactly what you feel so as to enable him to diagnose your disease and give you the right medicine."

The second source of data was the Apostle [Elijah Mohammed] himself, who joined the original founder of the cult, W. D. Fard, in 1931, and who founded the branch in Chicago in 1932.

The third source was the interviews which I carried out with the aid of twenty-eight members of the cult, who constitute the sample of this study.

In addition to these sources, I joined the group and was a participant observer for fourteen months, a period in which I built up a very intimate friendship with every member in the cult.

Selection of Sample

Names in the membership list appear in the order in which the individuals joined the cult. Hence, every tenth name was selected, to avoid overweighting the sample with those who entered in any particular phase of its development.

Conducting of Interviews

The following are sample questions from the questionnaire I used to pre-test a sample of fifteen individuals before applying the questionnaire to the larger sample drawn for study.

1. When and how did you make your first contact with Islam?
 - a. Who told you about it?
 - b. What was there about Islam that attracted you?
2. When and how did you first become connected with this movement?
 - a. What happened in the first meeting you attended?
 - b. What was your reaction?
3. When did you finally decide to join, and why?
4. What difference has joining the group made in your life?
 - a. Recreational?
 - b. Vocational?
 - c. Family?

Out of twenty-four questions, I chose only eight after that pre-test.⁸

Finally, a brief note is in order regarding Dr. Sahib's often harsh commentary regarding the motives and capabilities of Nation of Islam leaders and followers in

its early years. Today studies of politico-religious groups such as the NOI tend to be carried out in a far less judgmental manner than were similar investigations by social scientists in the early 1950s. The term "cult," for example, while continuing to bear valid sociological meaning, would simply not be used today because of its strong negative connotations. As a Muslim, Sahib seems to have been genuinely appalled not only by the lack of knowledge of Islam among NOI converts, but by their apparent ignorance of Christianity as well. He was therefore led to conclude that religion was a negligible factor in the organization's functioning compared to the role of secular protest. However, just because NOI theology manifested rough-hewn edges at this stage of the organization's development did not mean that religious sentiment was peripheral to its worldview, as evidence clearly attests a decade later. (On the other hand, in line with the "messianic-nationalist" category of sociologists Hans Baer and Merrill Singer, protest certainly has continued to play a major role in the outlook and functioning of the NOI to the present day.)⁹ With these caveats in mind, we believe that our readers will find Dr. Sahib's study one of the most illuminating examinations of the Nation of Islam, not only due to its thoroughness and lengthy interviews, but also to the fact that the inquiry was conducted at a critical period in the NOI's institutionalization process.

NOTES

- ¹ Hatim A. Sahib, "The Nation of Islam" (M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1951).
- ² University of Chicago Professor of Sociology Ernest W. Burgess (1886-1966). [Ed.]
- ³ By "Moorish" Sahib means the Moorish Science Temple of America. Although the Moors also called themselves "Asiatics," by that term Sahib presumably means the Holy Temple of Islam, the name by which the Nation of Islam was generally known at the time. [Ed.]
- ⁴ The Palestinian was probably Jamil Diab. See Ernest Allen Jr., "Minister Louis Farrakhan and the Continuing Evolution of the Nation of Islam," in *The Farrakhan Factor: African-American Writers on Leadership, Nationhood, and Minister Louis Farrakhan*, ed. Amy Alexander (New York: Grove Press, 1998), 64. [Ed.]
- ⁵ Sahib, "The Nation of Islam," 54-55.
- ⁶ Robert Russa Moton, *What the Negro Thinks* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1929), 64.
- ⁷ Sahib, "The Nation of Islam," 55-57.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 57-58.
- ⁹ Hans A. Baer and Merrill Singer, *African-American Religion in the Twentieth Century: Varieties of Protest and Accommodation* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992).

1. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOVEMENT

The Movement in Detroit

ON THE FOURTH OF July 1930, in the depth of America's severest depression, which began in 1929, the worst economic conditions and hard years were suffered by the people of the industrial area, especially the poor Negroes. A white peddler by the name of W. D. Fard, Arabian by nationality and Moslem by religion, appeared in Detroit selling silks, going among the Negroes from house to house.¹ In order to attract these Negroes to what he was selling, he was telling them that the silks he carried were the same kind that the Negro people use in their home country in the East. Gradually he began to tell them that this kind of silk is made in their home country by their own people in the East, and that he himself had come from there. This information interested these clients, who began to ask him to tell them about their own country in the East, their own people there, and their status and civilization. W. D. Fard found himself in a situation which compelled him to work out answers to these questions which he himself had provoked. Through such informal communication friendly relationships began to develop between the peddler and his clients, whose curiosity about their own people had been increasingly aroused through such informal process of communication. Some of the clients began to invite him to their homes to dinner or lunch, occasions which gave the peddler and his inviters a chance to participate seriously in the communication process which revolves around the story of the Negro people in the East. Since he was a Moslem to whom eating pork is forbidden, these invitations offered him the opportunity to criticize the food of the Negro, which is mostly constituted of pork. "Now, don't eat this food. It is poison for you. The people in your own country do not eat it. Since they eat the right kind of food they have the best health all the time. If you would live just like the people in your home country, you would never be sick any more." Hence the audience wanted him to tell them more about themselves and about their home country and about how they could be free from aches and pains. Through this process of communication preliminary phases of race consciousness had been stimulated among these clients.

Rumor had spread about the peddler, who was requested insistently by his clients to tell them about their home country. Under such increasing pressure he suggested that those who were interested in knowing about their home country should gather at one of the houses where he could tell the full story. Hence informal meetings were held in various houses where the peddler had been invited to tell the story of the Native Land. Collective interest in the matter had been arising increasingly among these Negroes; a milling process of

a typical kind went on among some of the Negroes in Detroit through which admiration, curiosity and attachment to the emergent “race leader” was aroused.

By this new development of interest the peddler had assumed the role of messenger to these Negroes. His text had been the Bible during the early period of his prophecy, but his audience had increased and his prestige had grown by this time. Hence he assumed the role of prophet and began to attack teachings of the Bible and the white race. These attacks brought some of the members to an emotional crisis—especially these bold attacks on the Bible.

One of the earliest converts in Detroit describes the experience through which he had passed after hearing the prophet speaking for the first time. This experience does not differ much from the experiences of other converts. He stated:

The very first time I went to a meeting I heard him say: “The Bible tells you that the sun rises and sets. This is not so. The sun stands still. All your lives you have been thinking that the earth never moved. Stand and look toward the sun and know that it is the earth that you are standing on which is moving.” Up to that day I always went to the Baptist church. After I heard that sermon from the prophet, I was turned around completely. Just to think that the sun above me never moved at all and that the earth we are on was doing all the moving has changed everything for me.

The rumor about the new prophet had spread widely through the Negro community. Many of those who heard him invited their friends and relatives to attend the meetings. These meetings were held in various homes first and then began to be organized and held in a particular house. The attendance of the house meetings increased so much that the prophet was compelled to divide his hearers into several groups; the members of each were permitted to hear his message only at the time assigned to their group. Because of the rising inconveniences of such arrangements, some of the enthusiastic followers volunteered to contribute money sufficient to hire a hall, which was fitted up as the temple.

The Prophet

Sociologist E. D. Beynon stated that “Although the prophet lived in Detroit from July 4, 1930 until June 30, 1934, virtually nothing is known about him, save that he came from the East and that he called the Negroes of North America to enter the Nation of Islam [NOI].”² Beynon declared, “One of the few survivors who heard his first addresses states that he himself said: ‘My name is W. D. Fard and I came from the Holy City of Mecca. More about myself

I will not tell you yet, for the time has not yet come. I am your brother. You have not seen me in my royal robes’.”³

The current Apostle [Elijah Mohammed] had told the writer that W. D. Fard told him that he was from the royal dynasty of the Hashimide Sheriffs of Mecca, who were the kings of Hejaz until the First World War. The wife of the Apostle told the writer that W. D. Fard told her that he was born in the Holy City of Mecca and that he is the son of very wealthy and noble parents of the tribe of Koreish, the tribe from which Mohammed the prophet sprang, and that he has royal blood in his veins. He is said to have been educated at a university in England in preparation for a diplomatic career in the service of the kingdom of Hejaz, but to have abandoned everything to bring “freedom, justice and equality” to the dark people who have been lost in the wilderness of North America, surrounded and completely robbed of their virtues, names, language, and religion by the “cave man.” The current Apostle, his wife, and some of the earliest followers in Chicago say that W. D. Fard received his education at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. The current Apostle told the writer:

Mr. W. D. Fard told me out of his mouth that he had been educated in the University of California for twenty years just to prepare himself and be well equipped to save our people. He told me that he was working for this purpose for forty-two years, twenty of them he worked among dark people before he made himself known to them.

In describing his attacks on Christianity and the Church, Elijah said:

He was very bold and harsh against the Christians and their civilization. He was referring to the Christian whites as the devils or slavemakers; and he refers to the Bible as the poisoned book. He used to tell the story of Jesus when he preaches. He told the followers: “Mary’s father was a rich man and therefore he refused to give Mary in marriage to her greatest lover, Joseph Al-Nejjar, because he was [a] poor man with nothing but a saw and a hammer, because he was a very poor carpenter. Being in love with Mary, hopeless of marrying her, Joseph had impregnated her with Jesus.” And this is very reasonable and scientific.⁴

Fard’s disciple continued:

He stated that the sacred books were written by the scientist. These scientists, whose number is twenty-three, make one book every twenty-five thousand years but they do not give it to the prophet unless ten thousand years passes after they had finished it. Therefore the Bible was completed by these scientists ten thousand years before Jesus was prophesying and so Koran and the Torah.

The full picture of Fard's teachings will be given elsewhere when we deal with the story of induction and indoctrination of his apostle, Elijah Mohammed.

Since winter of 1932, after he had established the University of Islam and organized the militaristic training of the followers who constitute what they call the "Fruit of Islam," W. D. Fard gradually sank into the background of the movement and took the role of the administrator. He did not come to the temple any more but he practiced his plan by contacting his minister whenever he had an order, decision, or instruction. On the fourth [sic] of May 1933, he was deported by the local authorities from Detroit, after they arrested him for the third time, accusing him of disturbing the peace.⁵ He left Detroit to come to Chicago and lived there for awhile; then he traveled all over America. He left Chicago for the last time in February 1934. His last letter to his Apostle was from Mexico in March 1934. He was 56 years old when he left Chicago. His current Apostle described the day of his deportation from Detroit as one of the greatest tragedies that he had ever seen in the Negro community. His last statements to these sad and weeping masses gathered around his car at the hour of his deportation were: "Don't worry. I am with you; I will be back to you in the near future to lead you out of this hell."

Before his departure, W. D. Fard had been elevated to the position of the deity. He himself began to adopt this attitude and thereupon acted on the basis of such a conception. This transformation of his charismatic leadership will be clear from the following story which Elijah Mohammed himself has told to the writer. Elijah Mohammed mentioned that Mr. W. D. Fard, in the last two months he had seen him, had given him two copies of the Koran, one in Arabic and the other with the English translation alongside the Arabic, and he told him to learn Arabic. In this context Elijah stated that when W. D. Fard gave him the copies of the Koran he told him: "These are not the only books I have, but I have another book that I made myself." Here the peddler became Allah who authors sacred books.

Growth of the Movement

During the three years of Fard's preaching, approximately eight thousand Negroes in Detroit became members of the Nation of Islam.⁶ All of these members, except less than half a dozen, were recent migrants from the rural South, the majority having come to Detroit from small communities in Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. After joining the movement these members became highly sensitized and more conscious of race discrimination against them on the part of the whites. This consciousness has been reflected in many parts of their secret rituals and songs: "Me and my people who have been lost from home for 379 years have tried this so-called mystery

God for bread, clothing and home. And we receive nothing but hard times, hunger, naked, and out of doors. Also was beat and killed by the ones that advocated that kind of God.”⁷

When the group transferred their informal meetings in the house to the temple, the group began to organize gradually and the movement took on a more formal character. The teaching became systematized; membership was recognized and registered; and the group began to acquire a hierarchical structure. During this phase where the teaching was formalized, the prophet himself began to write down some of his ideas, later collected in three texts which served as authoritative manuals of the religion and were memorized verbatim by all who became members of the Nation of Islam. The essence of these teachings has been summarized by Beynon as follows:

The Black men in North America are not Negroes, but members of the lost tribe of Shebazz,⁸ stolen by traders from the Holy City of Mecca 379 years ago. The prophet came to America to find and to bring back to life his long lost brethren, from whom the Caucasians had taken away their language, their nation and their religion. Here in America they were living other than themselves. They must learn that they are the original people, noblest of the nations of the earth. The Caucasians are the colored people, since they have lost their original color. The original people must regain their religion, which is Islam, their language, which is Arabic, and their culture, which is astronomy and higher mathematics, especially calculus. They must live according to the law of Allah, avoiding all meat of “poison animals,” hogs, ducks, geese, ’possums and catfish. They must give up completely the use of stimulants, especially liquor. They must clean themselves up—both their bodies and their houses. If in this way they obeyed Allah, he would take them back to the paradise from which they had been stolen—the Holy City of Mecca.⁹

The rapid increase in membership made necessary the development of a formal organization. A private school was organized under the name of the University of Islam, to which the children of Moslem families were sent rather than to the public schools. In the University of Islam they taught the knowledge “of our own” rather than the “civilization of the Caucasian devils.” Courses were given in “higher mathematics, astronomy, general knowledge, and ending of the spook civilization.”

For the Sisters to cook properly and to keep their houses clean a special class was established as the “Girls’ Training and General Civilization Class.” Fear of trouble with the unbelievers, especially the police, led to the founding of the Fruit of Islam, a military organization for the men, who were drilled by captains and taught tactics and the use of firearms. Each of these organizations was under the control of a group of officers trained especially by the prophet for their task.

Finally, the entire movement was placed under a minister of Islam and a corps of assistant ministers, all of whom had been selected and trained by the prophet. Within two years the prophet not only began the movement but organized it so well that he himself was able to recede into the background, appearing almost never to his followers during the last year of his residence in Detroit.¹⁰

Schisms and Conflicts

The first opposition the movement met in Detroit was that of Abdul Mohammed, who was the first minister of W. D. Fard. He began to teach against W. D. Fard in order to preside over the group himself. Since the disappearance of W. D. Fard many NOI branches have sprung up. In 1936 one of the ministers of the movement, Azzim Shah, organized an independent group. A Haitian, Theodore Rozier, another assistant minister at the time of W. D. Fard, had organized his own group in 1938. All of these groups stayed within the same frame of teachings, although there were personal conflicts among the leaders of these groups. Apparently the split is mostly an expression of craving for prestige and leadership among the ministers.

Moreover, inherent in the prophet's message were certain points which led to conflicts and split of the membership within the group. Some of these teachings are:

1. That the dark man does not belong to America. They were citizens of the Holy City of Mecca. Hence, their allegiance must be to the Moslem flag. (As a reaction to the first teaching some of the members seceded and organized a small group whose cardinal principle was loyalty to the Constitution of the United States and its flag.)

2. Moreover, their children must be moved from the public schools and sent to the University of Islam.

The attendance officers of the board of education and the police attempted to break up the University of Islam and to compel the children to return to the public schools. This led to a severe riot in which the members of the cult tried to storm the police headquarters.

3. The prophet taught that the duty of every member is to offer as sacrifice four Caucasian devils in order that he might get free transportation to his original home, the Holy City of Mecca. He also taught that Allah demanded obedience unto death from his followers. No Moslem dare refuse to sacrifice himself or his loved one if Allah require it. What had aroused the police department and public opinion in Detroit deeply in 1932 was his teaching concerning free transportation to Mecca for anybody who kills four white men. Ever since, the

police department has directed its attention to the cult, a factor which forced the group to pursue many of its activities in secret. Serious clashes with the police had been aroused by such teachings. Many members have left the temple since that time and organized themselves in another temple of Islam, but within the same framework of the cult. This was essentially due to the fear of these members of the police department after the conflict between the police and the cult had grown and become entrenched.¹¹

Since May of 1933, directly after the departure of W. D. Fard, the conflict among the various groups of the cult began to be very strong. This conflict led to the alignment of the loyal and enthusiastic followers of the original teachings with Elijah Mohammed, the loyal disciple and minister of Fard, who under such severe conflict could not reside in Detroit anymore. Hence he left Detroit to live in Chicago because "an increasing number of enemies aligned against [him]," as he said. This conflict led Elijah and his followers to be extremely enthusiastic to the pure teachings of W. D. Fard. Hence they called themselves "The People of the Temple" to differentiate themselves from the other groups and to express their distinctiveness in holding the original teachings of W. D. Fard. This group went to an extreme in identifying the prophet, Fard, with God, Allah. And since Fard has been deified, the "Temple People" raised to the rank of prophet the former minister of the Nation of Islam, Elijah Mohammed, who currently directs the movement in Chicago and is referred to reverently as the messenger or the Apostle Elijah Mohammed.

After the departure of W. D. Fard the movement underwent a rapid collapse. Most of the members had converted back to Christianity, because the movement did not appeal to them any more, especially under arising conflicts. Clashes of interest and striving of the various ministers and assistant ministers among themselves to get hold of the group for their own personal benefit were other additional factors in disappointing most of the followers. The most effective factor in weakening the movement, Elijah said, was that of the arousal of the police department in Detroit against the movement. Moreover, the deaths of some of the followers and the lack of replacing them by new converts was another factor in the increasing collapse of the movement. Some other followers, Elijah Mohammed said, began to be careless about their affiliation in the cult. Division of the original body of the cult into small groups scattered around Hastings Street in Detroit has left around 180 members, who organized themselves in a temple which forms a branch of the cult currently led by Elijah Mohammed.

Efforts to Exploit the Movement

There were many efforts to exploit the movement by many interesting groups in Detroit who tried to redirect the movement for furthering their own purposes and causes. The Communists made efforts in 1932 to exploit the movement, but the cult members rebuffed their appeal. A Japanese officer sought to lead the group to swear allegiance to the Mikado, but only a very few members followed him—organizing themselves in a group called “The Development of Our Own.”¹² An Ethiopian sought to reorganize the movement as a means of sending financial support to Ethiopia. This attempt also was unsuccessful. Around 1936-1938 the members of the cult came under the influence of certain anti-union interests, but even this did not succeed to redirect any of the group to its interest.

The Movement in Chicago

Growth of the Movement

During the depression, which began in 1929 in America and which was more severe in the northern industrial cities than in the southern area of the country, most of the Negro workers were on relief; those who were working had no opportunity for promotion; those who were unemployed and willing to work had no chance to get a job. In the period of 1930-1933 there was utter distress and pessimism among these Negroes; practically the only ones with hope were the few who turned to Communism. In addition to these difficulties, movements like the “Black Shirts” were organized to deprive Negroes of what jobs they had. Unemployed Negroes, unlike many of the unemployed whites, had no savings upon which they could fall back in the crisis.¹³

Under such hard economic conditions Fard and his disciple appeared in Chicago in 1931 preaching the new religion. Elijah Mohammed, although he was not living in Chicago at the time, came to Chicago frequently to preach in a rented hall at 37 Wentworth Avenue. Now and then Fard came to deliver a speech to such an audience. At that time his disciple Elijah Mohammed was preaching that Fard is Allah, who came to save the dark people. At that time, Elijah told the writer, people were coming “by hundreds just to hear the Savior because they were so distressed and having a hard time that they were looking for something like this to come.” So when he “spoke here in Chicago people crowded around him; and when he attacked Christianity people seemed to accept these attacks because they themselves bear witness that it did not do good for them.” Through this repeated agitation in the earlier stage, the movement won a few followers who were organized under the leadership of Elijah Mohammed. The movement began to grow. An assistant minister had been chosen to direct the movement in the absence of the minister, Elijah Mohammed.

Schisms and Conflicts

In 1933, after the deportation of W. D. Fard from Detroit, the conflicts and clashes among the ministers, assistant ministers, and the members aspiring to leadership became so strong that Elijah Mohammed was not able to continue preaching in Detroit. Therefore he changed his residence to Chicago and appointed a minister for the small group in Detroit who kept allegiance to the teachings of W. D. Fard and his disciple.

In Chicago a strong conflict or schism had developed within the movement as a result of emerging conflict between Elijah and his younger brother [Kalat Mohammed]. The Apostle said:

In the fall of 1934 most of the followers turned out to be hypocrites and they began to teach against the movement, and to join the enemies of the movement. The situation got so bad that in 1935 it was impossible to go among them because it seemed to me that over 75 percent of them were hypocrites. And therefore I had to leave them to save my own life. Hypocrisy was arising in my house with another assistant minister, aligned against me because he wanted the teachings for himself. They joined my enemy here and in Detroit and they began to seek my life. So Allah warned me to leave. Hence I left to Milwaukee, where Allah warned me to leave again and showed me in a vision nine people; among them was my brother. Therefore I left to Madison, where they followed me; and Allah warned me again to leave Madison.

The clash began by the younger brother's asking Elijah Mohammed to allow somebody to copy whatever was said in the class of ministers, a thing which Elijah Mohammed emphatically refused. The conflict grew stronger between the two brothers. The assistant minister aligned with the younger brother of Elijah Mohammed. Both of these opponents were able to stir some of the followers against Elijah, who was compelled to run away later to save his life, because most of the followers, "75 percent of them," as he said, "had turned [out] to be hypocrites."

During his hiding period the Apostle changed his residence from "city to city and from place to place within the same city," but he spent most of the period in Washington, D.C. He began to preach there under the name Mohammed Rassoul; he was able to establish a temple there which constitutes one of the active branches of the movement today. The hiding period lasted seven years, during which time the Apostle suffered a great deal of anxiety, fear, obsessive thinking, and various kinds of deprivations.

Consequent upon the clash between the two brothers the movement had suffered a rapid collapse, beginning in the fall of 1934. From around 400 members with organized meetings only 13 members had kept allegiance to the movement by September 1935. This small group of followers began to hold

their meetings in their houses under the ministry of Malik X, who was appointed by the Apostle for this purpose. The movement began to grow again in winning new members through friendship relationships. Increase in membership drove the group from meeting in the houses to hire a place at 51 Michigan Avenue, where the group continued their meetings until 1942, the year in which most of the Brothers were arrested consequent upon their refusal to join the American army during the war. Hence, the movement collapsed again. The rest of the members who stayed out of prison left the temple and began to hold their meetings in the houses. They organized and developed themselves again by winning new members, and therefore they hired a place for their meetings on Wentworth Avenue in 1943. In 1944-45 the movement gained its vigor again by the return of the followers from prison. Therefore, the group decided to hire a big hall on 63rd Street for six months. At the end of this period the landlord compelled them to vacate the place. At that time they decided to buy a temple on 43rd Street, and so they did—a place where they meet today. During the hiding period (1935-1942) of the Apostle many conflicts arose among the ministers in the movement. All of these conflicts had their origin in the striving for prestige and exploitation of the movement.

It is very interesting to note that even during the period of the severest collapse, where the whole membership amounted to 13 members only, the members were distributed according to the following duties: general secretary, recorder secretary, Fruit¹⁴ secretary, formal secretary (whose duty was to sponsor and file the forms after they had been filled by the new members who planned to join the movement), a captain, a minister, assistant minister, and the other six members as lieutenants. This confirms the statement made by Professor Wirth in his course about minorities, namely, "There is no buck private in the minority groups but all the members are officers."¹⁵ This principle holds true in such organizations among Negroes, because these persons are seeking status and prestige and therefore to be officers might be the only appealing element that holds them to the organization, especially during the time of its collapse.

Emergence of Economic Interests

When most of the male followers were in prison and the economic plight of their families and relatives was very severe, the prisoners, among them the Apostle himself, had developed economic objectives and economic interests. Then these interests had acquired plans and decisiveness because the Apostle himself adopted them. When some of the imprisoned followers were freed they carried out with them these plans and orders which had already been supported by the will of the Apostle. First they bought a farm in 1945. Then they bought some cattle to be developed on the farm. Likewise, mobility and the compulsory change of the temple from place to place, due to the direct

persecution of the landlords or the indirect persecution stimulated by other opposing agencies, had given rise to the formulation of the decision to buy a place to be a temple.

In the course of the development of the organization, minor goals emerged which later became some of the most important ends—ends to which more attention has been directed by the leadership of the group than to the original basic objectives. Although the major goal—namely, salvation of the Negro from the enslavement of the white man by deporting them to their original land—is still lurking behind all the collective activities of the group, there is not any serious planning toward the realization of such a dream and will never be. The major interest of the group has become the expansion of the organization and developing its structural means:¹⁶ for example, expanding the school, building a new temple, or improving the restaurant. Such structural means, which consist of the agreed-upon instruments through which the group puts its purposes and intentions into action, reveal clearly and definitely the emerging major lines of activity and the new major purposes and intentions which are far from being related to the original major interest of the group, namely, the expected departure to the native land.

In 1945 the Apostle developed the idea of buying a restaurant. After they bought a restaurant, they developed the idea to have a store in the restaurant itself, and so they did. Behind this economic trend there is the tendency to isolate the group from the larger society. The members do not eat except in the Shabazz restaurant; they do not shop, except under urgent necessity, but from the Shabazz store. The Apostle himself expressed this decision to the writer, declaring that he “wants to isolate his followers from the wicked people and impure life as much as possible.” He told the writer once that he has a plan to “have their own stores, their own school, their own homes,” etc., so as to make the group self-sufficient and “has no necessity whatsoever to demand the devil or resort to him.”

Persecutions

Since the beginning of the movement in Detroit various kinds of persecutions had been directed against the group. Several persons who witnessed the movement in its earliest phase declared that enthusiasm among the Negro community for the emerging movement and its messenger, Fard, was the dominant phenomenon among thousands of Negroes in Detroit. They were coming to hear Fard speak, though they knew that they would have no chance of hearing him or of getting in the temple because the people were crowded in that basement, around the windows, outside the basement, and in the adjacent streets, competing for places to hear the savior of the race. This enthusiasm and rapid growth and organization of the movement attracted to it the attention of the leaders of the Negro community, of the preachers in the churches, whites

and Negroes, and of the police department. Mr. W. D. Fard had been detained by the police department many times, generally being charged with disturbing the peace in the community. Later on, in May 1933, he was compelled to leave the city, a condition under which these thousands of people gathered around his car when he began to leave, “weeping, sad and grieving” for the departure of their Savior. Before his leaving he told the audience to act together and do their best until he returned to save them and lead them to their native land.

Many attacks were organized against W. D. Fard by the churchmen of Detroit because of his attacks against them and against their teachings. Some of them were coming to him directly, asking him, in front of his followers, baffling questions and demanding proofs about this prophecy—a situation to which he responded by merely attacking them personally, avoiding answering their questions: “You think I do not understand what is going on in your mind; I can tell you just now what you think, what each individual here thinks and all what is going to happen in the future.” Such questions were “arousing him deeply; our people are really dumb,” as his disciple Elijah Mohammed commented on these attacking individuals and groups.

One of the Negroes in Detroit by the name of Harris had murdered one of his roomers because he did not pay the rent. The groups opposing the movement charged that Harris was one of the followers and that he did what he had done because of the new belief. Although Harris was not [sic] one of the followers, the case was exploited and the rumor spread that these people believed in offering human sacrifice. Against this rumor W. D. Fard announced in the *Detroit Times* that Harris was not a follower and that the teachings of Islam do not teach human sacrifice. This rumor was of very far-reaching effect in handicapping the growth of the movement and in creating internal clashes and serious conflicts among various members of the group.¹⁷

The clash of the group with the police department in Detroit, consequent upon the decision of the Board of Education to break up the “University of Islam,” has led to strengthening the unity of the group and raising its level of morale, and to the loss of members who left the movement because of their fear of the police department.

The cult in Chicago also aroused the police department, since they had a clash in 1935 with them. The story of this clash is as follows. On the fifth of April 1935, one of the Sisters had a case in the court concerning her child, who was attending the University of Islam and not the public school. On the day of her trial all of the followers went with her to the police station at 11th and State Streets in Chicago. Under this condition a hot argument developed between one of the officers and the Sisters, consequent upon his pushing the Sisters (who are not supposed to be touched by a man [other than their husbands—Ed.], according to their teachings) out of the court, through the door. The clash between the police and the Sisters brought the Brothers into a serious fight with

the police, who were compelled to shoot the followers and wound some of them.¹⁸ This fight influenced some of the followers to turn away from the movement because of their fear of the police department. The Apostle assured the writer that the greatest loss of membership is always after some conflict with the police department. He stated the effect of the persecution, real or imagined, upon the decisions and plans of the movement as follows:

We had been persecuted so much to the extent that we were moving from temple to temple and from district to district just because we did not own our own temple. The white people and the Christian dark people were stimulating the owner of any place we had rented as a temple to compel us to vacate the place through the enforcement agency. The F.B.I. did that many times, telling the landlord to drive us out of his property. This continuous persecution led me to think of buying our own temple and so I told my followers, when I was in prison, to buy a place to be a temple. Then I thought of buying a farm to grow our own food, lest this devil some day might boycott us and then we would have nothing to eat.

To their feeling of persecution, actual or expected, might be due the great suspicion of the group toward any outsider, their militaristic training, their careful inspection of everybody who enters the temple, their arrangement of guarding during any meeting, and their organization of a special group from among the loyal members who assume the role of the "Intelligence Service" in the group.

The Apostle and the Teachings

Elijah Mohammed, whose "slave name" is Poole, was born in Sandersville, one of the small towns in Washington County, Georgia.¹⁹ He was one of thirteen children (five sisters and eight brothers) born to very poor parents. His father was a farmer and "Jack leg" preacher, as was his grandfather. He had grown up and lived in Georgia until the age of twenty-five. Since he was a little boy of four years, his grandfather and his father took him with them to the church, where he used to sit on the "preacher set" listening to the preacher. "The members," he said, "used to make much of me; they seemed to love me as the preacher's dear. Since that time I developed the idea that some day I will be a preacher, but not like the preachers whom I heard."

During the first part of his history, before he met Fard and joined his movement, Elijah Poole lived a very hard and poor life.

When I was a little boy it used to be very hard for me because my father had at that time thirteen children. I was the middle child. We were brought up on the farm. When I was ten years old I used to cut firewood and take it to the little town to sell it for fifty cents, so as to help my brothers and sisters. My older sister used to chop with me and we'd

go together to the little town to sell it. We had nothing to wear. I was having at that time only one rough garment for the whole season. When I was eighteen years old I used to work for a white man on his farm for fifty cents a day, from sun to sun. Then it got worse, so he began to pay me eight dollars a month for farming the whole day from sun to sun during the entire month. That man was a very cruel white man, as all devils are. He was very old, too. He used to gather the farmers whom he did not like and give a whip to his wife, who would whip them while he held a gun at them to make them submit to beating.

I worked for that cruel white man so as to collect enough money to train myself to be a dining boy in the railway, but I was not able to take the course because I quit working for that cruel white man after six months, because he threatened me that he would beat me with a very strong six-foot stick that he used to carry with him if I did not obey him. But I told him that if he did strike me I would have no better sense than to strike him back. Therefore, he told me to leave and so I left. That was not the time they called slavery, but it was at the time they used to call freedom. He was not calling any laborer by his name but he was calling our people some nicknames he invented for them. He used to call me Levy. This man was not an exception; they were all about the same.

When he quit working for this white man he used to go to the little town to work here and there so as to bring some little thing to provide for his brothers and sisters. Since he was a child ten years old he was going to Cordele, a small town in Georgia, to sell the firewood that he had chopped. He was impressed deeply by the racial riots he had seen.

Once, a time when I was a little boy coming to Cordele to sell a load of wood, I saw a lynching crowd. I was that time a child about ten years old, when I saw that morning a dark man horribly lynched by whites. He was accused of insulting a white woman. That dark man was a young fellow about eighteen years old. They lynched him right in the section where I was selling the wood and where our people live. They took him and hanged him to a willow tree after they lynched him with extreme cruelty. That event impressed me so much that I cannot get over it; I did never forget it, not until this day. It was terrible and horrible to see such things happening and all our grown men right there to our section allowing such things to happen. I returned to our house, which was about four miles away from the little town, grieving all the way. I wished I were a man so that I could try to do something about it. That scene hurt me very much.

Elijah Poole was impressed deeply by another scene of lynching when he was twenty-three years old, going to Macon, a little town in Georgia, with his brother:

My brother and I went to the town nine miles away from our home one Saturday evening and on our way to the town others who came from the town warned us not to go up to the town because the white people lynched one of our people out in the town and that the whites dragged his body on the streets behind a little small truck. But I was having very necessary work to do and I had to go through the town so I went. When I reached the town I saw the man's body dragged by the truck on the ground. Then I returned back home with this image of the lynching.

Elijah Poole did not attend school during his life except for half a term when he was twelve years old; this was due to the poverty of his parents and their need for him to work on the farm. Hence all of his educational background was acquired from and through the encouragement W. D. Fard. He said: "The only knowledge I really have today had come to me through Mr. Fard after I had been around him for about three years."

When he was twenty-five years old, he moved with his wife and two children to Detroit, following his father, who had moved to Detroit two years before:

I moved to Detroit because I thought the life might be better, but even there the first year I saw my people shot down right on the street without any justice whatsoever. I had seen there two of our people killed on the street by the police without any justice whatsoever and without any effort on our people's part to do anything or to help. It just is like a man going among a gang of savage beasts and shoots them to satisfy his desire for hunt. So that again impressed me and I said to myself: "Now, I left the South so as to get out of the territory where such things are going on all the time and now I find it here before me in the police department. The difference is that they do not hang them up to the trees but they kill them right here on the streets." The things that I had seen in Detroit were awful. I had seen this and worse than this in all of the other cities that I had visited. I did not see justice in any part of the country.

His family lived very hard lives in Detroit, because his father was a "Jack leg" preacher and seldom had been called by a churchman to preach in his church. Sometimes his father was employed by the city to do labor work. Elijah Poole himself suffered since he had come to Detroit in 1923. He did no work before he met W. D. Fard beyond selling firewood, which sometimes took him all day long to sell for fifty cents.²⁰ With his little knowledge of the Bible, which he had acquired from attending church since his childhood, Elijah used to read the Bible with great curiosity and deep interest. The more he read the more he longed to be a preacher and "corrector."

Before he met Fard, Elijah Poole was not affiliated with any movement or organization except the Masonic movement, which he joined in 1924, when

he came to Detroit. He was a member in this movement until his attachment to Fard in 1931.

Let us listen now to Elijah himself tell some of his history in Detroit around the year of 1931:

After I went to Detroit I began to long to something different, I was working there, transferred from job to job. So I seem having very difficult in trying to make a living. Finally I talked with my mother. I told her that it seemed that there was something warning me that I should be a better man, and I should do what I always longed to so since I was a boy and that is to teach religion or preach. That desire was strong in me but just that I cannot see my way to going to the church telling the preacher that I want to preach the Christian religion as they are preaching. I said something warning me that is not right. But I told her that I will not look like success until I do something of that nature. So that desire kept with me until in 1931 my older brother and I were living in Hamtramck in Detroit, a little suburb out of town, began to discuss religion daily.

One day our father told us that he received some information and teachings from his friend Brother Abdul Mohammed, who told him that Mr. W. D. Fard has taught him and gave him that name after he was known by his slave name Brown. Brown himself was connected with the Moorish-American movement started by Noble Drew Ali. Abdul Mohammed joined the movement under the name Brown El [pronounced Eel—Ed.]. Abdul Mohammed told my father what Mr. W. D. Fard was teaching, and my father told me. When I heard it I told my father, “I like to hear that man.” I said, “That is good what Abdul Mohammed told you.” That was in the spring of 1931. I asked my father about Abdul Mohammed and he told me where that man lives, and therefore we went, my brother and I, to find Abdul Mohammed.

We had visited Abdul Mohammed in his house, me and my older brother, for several weeks and he was telling us what he had been taught. Then we visited the place where Mr. W. D. Fard was teaching; it was a basement. I was not able to get into the basement because it was so crowded that I had no way to get in, but I heard him he was speaking on Hastings Street, around 3408 Hastings, and I was not able to hear him well here too because it was so crowded, thousands of people listening to him. After the meeting was over I was sitting down and thought about the teachings. They did me so much good just to think about them. I waited after the second meeting so I might have a turn to meet him. So we lined up to go by and shake hands with him because he was shaking hands with us all. And when I got to him I shook my hands with him and told him that I recognized who he is and he held his head down close to my face and he said to me, “Yes, Brother.” I said to him: “You are that one we read in the Bible that he would come in the last day under the name Jesus.”

I said, "You are that one?" Here he looked at me very serious when I said that to him, and finally he said; "Yes, I am the one that you have been looking for in the last two thousand years; I am the one. But you go ahead now brother, that is good." And he did not seem to care whether others were sharing what I was saying or what he was saying. So finally I went back again and listened and he told the whole congregation that he was the Jesus that we have been looking for and expecting, not the one who was here two thousand years ago, but the one we had been expecting. He said, "This is the time of that one."

At that time I was satisfied. Then I go out in Hamtramck and tell my poor brothers and sisters there what I have learned from his teachings. So they would sit and continue from hour to hour listening to what I was saying. Now and then I got the Bible to show truth that he was telling us same thing that was predicted by the Bible and the prophets of the Bible that he would come in the last day, and that he taught that the white man was the devil and that we were the people whom . . . that they have deceived near four hundred years ago and had deprived us of the knowledge of ourselves and put us in their names and give us just what they wanted us to have. On that spot I said that it is the truth and no one can deny that.

The people were real anxious to listen to me there in Hamtramck. In those days were great gatherings wherever the teachings were told. Huge crowds everywhere as if people were gathering for a free meal. It was not like it is today. It was enough to tell the man and he will be there in the meeting listening. I went on for a few months. In the fall of 1931 my wife one day went to hear him and I stayed home with the children. That night he asked about me, saying, "Anyone here in this hall know that little man who lives in Hamtramck?" My wife answered, "Yes, he is my husband." Then he wants me to teach. He told her to tell me to go ahead and teach Islam and he will back me up. These were the words he told her to tell me. I felt so happy when my wife told me that. I said to myself, "Now, we really have something to teach, and it is good." So I began teaching.

The confidence of the Apostle in Fard is really of exceptional character. He told the writer, in order to maintain his belief, that Fard knows the unknown:

Sometimes Mr. W. D. Fard warns me from going to the temple and keeps me with him because he knows that there is somebody there in the temple coming to harm me. Sometimes he was telling me before I go to the temple the name and the exact description of the man who intends to harm me and even the seat on which he will sit, and when I go I find that person exactly the one Mr. Fard described and on the same seat and he came just to harm me.

This probably reveals that Fard was tricky enough to play this role of hiring somebody for this purpose just to convince his disciple that he is omnipotent and omniscient. The simplicity and credulity of Elijah Poole, who had been named by Fard as Elijah Mohammed, are reflected in the following declarations:

When I heard the teachings of Islam from the mouth of Mr. W. D. Fard, I said, "This is the salvation that I was praying for; it came now to me in person." I did not need to read any book about it because my education is limited. But the prophecy was very clear that this is the truth. I prayed to Allah for his favor after I heard Fard for the first time. We began to hold meetings together at night in our house discussing what we had learned and heard from Mr. Fard. We were real happy. I used to go to my clothes closet and pray to Fard, who brought us the truth that I was longing to hear. I used to read the lives of the prophets and their histories and prophesying. And I used to say that if I live to see God when he comes to set up righteousness that I pray that I will be one that he accepts, and I would like to point him out that these are the people who mistreated my people all my life and all the life of my parents.

My grandmother used to sit down and tell me how the white people used to beat her sister when she was young and under slavery. They were beating her until her legs swell enough and blood comes out of her skin; and I sit and listened to her telling me the sufferings of slavery until I fill my heart with griefs and I used to tell her: "My grandmother, when I get to be a man, if the Lord helps me I will try to get my people out of the grip of this white man because I believe that we will not be able to get along with peace under his government." She says, "I do not think either, son."

My grandfather, he also told me what happened to them in slavery. So I have pretty good knowledge of what went on in slavery. The worst of all of this to me is what happened to our people from the white man after they call themselves free. That is what hurts me more and still more hurts me what white the white man taught them to believe as their religion just to blind us. They do not offer us real help. Hence as soon as Mr. Fard began to teach us it was so clear to us just as someone comes out of night into day and sees all the objects that were hidden by the darkness.

He did not teach us that he was a prophet. We used to call him prophet. I made the followers [call] him prophet because I do not know exactly what great name to give him. No one called him prophet before me. First I thought that we should call him Master; later I thought that we should call him prophet, and later I told them that he [was] neither of either one; I said that we should call him the "Almighty God" himself in person because, according to what he has taught us, that must be the work of God and not of a human being. Then I took it with him, but, although he did not tell me exactly, but he did mention that I will find out who he was. He was referring to himself as the one coming to save

us and that he was the Messiah that we were looking for. He came once to Chicago and delivered a speech in which he said, "I am God Himself," and I looked at him and he looked at me when he said so. And it came to me when I looked at him that I was believing that all the time. He did not say that "I am prophet," but he said, that "I am the one who comes in the last day." He did not say, "I or Allah will do this or that," but I noticed him carefully saying, "We do this or that." So I gain knowledge from those words that he made himself.

Later on he kept saying that he had been predicted to this for many years. He goes back around 13,000 years before Jesus and teaches till the present day. He told us for history dating back 66 trillion years ago that they had in Mecca; how his father worked faithfully to produce him to give him to deliverance of us here in America. He said that his father made an effort to have him first time, but he missed him. He said it was a girl and hence he came next. He said that his father went often in the mountain there in their country where some Caucasians were living. They think that they are Moslems and they do think that they are Christians or they belong to the Christians too. He said he got one of those women and took her for his wife so he could get a son to live more like this civilization of the whites so as to be able to get among them and they will not be able to distinguish him; so, he said they will adopt me.

So he got a son by this woman and that he was the son and he taught him everything that you could find of wisdom. He said that when he was six years old he had a dream that he overthrew all the riches of the white people as he always called them as devils. Then he looked at me and said: "Look, Brother Elijah, I see my dream is becoming true; you know I am not a dream believer, but there are some truths in it and that is one I believe and I know it is coming to be true; I am just going to burn them all and I will not save not one of them. I am going to gather them wherever they are and bring them here and burn them right here in America."

And he taught me about how he is going to bring that end and how long it will burn. He said it burns here 390 years until it has consumed all the civilization that on the surface of the earth. After that it will take around 610 years before that this country be convenient to live in again. And therefore the sum of the period will be a thousand years. He told how he will built what he called the "mother plane," which takes 22 years to be built, to destroy this country with bombs. And he will put the same type of bomb on this kind of plane that had been used to put mountains on the earth. He told me that all the mountains that I see on the earth were carried by these airplanes. The bomb which will be used specially for this kind of planes will go into the earth one mile. This is to destroy America first. Yes, not Europe, but America first. Yes, this is the number-one place for what they have done to us, because they have been poisoning my people and teaching them other than the truth. I will never forget what they have done for my people. All the evils they have done to my people will be punished severely and not evenly.

He asked me, "Are you with me?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Well, then, you come with me and help me with this work so as when the time comes you and me will be together." He taught us how to eat and what to eat. We were eating before him all that kind of bad food and we were eating three times a day. So he told us not to eat but once a day. He told us not to touch swine and not to eat meat but the pigeon and fish, and he told us not to eat rice so much because it has so much starch. And he taught us not to eat so much white bread because this does no good to us, but we must eat brown bread. W. D. Fard did teach us that [if] everyone kills four devils at the proper time he will have free transportation to Mecca. This teaching had stirred the police department in Detroit against him. Ever since they began to persecute us and charge us with various charges.

It is because this interview sheds bright light in both of the personalities of Fard and Elijah Mohammed, because of its importance as a background for the analysis of various processes which had occurred in the historical development of the movement, and because it sketches the general outlines of the movement as a whole, that I planned to record most of it here for the reader. Therefore, let us listen to Elijah Mohammed, who continued telling us about the movement and about the peddler, whom he had stimulated to pretend that he is the promised Messiah of the Bible, and whom he has raised to the position of Deity. Elijah Mohammed continued:

Mr. W. D. Fard taught us what to eat, when to eat, and how to eat. That was also a great lesson to us. We all today pray and are thankful to Allah for sending him. This was one of the things destined us more stupid. We did not know what to eat and that kept us sick all the time. He taught us that what we had been eating was the greatest factor causing our sickness. So after he taught us we began to eat according to his teaching.

I was myself the third minister he had chosen. Before me were two whom he did not like; one was Abdul Mohammed and the other, Othman Ali. He did not like them because they were following the Moorish [teachings of the Moorish Science Temple of America - Ed.]. More than that they were trying to get the teachings and use them to their own benefit. That is why Abdul became a great enemy to us and he began to teach against Mr. Fard. Before I became a minister I used to listen to Abdul Mohammed while he was talking and then I used to go to Mr. Fard myself, telling him that I did not like the way they were carrying on; and that if I had to teach I will teach the people with you. "Then," he said, "well, then you come over with me."

And so we went to his secretary's house where the woman invited him for dinner. So I went with him and there he gathered in the house most of the followers he could get, so as to listen to what I was going to say and to what he will say to me. So he took me and put me in

the center of the followers and questioned me. And after he questioned me he said, "Now, if you would teach, tell me what would you do?" I told him I would teach and carry out what you tell me, not what I think is best; and then he gave me a blow like a pet, you know, and then he said to me, "You sit down now here beside me"; and then he began to address the people in the house saying, "This is the man that I want. That is just what we need; we need someone who teaches what I tell him." Then he said, "Elijah is the only one who'd do that. From now on you go to the temple and teach what I tell you. And you have to go down there and take notes of all what Abdul says."

So I went and took notes. He said, "I don't like what they say." I was going there and pencil out what I could and I give it to him, though he knows himself all what Abdul was saying anyway. Then he took me to the temple and told me to prepare a subject. He said, "I want you to preach here before me." So I stood there near the speaker's stand and I began to teach the people of him "that we have looked and hoped for to come such [a] man and now we have him and should we all submit ourselves to him and do as what he says and then we will be successful." So he sits there and I talk for an hour or more to the people. I was a little kind of bashful at that time because he was sitting there and my mind is mostly on him. He told me every now and then, "Don't think of me; go ahead, go ahead." After that I got a chance of talking to the people in his absence, where I could go very strong because I did not see him sitting behind me.

So I told them that he is the one to whom the Book referred to as the one who is after the lost Brothers or the lost sheep of the Bible and that is well known among the people as he himself said that he was. And I said that there is not any wisdom in the world that you can compare with the wisdom that he gave us. He told me that the time will come when we govern the world and that he will send to us a messenger to give every one of us a little book in which are all the records of that person. This little book will help you to go to your people there; they will admit you as soon as you show them that little book. This will take place at the proper time, i.e. at the end of this devil.

He taught us the life history of "Prophet Mohammed," Jesus and Moses. Those three he had emphasized to great extent, especially the life history of Prophet Mohammed. He taught us the beginning of the history of the creation of the world and history of the white man in the cave; and he told us everything that happened in the world until 1914. He taught us that the end of this devil will be in 1914 but this destruction does not take place until we learn the truth. He told us how the scientist has set the date of expiration of this civilization back 60 years prevents him to know exactly when the end will come. He told us: "Law of nature does not allow the man to tell the other just exactly when he is going to die, so therefore they set this time back 60 years in order to keep it within the

period when the time will be up.” All of this knowledge and the knowledge of the father of this race of people and the time they spend in the caves and hillsides of Europe and how they make trouble among our own people after they were made and exiled; all of that was made thoroughly clear to us.

I have gathered all of this knowledge and printed because it was so good. I kept it in many places so that in case one place was destructed I still have it in the other place. It takes at least six hours just to tell what he gave us because I tried it time and time again, it took me six hours all the time. He used to teach us six hours. In fact the basic part of his teachings was the history of our people, their freedom, superiority and their civilization before they have been enslaved by the devil. The purpose of his teachings was to free us. For all of this I pray to Allah because I was so blind, deaf, and dumb before his coming.

From the foregoing quotations it is clear that the confidence which Elijah Mohammed had in Fard is not the kind of confidence a man has in another man or a confidence of a follower in his leader, but it is the blind confidence of a worshipper in his God. He used to tell the writer that in his hiding period (1935-1942) he was hearing the voice of Fard, the voice that he knows, warning him and directing him to save his life from the enemies who were seeking him. He told the writer once that when he read the Koran after the departure of Fard he found the validity of the deity of Mr. W. D. Fard himself. “At that time I realized his intention why he was asking me insistently to read the Koran. It was just to know who he was.”

The Apostle used to tell the writer:

When Fard left he gave me a list of 150 books to read. When I began to read I have detected, specially after reading Koran carefully, that Fard was Allah himself incarnated. The more I read the more I become sure about this fact, especially that his name has been mentioned in the Bible and the time of his coming has been assigned, but the devil has concealed him under another name.

NOTES

- ¹ Elijah Mohammed, the current leader of the movement who resides in Chicago (who was chosen by Fard to be a minister and later on his messenger to the colored people) told the writer that W. D. Fard told him that to be a peddler was not his job but he did that in order to have access to the homes and get in touch with his people so as to awaken them and prepare them for the war of "Armageddon" against the Caucasian, an end for which he was preparing himself by studying twenty years in the best universities of the world. So when he came to Detroit, "it was hard for him to come into contact with us," Elijah said, "because our people are a little shy and did not recognize him as being one of us. So he began going from house to house pretending like he was some kind of agent for a retailer selling clothes for men and women. He told me that this is an idea that he picked up himself to get into our homes, as he said, just to teach us. He said, 'I have no interest in selling clothes. What I wanted to do was get into the homes and talk with them'."
- ² Erdmann Doane Beynon, "Voodoo Cult Among Negro Migrants in Detroit," *American Journal of Sociology* 43 (May 1938): 896.
- ³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴ It is worth mentioning here that such an accusation is against the teachings of Islam laid down in the Holy Koran, which considers such accusing individuals as being atheists and non-Moslems and states that they will be punished in the after life by being put in Jehanna. Such beliefs that contradict the main principles of Islam will be more clear the further we advance in our treatment.
- ⁵ Following reports of the involvement of NOI members in a human sacrifice in November 1932, W. D. Fard was held for examination at a local hospital. After his release in December, Detroit detectives "advised" him to leave the city. Discovered to be living at his former hotel the following May, Fard was arrested on the 25th of that month, soon after which he apparently moved to Chicago. *Detroit Free Press* (November 22, 1932): 1, 3; (November 30, 1932): 3; (December 7, 1932): 7; (May 26, 1933): 10. [Ed.]
- ⁶ The current apostle says that 11,000 members were in the Nation.
- ⁷ Question II, cited from *Lost Found Moslem*, compiled by W. D. Fard.
- ⁸ What is more interesting is that in 1947 the group in Chicago established a restaurant by this name.
- ⁹ Beynon, "The Voodoo Cult," 900-901.
- ¹⁰ See note 5 above. [Ed.]
- ¹¹ His disciple, Mr. Elijah Mohammed, told the writer that Fard himself does not believe in this teaching but "he taught it in order to take fear of the white man out of the hearts of the followers." This last quotation is what Fard himself told Elijah Mohammed after his declaration of the rule.
- ¹² See Ernest Allen Jr., "When Japan Was 'Champion of the Darker Races': Satokata Takahashi and the Flowering of Black Messianic Nationalism," *Black Scholar* 24 (Winter 1994): 23-24. [Ed.]
- ¹³ Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1944), 754.
- ¹⁴ I have mentioned elsewhere that the group had developed this term, meaning by it those members who acquired militaristic training.
- ¹⁵ A reference to University of Chicago Professor of Sociology Louis Wirth (1897-1952). [Ed.]
- ¹⁶ I refer here to the statement of J. Dewey, namely, "Structure is constancy of means, of

things used for consequences not of things taken by themselves or absolutely.” *Experience and Nature*, 2d ed. (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1929), 62-63.

- ¹⁷ In fact, Robert Harris and James J. Smith, the reported, willing victim who was sacrificed by Harris on November 21, 1932, were both members of the Nation of Islam. See note 5. [Ed.]
- ¹⁸ See E. U. Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism: A Search for an Identity in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 64-66. [Ed.]
- ¹⁹ For biographical information on Elijah Muhammad, see Claude A. Clegg, III, *Original Man: The Life and Times of Elijah Muhammad* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997). [Ed.]
- ²⁰ Actually, Elijah Mohammed also engaged in factory work during this period. See Clegg, *Original Man*, 16. [Ed.]

2. THE FOLLOWERS

THE DISCUSSION IN this chapter will focus upon the following questions:

- a) From what class of Negroes were these followers drawn? What are the general characteristics of the social life of that class?
- b) What is the educational background of these followers? What is the age and gender structure of the group?
- c) What are the problems of these followers?

Social Background

All of the listed followers, with the exception of one girl 16 years old who was born in Chicago, came from plantation areas in Georgia, Alabama, Arkansas, Virginia, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas. All of them, including the leader of the group, came from poor families who lived on farms. All of them, except a few—not more than half a dozen—were farmers in the South. They migrated to the North seeking better living. The majority of them mentioned at least one kind of familial crisis that befell their families when they were children. Divorce, desertion, or separation of the parents, fights between the parents, and the death of one or both of the parents are some of the familiar happenings in the childhood of these followers. Most of them mentioned their indulgence in illegitimate sexual relationships before their joining the cult. Some of them even have illegitimate children.

In order to show clearly the general social background of these followers, let us mention some of the characteristics of the social life of the lower class from which they were drawn. In describing the life of the lower class Negroes in Chicago, W. L. Warner says:

In the lower class the family is virtually matriarchal or presided over by the mother. Since common law marriage is frequent in this group, family life tends to be unstable. Children within a single family may have different fathers and, because of the family breakup, they are often brought up by their maternal grandparents. Within the “shady” lower class there is hardly any family life at all. Whereas many people of the older generation still emphasize religion, the young people tend to drop all church connections.¹

The lives of these Negroes are filled with disappointments and hardships. They are characterized by low status, lack of necessary education, poverty, and a large family in crowded quarters. One of my respondents told me that the

place in which his family was living was so small that he used to sleep in the closet. Members of this class blame their difference and incapacities either on the white people or the upper class of the Negroes. In describing this Warner says:

Lower-class Negroes are quite inclined to attribute their personal inadequacies and economic difficulties to race prejudice and they resent upper class Negroes as disloyal to the race. Many express the conviction that something like a "race war" or a "divine intervention" will be necessary some day to "vindicate the Negro."²

Members of this class fill the unskilled jobs and lower positions in the economic system of Chicago. In addition to this, they are "the last hired and the first fired." And this will be, as Warner states, "His chief experience with caste-like organization of the Chicago community."³ Most of them are mobile in the occupational system. H. G. Lewis has shown in his dissertation that, in general, the rate of change in some callings for the Negro group has been much more rapid than the rate for the white group.⁴ If we know that most of the members of the lower-class Negroes fill the ranks of unskilled labor, then we can realize the occupational mobility of these workers. Members of the lower stratum are socially discriminated against by the other strata of the Negroes themselves, who are differentiated from the rest of the Negro community on the basis of cultural attainments, social interests, and professional or economic standards. Being unskilled laborers, these members are mobile in their jobs, and cut off from the professional Negroes who have their own particular organizations, interests, and social standards. Being members of poor Negro families in the South, they have grown up with poor backgrounds and with no essential training that would enable them to work successfully in any skilled or semi-skilled work. As migrants from the farms, most of them had difficulty in adjusting to the life in such a completely industrial and urban society. Entering a new society with a strange new social set-up, the Negro is involved in the various aspects of the disorganized life of the lower-class people among the Negroes in Chicago. Coming to the North to escape from poverty and the conditions of the caste system in the South, the Negro found before him the same racial discrimination against him in all phases of the urban life. In describing this situation, Myrdal says: "The social paradox in the North is exactly this, that almost everybody is against discrimination in general but, at the same time, almost everybody practices discrimination in his own personal life affairs." The reflection of this discrimination in the life and psychology of the Negro might be clear from the following statements of Brother Horace, whose declarations do not differ from what the other Brothers stated. Brother Horace says:

I do prepare myself to be qualified to do what I like and aspire to, but, when I find myself sure that I can do it, my face fails me. Whatever job I seek to which I find myself well qualified and get good marks, the devil does not give to me, but gives it to the devil although he did not do as good as I did on the test. All the jobs that I can take are “janiting” or cleaning washrooms and the like.

Another example of his statements is the following:

I have a hard time all my life before Islam. I wished all my life to be dead and not to be a Negro. I was asking myself and wonder why I was not created a man of another nationalities and color but not a Negro, because I thought this might change my fate.

In order to give a picture of the poverty and hard life these Negroes live, let me mention what Brother Horace X said once to the writer:

I really would like to invite you home, Brother Hatim, but I feel ashamed to let you see the place where I live. You do not know the conditions of our living. Some of us sleep in the closet or in the kitchen or in the washroom. The roof might be leaking. Worms and mice all over the place. The landlord does not do anything about it. He wants rent and that is all.

All of these conditions operate upon the Negro to weaken the effectiveness of the mores and social controls in his behavior, keep him restless and looking always for change, living a mobile life, and experiencing a condition of anomie which is responsible for being loose, dissatisfied, and confused. Moreover, his Southern social background and experience within the rigid caste system of the South is of great importance in accounting for individual attraction to such aggressive social movements.

The majority of these followers had no interest in the church at all. Some of them even pretend that they do not know their denominations before joining the Asiatic cult. Most of these irreligious persons answer the question, “Were you a churchgoer before Islam?,” in approximately the same way offered by Brother Willie 8X, who works at collecting and selling junk. Brother Willie’s answer for this question was, “I did not care for such junk.” All the followers who know their original Christian denominations were Baptists with the exception of one girl, Sister Sylvia, who was Catholic. Their knowledge of Christianity and the Bible is not much better than their knowledge of Islam and the Koran. In fact, they are ignorant in both. My observation reveals that the best of these followers might know two or three verses of the Bible, but even these few verses they do not understand. Moreover, each of them has a great doubt about the significance of the church in his life. All of them were skeptical

about the knowledge and character of the churchmen.

The majority of these followers had been mobile among the various religious cults, protest organizations, and repatriation movements for a long time before their participation in the Asiatic cult. Their mobility is due to the fact that in the North there are so many revolutionary associations among the Negro people in contrast to the case in the South. As Brother Henry 3X, one of my respondents, put it: "The North differs from the South in that in the North there are many and various organizations whereas in the South the only dominant organization that attracts the Negro is the church." During this mobile affiliation, these members developed race consciousness because most of these associations are organized around at least one aspect of the racial problem. Brother Horace X declared that after he had lived a mobile life among the churches of various denominations he joined the "National Association for the Advancement of Colored People," whose purpose, as Brother Horace says, "is bettering the conditions of the dark people but they will never do." After Horace joined the Israelite movement, which promises, as Horace said, "that I will go back to our Native land sometimes." This movement promised Horace, and all other members, that the arrangement would be made to deport them to Liberia, their native land, where the government has already been formed of "their own people." "But later on," Horace said,

I detected that they were deceiving us because I planned to go to Liberia and I got my passport, but they were deferring our departure continuously to a point that I [became] disappointed, and so I left to the Peace Movement of Ethiopia, where Mrs. M. M. L. Gordon, the head of the movement, promised us that she has already made the arrangement with General [Carlos] Cooks [of the African Nationalist Pioneer Movement] to get our people out of the U.S.A. and she showed us a letter from General Cooks that he is doing his best to help in returning our people to the native land.

Then Horace lost interest in this movement and joined the Nation of Islam. Brother Will 4X said, "After I left Baptism I joined the Jehovah's Witnesses because I was seeking for reality and more satisfying belief." Brother Jacob said, "I joined the Knight Pythians [Knights of Pythias], then the Elks, and then the Masons before Islam." Brother Lucius declares that he joined the Masons and then the Seventh Day Adventists.

Generally speaking, all the followers who were above 25 years of age claimed that they were Masonic. Such mobility of affiliation, perhaps, paved the way for joining the Nation of Islam as long as it promises the followers to return them to their native land. Most of these cults and movements among the Negroes, as it seems to me, are organized along the same pattern of promises and appeals.

Out of 28 followers who fell within my sample, there were 19 followers who attached to other cults and movements prior to their following of this Asiatic cult, although 4 of them were under 18 years of age and 7 were females.⁵ Out of these 7 females there were two girls in their sixteenth year of age, one of them born Moslem and the other converted directly from Catholicism. All the other five females were mobile among various other cults, following the attachment of their husbands.

The various organizations among which these 19 followers were mobile prior to their conversion to the Asiatic cult were as follows: Marcus Garvey Movement [UNIA], Masons, Seventh Day Adventists, Israelite Movement, Jehovah Witnesses, God's Government on the Earth, the Elks, Knights of Pythias, Repatriation Movement to Africa, Repatriation Movement to Ethiopia, Repatriation Movement to Liberia, National Association for the Advancement of the Colored People, Black Jews, and Peace Movement of Ethiopia.⁶

Educational Background

As a result of the poverty and familial disorganization which I have described in the preceding section, members of the cult did not receive enough schooling. The majority have been obliged to leave school early because of the poverty of their parents and the need for them to work on the farm or help the family in some other ways of earning a living. Familial crises, such as desertion, separation of the parents, divorce or death of one of the parents and marriage of the other at a time when these followers were still young are frequent causal conditions in handicapping these followers in continuing their schooling in childhood.

The following table shows the percentage of the followers according to their schooling levels.

TABLE 1
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF 286 FOLLOWERS
ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF SCHOOLING⁷

Grade Level Completed	Percentage
None	5.2
1st	1.3
2nd	2.3
3rd	3.6
4th	13.3
5th	10.3
6th	4.0
7th	6.8
8th	16.8
9th	10.8
10th	8.0
11th	6.8
12th	10.8
Total	100.0

Age and Gender Structure

Among the recorded members there are 172 males and 112 females, distributed as follows:

TABLE 2
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF 286 FOLLOWERS
ACCORDING TO AGE AND GENDER

Age interval	Gender Frequency	
	Male	Female
15-20	9	5
20-25	18	12
25-30	12	7
30-35	11	6
35-40	27	13
40-45	23	15
45-50	16	9
50-55	24	17
55-60	8	12
60-65	7	8
65-70	12	5
70 and over	5	3
Total	172	112

Who Gets What, and How?

Few of these followers are vested with an economic interest in the existence and continuity of the cult. In fact, those few members presided over by the Apostle himself are the ones who consume most of the income of the cult as recompense for the roles which they play in the cult or the functions that they perform.

The following table shows the number of followers who acquired new working roles in the cult.

TABLE 3
NUMBER OF FOLLOWERS WITH ROLES
AND FUNCTIONS IN THE CULT

Number		Roles and Functions
Female	Male	
5		Cooks, Shabazz Restaurant
2		Waitressess, Shabazz Restaurant
	1	Cashier, Shabazz Restaurant
	2	Dishwasher, Shabazz Restaurant
	1	Food procurer and janitor, Shabazz Restaurant
	1	Driver, Fruit of Islam car
	1	Driver, Sisters' car
1	2	Teachers, University of Islam
	2	Ministers
4		Missionary Sisters
	1	Captain of the Brothers
1		Captain of the Sisters
	10	Secretaries
1		General Secretary
4	5	Farm Workers
18	26	Total

All of these persons get paid, although only the Apostle and the General Secretary receive regular salaries

Problems Faced by Followers

The problems of these followers are not common to all of them, but differ with the persons and their conditions. Some of the men who are single and who try to marry have the problem of not finding a wife among the Sisters, or they experience some conflict which arises out of being in love with a non-Asiatic person, or the desire to marry an outsider. Some of the married couples suffer from great conflict that develops as a result of the attachment to the cult by one party while the other either has lost interest in the cult, or he (or she) is still Christian. Separation and desertion are the result of such cases. In fact, four husbands told the writer of their decision to divorce their wives because

they did not join the cult or “like the teachings.” Some of the enthusiastic followers seek the opportunity while they are on the job to teach the others who work with them in the same place. Oftentimes this causes their elimination from the job or gives rise to conflict with the supervisor of the work or the foreman.

Children under seventeen years of age who join the cult without the consent of their families and who are still living with, and provided for by their families, suffer from great conflicts with the members of their families who are still Christian. Paralyzing censorship on the part of the elders in the family is the general characteristic of the life and relations of such followers with the members of their families. The parents of Sister Sylvia, a very light mulatto Catholic young girl, for example, sued their daughter in court, as a result of which she spent two months in jail. Bitter conflict has developed between the parents on one side and their daughter on the other side. A sixteen-year-old girl, Sister Sylvia is in love with the son of the Apostle. The lovers plan to marry. The parents of Sister Sylvia, who are very strict Catholics, regard such an event as the greatest disgrace that threatens the name of the family in the Catholic community. This is an example of many other similar cases and problems of some of these followers. In some cases attachment to the cult by some members of a family has split and broken down the family into two conflicting parties where elimination of the dissenter from the family circle is the general result. Since their attachment to the cult, these members have developed the “chosen-people” attitude. Acting on the basis of such assumption has set them apart from their intimate Christian friends and cliques, who began to look at them as outcast members and to regard them as “crazy.”

In addition to their lower educational background, these members, except the children who are born in Chicago, have come to Chicago, as I have remarked, from the rural South with a simple agricultural way of life that is not suited to urban conditions. Hence their difficulties in finding jobs and coping with the procession of urban life were their chief experiences with the caste-like organization of the Chicago community when they first arrived in the city.

Because of this lack of qualifications for working in skilled jobs, most of these followers do “janiting,” work as a “bellboy” in an office or a hotel, perform unskilled work in a plant or a factory, shine or repair shoes, work in a laundry, serve in a restaurant, collect or sell junk, wash dishes, or do home cleaning. Therefore, with regard to the various categories of jobs, these members do not differ from the other lower-class Negroes. The only difference is that these members are not as mobile as they were before their membership in the cult. This might be due to the fact that, in general, the personality of these members has obtained some kind of stability as a result of joining the cult. Moreover, social controls within the cult made of these members strict, clean, and somewhat honest people—characteristics which encourage the employers to employ them and prefer them to other Negroes of the same social class.

NOTES

- ¹ W. L. Warner, B. H. Junker, and W. A. Adams, *Color and Human Nature: Negro Personality Development in a Northern City* (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1941), 22.
- ² *Ibid.*, 22.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 81.
- ⁴ H. Garnet Lewis, "Social Differentiation in the Negro Community" (M.A. thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, 1936), 185.
- ⁵ I mention this fact here because females, as it seems from the data of the sample, are less mobile in this respect than the males. Moreover, in general they follow the mobility of their husbands if they are married.
- ⁶ The Repatriation Movement to Africa was probably the UNIA. On the other hand, the Peace Movement of Ethiopia, based in Chicago, was actually a repatriation movement to Liberia. The Pacific Movement of the Eastern World, which began in Chicago and subsequently moved its headquarters to St. Louis, sometimes advocated emigration as well. I am unaware of any other significant repatriation movements in the midwest during the 1930s and early 1940s. [Ed.]
- ⁷ It has to be mentioned here that this number of followers does not include the children in the University of Islam.

3. PECULIAR ORGANIZATIONAL FEATURES

THE FIRST ESSENTIAL characteristic of this cult is that of being very aggressive and hostile toward the Caucasian race. This hostility, perhaps, has played a very important role in the development of the cult and in its unity. The current dominant trends in the activities of the cult are economic trends which function to increase the isolation of the cult from the larger society.

The cult has some of the traits of a secret society. This characteristic has furnished the cult with appeals to outsiders and initiated members by arousing their curiosities. Moreover, it wrought stringent maintenance of the internal solidarity of the group whose members have common interests and a basic community of understandings and experiences. Since it is a secret society, its members are very deeply suspicious of any outsider, although he might be a Negro. Therefore, its principles, teachings, plans, membership, and its structure are aspects impossible for an outsider to comprehend.

The cult is exclusively an ethnic cult. Hence there is no place for a white man, even if he is a Moslem, to participate in the group or join as a member. The members of the cult have been drawn exclusively from the lower, poor, and illiterate people. Therefore, such an organization serves as giving them "a lift," at least in feeling that they are learning something new, and that they are gaining status and superiority by being members of the chosen people. Loyalty of the members to the Apostle and their blind confidence in his prophecy, superior potentialities, prestige, good will, and in his caliber, are above description. They give him so much money and do him so many favors, not [only] because they have confidence in and loyalty to him, but because they really love him with awe and reverence. Leadership of the cult is becoming increasingly administrative. The Apostle is busy with the economic aspect of the cult more than anything else. Hence he comes to the temple once a week and infrequently twice, but he spends all the day during the whole week in the restaurant.

Niebuhr has remarked that "the distinctive ethical note of the churches of the poor in the earlier periods was due to the interest of the constituency in salvation from social evils, from class inferiorities, injustices, and oppressions and that these movements derived much of their driving force and enthusiasm from the millennial hope."¹ This is actually the case of this group. The movement does not seek religious salvation or set religious goals. Its aims and hopes are altogether secular in character; salvation from social evils, from caste inferiority, injustices, and oppressions are the essential mechanisms of the movement and the basis of its hopes, expectations and most of its myths. As one of the interviewees put it explicitly when he was explaining why he quit Christianity:

I left Christianity because I have been convinced that Christianity is not in the interest of our people [he means here the dark people], because Christianity has unreasonable logic; it teaches that the basis of salvation is faith while I know from my experience that salvation is by work. It teaches us that salvation will be in the after-life while we need salvation in this life. It teaches us to suffer because we will have good life after death. It tries to keep us inferior and accept all these injustices. Christianity teaches us that Jesus crucified himself to save people from sin, but as far as I see sin was not removed from those who claim this myth themselves. In fact, sins have increased among them since that crucifixion.²

Moreover, these secular tendencies have been shown more clearly in their economic plans and activities to the extent that the whole cult revolves around an economic axis, not a religious, national, or moral axis as the core.

Being poor, underprivileged, and ignorant, these members are not able to comprehend abstract thoughts or to develop them to a high level. Moreover, the history of the movement shows us that the cult has developed originally along emotional lines, not along intellectual or purely religious careers. Hence its ideology was mythical and crude, and so was its symbolism, which is highly charged with emotions and feelings.

There are some characteristics carried over from the Christian Church and introduced into the temple as, for example, paying donations, which has no relationship whatsoever to the Islamic religious system. Singing in the temple is another feature carried to the cult from the traditions of the church. Incarnating Allah and regarding him as a human being to whom the Apostle spoke and with whom he met is not far from the belief of the Christians in Jesus.

In fact, the cult is so far from the ideology and beliefs of Islam due to the fact that the cult is not essentially a religious group, but a protest group. They have acquired some of the aspects of Islam after they have ethnicized some of them and distorted the others to fit their mythical beliefs and ideology. Allah is Mr. W. D. Fard; Prophet Mohammed did not originate Islam because Islam was before him, it was the religion of the original man; Allah is not able to resurrect people after death because this is "something no one can do"; Prophet Mohammed is not the last of the prophets because this does not leave a place for the prophecy of Elijah; the Koran was not revealed to Prophet Mohammed, but it was known before him; it was not given by Allah, but it is like the Bible and the Pentateuch and was written by a group of scientists (23 scientists) 15,000 years before the appearance of Prophet Mohammed. These are some of their beliefs concerning the God of Islam, the Holy Book of Islam, and the Prophet of Islam. In fact, there is not any Islamic feature that yet has been institutionalized except the reciting of the first chapter of the Koran, which constitutes part of the Islamic prayer. All the other features introduced in their institutionalized behavior have been distorted or disfigured completely. They

do fast, but not during Ramadan or according to Islamic rules; they pray, but not the Islamic prayer, and not even like the Moslems, who pray five times a day. They offer their so-called prayer whenever they meet in the temple or they have to eat. They do not practice "Al-Zakat," but they have replaced this by carrying the principle of donation from the church, as I remarked before.

Isolation

Sumner states that an isolated cult is at war with the current mores and withdraws from the community because it cannot carry out its new ideals of life in the community.³ This isolation of the cult is not planned isolation, but it is a natural societal phenomenon and comes as a result of persecution, actual or imagined, or as a result of being different, a case which results in lack of common understandings and shared expectations between the converts and the outside people of the larger society. This distinctiveness of the converts increases with the assimilation of the convert within his new group. Concomitant with this gradual assimilation, the interaction between the believer and his non-believer associates comes to an end. That occurs because each side draws on a different frame of reference for the basis of his interaction.

Peculiarities of manners, speech, dress, bodily poise, rebellious attitudes, stubborn confidence in himself and his opinions, and his outlook on life in general and towards other people outside the cult in particular, operate increasingly to set the member of the cult away from the larger society. As a result of his participation in the social life of the new group, the new convert's complying with the normative rules and social controls of the new group (or new religion) is increasingly established in his conduct. By this time these new habits which prevail among the members of the group have become some of the characteristics distinguishing the followers from the outsiders. The members of this religious group do not interact religiously with outsiders because of the lack of common understandings between the two sides in the religious field of experience. Such habits become, then, a sign as well as an underlying factor of the religious isolation of the cult, possibly resulting in general social isolation.

The peculiar dress of the sisters, having a private school for "their own," having their own restaurant, abandoning the ways of recreation and socialization that Negroes are habituated to, attacking Christianity and the churchmen, believing that they are the chosen people, having this new set of ideals and hopes differing from the ideal of the surrounding society, their increasing contacts within the circle of the followers, a decreasing of their contacts with the persons without, and attitudes of the outside community toward them, are factors in isolating the members of this cult in all phases of social life except that of earning a living.

All of these distinguishing manners, attitudes, habits, and signs, as well

as sharing in an esoteric and hidden knowledge serve to deepen the sense of oneness and distinctiveness of the members in comparison to the outside social milieu. The tendency of the group is toward complete isolation, a purpose toward which their plans are designed. Having succeeded in owning a temple, a farm, a school, and a restaurant, they are planning now to buy a building for the poor families to reside in. The Apostle expressed this intention of complete isolation to the writer, saying, "I plan to have everything so as to be independent from the devil and we don't need him no more." In the process of isolation there are many factors operating in the peculiar individual cases. The story of Sister Sylvia, for example, runs as follows. She was imprisoned because she converted to Islam. She told the writer that she used to like Catholicism, but since her Catholic church began to interfere with her attending the school and learning something about Arabs and Islam, she began to hate Catholicism.

It seems to me that the experiments of Lewin and Zeigarnik⁴ shed some light upon the mechanism of such a change of attitude toward Catholicism, namely, that the organism experiences some tension. This tension, in the case of the believer, is released in the approved way he has accepted. So when this release has been blocked or interrupted, the tension tends to persist and become more powerful. This state of tension is accompanied by emotional excitement directed against the cause of this blockage.⁵ The picture of this analysis will be more clear when we know that the girl was in love with a convert who brought her to the temple himself.

Symbolism

One of the most important functions of the cult is that of furnishing symbolic environment in which the members interact and move. We will deal in Chapter 5 with the role of participation in acquiring these symbols. Our task here is to envisage symbolism from its collective phase, not from its distributive phase—i.e. our main concern here is to feel with the role of symbols in the behavior of the group as a whole. The standing up of the audience, for example, at the command of the captain to "stand erect" when the leader enters, keeping guards during the meetings all around the audience, beginning the meeting on Sunday with the "National Song," facing the East while reciting the prayer, the behavior of the guards according to militaristic tradition in saluting one another when they change guard-spots, encircling the leader when he attends the meeting hall (in a semi-militaristic procession), are some of the symbolic acts developed in this collectivity and operating as patterns of their behavior.

The group has its own collective representations and its own symbols—words, phases, songs, sacred objects, and rituals which express unique meanings understood by only those who have participated in the organization. Most of these symbols and phases have their import in that they are feeling—arousing significations as, for example, the "poisoned book," "unity night," or "skunk."

The flag as a communal symbol, for example, does not stand in the minds of the members for particularization of the group or the movement only but it stands for more deep sentiments and emotional history. This flag, called the "National" according to their myths, was the flag of their ancestors since the dawn of history; it was the flag of all the "civilizations that the dark man had built." But the Caucasians, because of their envy of the dark people and because of their wicked nature, had "killed the ancestors of the dark race four centuries ago and had taken off their flag." When Mr. W. D. Fard came he brought them the flag back because it was hidden in the White House in Washington, D.C. This flag is so superior that Truman and many other eminent entities in the world carry the symbol of the flag on their chests, "because they know what the National is!" The red color in the National represents the sun, which gives "light and life," the star stands for the five senses, and the crescent stands for keeping equilibrium of the water in the earth. There are four letters on the National, each in one of the four corners. These letters (F. J. E. I.) stand for the statement "Freedom, Justice, and Equality You and I own."

The National, then, as a communal symbol is so rich with meanings and significations that it has to be carried by each member, to be presented on the cover of each pamphlet they print, on any schedule they distribute, and to be drawn in every sign or picture they keep at home. Freedom, justice, and equality are not words of ordinary language any more. They are somewhat sacred symbols because they stand in the minds of the members for basic social needs and collective cravings. An additional factor in their sacredness is that on the corners of the National that Mr. W. D. Fard himself presented these words which were symbolized by the letters "F. J. E." and on the fourth corner "I" is presented.

The blackboard placed before the audience in the general meetings has on it the American Flag, the National, a cross, and besides it a drawing of a Negro hanging from a tree and a sentence runs as follows: "Which one will survive? The War of Armageddon." These items on the blackboard were additionally accumulated through a process which has a history. Now and then the collective process is pregnant with some symbol development which emerges externally and objectively through a symbolizing act of some members. For example, the American flag and the National were drawn by Fard himself on the blackboard using colored chalk. The purpose of drawing these two flags was to make a comparison between them during his speech. Later on, in 1942, Brother Jacob, an old man now 78 years of age, pictured a Negro hanging from a tree. This picture had been added to the other pictures on the blackboard. When the Apostle was released he himself added the statement on the blackboard. These items serve as good tools for agitation during deliverance of a speech. This is one of the most important tactics through which they raise the enthusiasm of the audience and heighten the emotionality of the audience.

Each follower keeps in his home a big drawn picture hanging on the wall. This picture represents the end of the white race when Allah comes back and begins the war of Armageddon, bombing the devil from the “mother planes” which Mr. W. D. Fard had described fully to his messenger, who in turn transmitted this description to his followers. This picture is drawn in such a way that it represents the horrible condition of the white people under such divine bombing. This picture does not show you revenge and hostility only, but it expresses, as most of their symbols used to denote to the white man, an extreme hostility of the dark man and his severe revenge in a deeply contemptuous and ridiculous presentation. Identification marks such as the particular dress of the Sisters and the carrying of the National by the Brothers, for example, serve as impressers and attention-attractives. Nathan Miller refers to these marks as “containing a compelling attraction which enhances the prestige of the individual in his own estimation and in that of his followers, members and non-members alike.”⁶

The ideals and values uniting the group are in the first place a formulation of desires and aspirations derived from their basic socio-cultural experience. These ideals as such have expressive indication of resentment to the ongoing socio-cultural value-system. Such collective representation have, beyond their unifying character, another appealing character which serves to bring new members in the group because of their being easily communicated to others.

One of the most important tactics of the leader, and hence of all the group, is the emphasis put on the symbolic character of the Bible and the allegory of the teachings of the movement. I consider this to be the most effective and important tactic of the movement because it works effectively to: a) offer a variety of appeals to different individuals having different educational levels or backgrounds; and b) convince especially the ignorant, and all of these members are ignorant, that what the agitator pretends is true. This judgment about the validity of the pretensions of the movement is easily reached by reading some verses in the Bible, viewing their meaning symbolically according to the particular perspective offered by the movement. For example, they refer to Genesis 17:8, “And I will give unto thee to thy seed after thee the land of thy sojournings,” as proving that Allah promised them to give them the inheritance of the world. Another example is that referring to the verse, “Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah and the people whom He has chosen for his own inheritance” [Ps 33:12], to prove their claim that they are themselves the chosen people meant in this verse. To have the name of the God as Jehovah in the verse, and not of Fard, is not of so much importance as long as the Bible refers to, and indicates, these things symbolically. To add more evidence for their pretension that they are the chosen people, they declare that the chosen people have been described and characterized in the Bible in Matthew 5:11-12 as follows:

“Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets before you.” Who is the dirty nigger? Who is more persecuted than us in the world? Who is the coon, the mentally dead, the enslaved. . . ? It is you and me whom have been meant in the Bible.

This is the kind of comment following such Biblical evidence of their cause. Such symbolism provides proof for the validity of the divine source of the movement and furnished a bond of union which seems to have a peculiarly strong appeal to most of the members, if not to all of them.

From the nature of the relationship between the followers and the Apostle and the way they act toward him, and the imputed or attributed significance which he represents to the group, one can conclude that the Apostle not only symbolizes the unity of the group and its leadership but he also symbolizes the status of the group. That is why the Apostle presents himself to the preaching platform with a militaristic procession of well-trained youths around him when the meeting is a general meeting having outsiders. The minute he appears on the platform the whole audience stands reverently for his presence. This ceremonial ritual does not occur that way in private meetings where there is no outsider, although the followers stand up when the Apostle presents himself.

The Apostle lives with his family in a beautiful, private house which the group owns collectively. How did this come about? The actual operator was this: since he was the leader of the group, visited by many outsiders who are curious about the movement or have the idea of joining, the followers felt that the house in which the Apostle was living was not appropriate to their name. Therefore they built this house for him. Moreover, most of the social controls and even manners operate effectively on the basis of status principle. The members do not drink or gamble, not only because these lines of behavior had been interdicted by their teachings (although this might have been the case when the teachings had been introduced at the beginning of the movement), but because

the Moslem does not do that. I feel it I do it then what is the difference between me and the dumb Christian who is still kept blind and ignorant of the truth and of himself.

We should dress well and be clean and eat clean food because this is what the Moslem should do all the time so as when the still ignorant people see us they recognize for the first sight that we are Moslems.

This kind of transformation and modification of the principles of the controls and manners from being done and obeyed because they are parts of the sacred

teachings to being based on the principle of distinctiveness and status-showing or recognition is a very important phenomenon in the life history of the group.

Most of these symbols became sacred not because of their divine origins. In fact none of them, except the National, which was created by Fard himself, have such an origin as long as Fard is regarded as Allah. The temple, for example, is a sacred place not because it is, as in Islam, for example, a place of praying, but because it expresses and stands for identification of the group as belonging together. Actually, if this group prays in the temple their praying is not, as in Islam, the essential cause for their attending the temple, but is something incidental; it consists only of around ten verses recited collectively by the group whenever they meet, and then they continue their program of agitation or teaching. This, in turn, deepens the sense of belonging together and entrenches the mutual responsiveness among the attendants, who, after a while, find themselves involved in a very highly emotionally charged collective atmosphere which operates to break down their individuality and their criticisms, and to increase their susceptibility to suggestion and responsiveness.

Ideology

The main ideology of the movement is a protest ideology which hinges around the race consciousness of the agitated followers. The core of this ideology is what Fard has taught. All that Fard has written is thirty-four problems printed later by his disciple in a very small pamphlet of seven pages, entitled "The Book of the Thirty-Four Problems." The pamphlet was fittingly called by Beynon, "Teaching for the Lost Found Nation of Islam in a Mathematical Way," because most of its problems are mathematical, apparently, although most of them do not make much sense. His disciple tries "to get to the deep meanings of these problems" because he believes that these "are symbols having great meaning and therefore their meanings have to be worked out." We have shown elsewhere the originality of the disciple in interpreting some of these problems. The other ideological source in the movement is two pamphlets, each amounting to five pages. These two pamphlets are constituted of questions put by Fard to examine his trained minister, Elijah Mohammed, along with the answers of the minister to these questions. The first pamphlet became a text in the University of Islam; known as "the first lesson," it is given to the new member. The second pamphlet is a text called the "second lesson." Both of these pamphlets must be comprehended before the student can begin with the book of the thirty-four problems of Fard.

In order to give the reader a general idea about the contents of these three pamphlets, I provide the following citations:

The uncle of Mr. W. D. Fard lives in the wilderness of North America surrounded and robbed completely by the cave man. Therefore, he has

no knowledge of his own, nor any one else. but his mind travels twenty four billion miles per second. How many round trips will he ma[k]e in ten seconds to the far planet Platoon?⁷

The second uncle of Mr. W. D. Fard in the wilderness of North America live[s] other than himself. Therefore his blood pressure registers over 32. He had a fever, headaches, chills, grippe, hay fever, rheumatism, also pains in all joints. He was disturbed with foot ailment and toothaches. His pulse beat more than eighty-eight times per minute: therefore he goes to the doctor every day and gets medicine every day in the year: one after each meal and three times a day, also one at bed time.⁸

Why does the devil keep our people illiterate?

Ans.: So that he can use them for a tool and also a slave. He keeps them blind to themselves so that he can master them.⁹

Why does the devil keep our people apart from his social equality?

Ans.: Because he does not want us to know how filthy he is and all his affairs. He is afraid that when we learn about him we will run him from among us.¹⁰

Who is that Mystery God?

Ans.: There is no mystery God. The son of man has searched for that mystery God for trillions of years and was unable to find a mystery God. So they have agreed that the only God is the son of man. So they lose no time searching for that that does not exist.¹¹

Will you set up home and wait for that mystery God to bring you food?

Ans.: Emphatically no. Me and my people who have been lost from home for 379 years have tried this so-called mystery God for bread, clothing and a home. And we receive nothing but hard times, hunger, naked and out of doors. Also was beat and killed by the ones who advocated that kind of God. And no relief came to us until the son of man came to our aid by the name of prophet W. D. Fard.¹²

In order to defend their being “original,” they refer to the fact in physics that you can derive white from black but you cannot derive black from white:

The white man has been derived from us by the scientist Yacob 6,000 years ago. We are the original people who have been living even before Adam. Our color is the original, natural and the most beautiful color. The white man is accidental and not original because white people constitute a race, the Caucasian race. Therefore, he has an end and beginning. That is why the race will die out some day in the near future. While the dark people are not a race but they are a nation, and the nation has no beginning, no end.

Other aspects of their ideology I covered when I spoke about their myths and their beliefs. After the members have developed interest to join the movement as a result of the influence of the collective atmosphere, they tie themselves to mythological ideology. This kind of ideology serves as rationalization to what the collectivity believe. As Whitehead declares, a myth satisfies "the demand of incipient rationality."¹³ However, the general core of their ideology is the waging of imaginative battle about the status and social destiny of the Negro. The most significant function of such ideology is not to defend the movement against outside attacks nor to set up logical reasoning for proving anything. It has, in fact, one major psychological function: namely, that of satisfying cravings of the members for superiority, and that of showing the whole world as if it were revolving around the Negro himself.

Myths

In the following discussion I plan to show some of the practical activities, social controls of the group, and some aspects of their organizational life related and tied to the myths which had been developed throughout this collective enterprise. These myths, which constitute an important dynamic part of the belief of the group, have arisen and developed in the new perspectives of the individuals as members in the collectivity. The part which feelings and wishes play in developing these myths is clear enough to establish the fact that myth "is an inarticulate vehicle of a people's wishful thinking."¹⁴ What these Negroes aspire to reach is to free themselves from the slavery of the caste system and to ruin the white man. The myths related to these aspirations have the function of modeling the world in a way so as to satisfy these desires. Hence, the desires of the collectivity have formed Allah, whose function will be to save the Negro and ruin the white man. This hoped for and believed in victory and salvation has been expressed symbolically in different ways. Prayers, pictures, and various ways of training and preparedness to meet Allah when he comes are some of the various forms in which the mythical hopes and beliefs are objectified and expressed.

Moreover, this mythology represents its developers as the chosen people or as the first and uniquely created human beings. The dark man is the "original," he has no end and no beginning; he is blessed by Allah, by being the most beautiful, the strongest, the most virtuous, and the only builder of civilizations among all the population of the world. Allah has given the "devil" the freedom "to be dominant in the last six thousand years, during which this "wicked devil" has enslaved the chosen people in the last 400 years, in order to show the devil how powerful he is." In some of these myths the members have dramatized their strongest inclinations. These dreams have become expected realities and because of their wishful projection of the universe of their wills and intentions. The peculiar character of these myths, as a cultural form, is that they

are an out-product of the collectivity, but the minute they take form they begin to be a guide for their logic and reasoning, behavior and rituals. The sanctity, and sometimes the sacredness, of these myths, it seems to me, are inherent characteristics as long as they have arisen in the collective perspectives of the group. This gives us a clue to why these myths exercise so much authority and such far-reaching influence in the behavior of these people, their reasoning, their rituals and ceremonies, and their organization. In fact, these myths constitute, by and large, a broad and comprehensive framework of reference for these members as participants in the group, and for the group as a whole in any behavioral line of activity and organizations, because they are not fictions and stories told, but they “are a reality lived”;¹⁵ they are essential constituents of the complex

socio-psychological network of the group. These myths live in their ritual, lurk in their hopes; they are patterns of their behavior; they unify their efforts and attitudes, and express their beliefs concerning themselves, the world, the Caucasian race and its destiny.

In order to show the lines of these implications let us detail some of the myths and legends in the cult:

Who is the white man?

The white race is an accidental race. It has been derived from the “original” man. The story of this derivation was as follows: Yacob, the creator of the white man, was a great scientist six thousand years ago. He planned to create the devil after he had been exiled from Mecca to live on the island of “Pilan,” one of the islands of the Aegean Sea. Yacob had been exiled to Pilan by the King of Mecca because he began to teach against Islam. Since he has been exiled the twenty-five elders in Mecca prophesied that Yacob will make the devil and hence change the course of civilization. The purpose of Yacob in his creation of the devil was to [seek] revenge from Islam and to show his ability of creating people and teaching them “tricknology.” Allah did not contradict Yacob in such plan but He enabled him to make the devil, to whom Allah gave the power to rule nine-tenths of the planet for 6,000 years and then He will ruin him to show him His omnipotence. It took Yacob 600 years to make the devil. Yacob knows that the original man has two germs: brown and black. Therefore, he began to kill the black germ and breed those with the lighter germ among themselves. In this process he was getting germs of lighter and more lighter people. At the end of 600 years Yacob obtained the first father of the devil. But Yacob himself did not live such a long life but he wrote the law of breeding the devil to the successive scientists who followed him and got the result of his design.

Before the creation of the devil Yacob wrote him a science of tricknology and he told the scientists after him to teach the devil this

science fully and with great care after they receive him. Through this knowledge he was supposed to go back to Mecca to live among the righteous people and divide them by telling lies and accusation, and by stimulating them to fight each other. Yacob told the devil that by doing so he will be the ruler among the righteous people. But the Moslems of Mecca are very wise, they know all of that. Therefore, when the devil came among them they caught him and drove him to the Arabian desert where he crossed to Europe and lived there in the caves. In that exile they stripped him of everything but his language. He stayed in the cave for 2,000 years and his knowledge and civilization and began to cross-breed with animals and beasts, associates with them and behave as they do. He was climbing the trees to protect himself from the wild animals. The dog was one of his most trusted friends at that time and that is why he kept him to live with him at home until now. The dog and the female devil have carried on social and sexual relationships.

That is why the devil is still carrying his primitive life characteristics and manners as eating the raw meat, snake, frogs and pork which is rat, dog and cat. And that is why he is unable to stand heat because he lived in the cave for a long time without cloth; he is also hairy because nature has provided him with hair at that time. Moses, who came to the help of the white man to save him from such life was himself half original man.

This legend is basic in their ideology and attitude toward the white man and in their agitation too. They used to take the new individuals, during the time of induction, to the Museum of Natural History and show them “the life of the devil in the caves of Europe six thousand years ago.”¹⁶

I will remark in Chapter 5 on the effects of such a myth upon the self-conceptions of the followers and their ideologies. What is of more importance is that such a myth has made out of these inferior Negroes individuals very proud of their race, their culture, and their civilization. Such a myth aligned them together as a collectivity even in the face of the police department or the court. Why should they become cowards, afraid of the “cave man,” while they are the original people who have no end and no beginning? Their mythical history depicts the race as the founder of all the civilizations in the world. As Brother Horace 2X puts it, “Our forefathers were of high standard of civilization, even those who had been brought over to America four centuries ago.”

The cult had woven a myth around the first Negroes brought to America. This myth depicts the history of the racial relationship between the two races, the white and the Negro, as follows:

In 1555, and not in 1690 [1619-Ed.] as the devil says, an Englishman brought 21 persons of our Asiatic people to America. [The Apostle teaches his followers, and the followers dogmatically believe what

he says because he has been taught by Allah himself.] The devilish American began to breed these 21 persons. After the first breeding they killed all the parents and kept only the children. Then they dispersed these children all over the farms of the various southern states. Through such savage event the original man in America lost his virtues, his language, his nationality, his religion, and the glory of his history in the world. These children [were] brought up on slavery and Christianity.

Another type of their myths is related to their conceptions of themselves as being the chosen people of God:

Allah himself was in heaven, got up one day and pulled his robe off. One of the apostles asked him: "What is the matter and where are you going?" He answered: "I made a promise with Ibrahim that I myself would go to the lost seeds in the wilderness of North America." And so he did come in 1930 and raised one of our own people to teach the others what He has already taught him.

Brother Albert 3X mentioned that "In the fifteenth chapter of the Genesis God laid down that we will be lost for four centuries and God himself will come and judge those people whom they serve. This was the statement of God through Ibrahim."

To validate the pretension that these "slave names" are not their original names, they quote the Bible as saying "the name of the beast and the mark of the beast go down with the beast." Then they comment that this will occur when Allah comes back at the end of the time. Another form of their myths is what might be called the Utopian myth, according to which the native land of these Negroes is a paradise filled with happiness and perfection. There is no vice, discrimination, or Caucasian race in that native land. It is the land from which all the prophets arose; it is the land of the greatest civilizations; it is the land of their glorious ancestors—it is the land of Allah himself.

These myths function as furnishing bases and goals for what Professor Blumer refers to as romantic morale and sacred morale. For the first type of morale, myths which overestimate the value of having the original names, of returning to the original faith, and of returning back to the native land, have been formed, furnished with highly appealing and attractive goals. For the second kind of morale, the goal of salvation from the "devil" has been set before the members as an ultimate goal which is more worth than all the life. Since the "devil" teaches them what disfigures their history and glory, planning "to blind them and keep them mentally dead so as to use them as a tool," they established the "University of Islam" in which they "learn the knowledge of their own." Since the war of Armageddon will come at the end of the time when Allah comes back, they organized the Fruit of Islam. And since the white man works against

them, they have to have their own restaurant, their own store and their own farm so as to be secure whenever the white man tries to cut off the food from them.

From the preceding discussion it was clear that myth is neither a rhapsodic rendering of natural phenomena nor an explanation of actual realities. Rather, these myths are active psychological organizations of the world which stand as behavioral and actual historical background or perspective in which the Negro is not a strange outsider or intruding element, but a focus in the design of the world and the essential or original element or character in the morale system of the cosmos. The evidence of such psychological actuality is constituted by expected events which will follow in the near future. Hence, the myths of the group are somewhat tied—in terms of feelings, expectations, and reasoning—within one general and comprehensive perspective with its clear psychological lines and implications. The function of these myths is to serve, in a sense, as an attitudinal bridge between the various parts of a general perspective in which the Negro moves as the essential figure. That is why we have some kind of integrative reasoning in this general mythical, attitudinal perspective: the Negro is original, therefore the white race is accidental and the event of his emergence is so and so. Because the white man is not original, he is weak and sinful. But the “original” man is virtuous, strong and the builder of civilization. Allah will ruin the “devil” and save the “original” man and burn America, the land of the “devil.”

Such integrative reasoning is behind all of these myths in the movement. This integration, at least, reflects the collective building process of the mythology of the group and the line of their attitudinal and behavioral perspective. These Negroes crave status; therefore Allah is expressed in their myths as being on their side, and they are represented as being original. They are deeply hostile to the white man; therefore the white man will be destroyed and ruined by Allah himself because he still lives the beast life he was living in the cave six thousand years ago. They hate to live under the caste system and suffer its consequences; therefore a thrilling hope has been symbolized by the myth in the movement. As is clear from the last part of our presentation, the role of the myth is to reinforce the essential concern of the group; to reaffirm and prove, in a psychological, not logical, way, the attitudes and aspirations of these Negroes; to furnish the lens through which they look into the world and themselves; and, finally, to set new perspectives for the life of these people, perspectives in which superiority and success are the very basic elements.

Islam and Negro Aspirations

It is not our concern that the teachings, principles and symbols of Islam have operated and wrought upon these Negroes and motivated them to change their religious attachment, because the leader of the group himself is far from

the true knowledge of Islam, as I have stated elsewhere. All that these followers know about Islam is the imputed characteristics which express and reflect the wish of these Negroes to clothe themselves with the superior history, glorious religion, and virtuous life which did not exist in reality but only in their imagination. "Mecca, the holy city of Islam, is the city of peace. All the world have undergone some kind of war and trouble but Mecca." "In Mecca there are no crimes, people there have no vice of any kind." "Mecca is the origin of civilization." Such statements expressed recurrently by the followers have more propaganda than reality.

What I am trying to show here is not the enumeration of propagating attractives which actually operate in the process of interaction and communication among the followers themselves and the frontier area between the cult and the outside world, but rather some of the principles in Islam concerning slavery and racial relationships. These principles and teachings are unknown to the members of the cult, but their functions and implications are actually operating in attracting these Negroes to Islam in indirect and indelible way.

Historically speaking, slavery in the Roman Empire which preceded the appearance of Islam, was an established social institution. When Islam appeared slavery was dominant in the countries around the Arabian peninsula and among the Arabs themselves. Hence Prophet Mohammed was not able at the beginning to repeal slavery as such or to attack or condemn it as being an inhuman act. All that Islam began with was that it included within its teachings some indirect ways to go around slavery. For example, it made the expiation of breaking some Islamic rules or instructions the freeing of a slave. Hence, if the person did not fast during Ramadan (the month of fasting in Islam) he should free a slave or feed sixty poor individuals.

Another method of the indirect attack upon slavery, one of the most established institutions and mores among Arabs at that time, was to offer personal examples. This phase of the attack Prophet Mohammed himself carried out. Examples of such attacks were as follows: Khadija, the wife of Prophet Mohammed, was given a Negro slave as a gift by one of her relatives. The slave, Zaid Ben Haritha, had been caught as a captive in southern Syria by an Arabian tribe. Khadija's relative bought Zaid and offered him to Khadija as a gift. Prophet Mohammed asked his wife to offer him that slave as a gift. She did, and Prophet Mohammed freed Zaid in the same moment. Prophet Mohammed gave Zaid the choice to go to his family or to stay with him. He chose to stay with the Prophet Mohammed. The next example was that of the Prophet Mohammed's adopting Zaid as a son at a time when such adoptions were against the customs and traditions of the people and considered a disgraceful act. More than that, Prophet Mohammed gave his first cousin, Zainab, a lady of beauty and noble familial background, in marriage to Zaid the Negro slave.

This was another hard blow to the traditional customs concerning the racial relationships and status system involved in such an important matter as marriage. One other step in this series of defying the mores of the Arab community was taken when Zainab, a lady of beauty and noble family, was not able to carry on such a sacrifice and live with Zaid. Conflict had arisen between the wife and her husband since the beginning of the marriage. Zaid had complained to Prophet Mohammed many times concerning her and told him of his decision to divorce her. Prophet Mohammed advised him not to do that, and he spoke to Zainab many times but with no benefit. The conflict grew increasingly until it led to divorce. Under such a condition, Prophet Mohammed was obligated toward Zainab since he was the one who arranged this exceptional marriage. Because of that and because after such a marriage no man of honor would dare to marry the divorced Zainab, Prophet Muhammed himself offered the exceptional example, and married Zainab.

From these examples it should be clear that the founder of Islam was against any kind of racial or status differentiation based upon color, wealth, nationality, or any other principle except piety. In his famous saying Prophet Mohammed said, "Being an Arabian does not mean being more virtuous than the non-Arabian unless the Arabian is more pious." Moreover, at the time of Prophet Mohammed, Zaid was the general leader of the Islamic army; under his leadership were the best generals and leaders of Islam of that age. When Prophet Mohammed planned to attack the Byzantine Empire he organized and sent the army under the leadership of Zaid. When Zaid was killed in the battle the leadership of the army was given to his son, Osama Bin Zaid, a twenty-year-old Negro. Through the history of the Islamic Empire these Negroes held good positions in the government. During the thirteenth century, for example, a Negro by the name of Kafoor Al-Okhshidee was the sultan of Egypt. The general governor of North Africa in the tenth century was a Negro. Moreover, Tariq Bin Zaid, who led the Islamic army across Gibraltar Strait (which has been known by his name ever since) and conquered Spain, establishing one of the greatest Islamic empires, was a Negro also.

In conclusion, Islam is not racial or national in theory and practice. Its basic principle is that it is a religion for the whole world. In fact, the Holy Koran mentions one of the eminent prophets as being Negro—namely, the Wise Luqman. Intermarrying with Negroes, adopting a Negro, marrying a divorced wife of a Negro, and playing the role of leadership under many circumstances in the history of Islam should have some appeal to the American Negro if he has happened to pass across such appealing facts. Moreover, in the actual social life of the Moslems there is no kind of discrimination against Negroes. Such distinguishing characteristics of Islam maintain the loyalty of the convert after he has become a member of an Islamic sect, but they do not cause his

conversion. They satisfy his social demands, in a psychological way, for equality and non-discrimination. But are these characteristics of any important role in the development of so many Islamic cults among the American Negro? The answer is, perhaps they are, as it has happened that such appeals have been communicated and circulated among the Negroes. But this [?] did not happen. The Moslems with whom Negroes came into contact did not mention these and other non-racial characteristics of Islam.¹⁷ Therefore, the question arises, Why does Islam have appeal to these Negroes?

The answer to this question mostly is in the historical story of the Crusades and in the fact that these Negroes believe that Christianity is more hostile to Mohammedanism than any other religion in the world. When these hostile Negroes come across the Crusades they feel some kind of alignment with the Moslems against the whites. In other words, to be a Moslem means to anger the American whites. This has at least the function of getting satisfaction through aggression. In the last convention the Apostle said in his speech, "The devil does not like Islam because Moslems are good fighters." Then he referred to the cult, saying: "The devil must know very well that we are the rattler. We do not fight unless we have been attacked, then we are very good fighters . . . and the devil knows." This means that they believe that Moslems are hostile to the Christians, and hence to align with the enemy means satisfaction of repressed hostility.

Social Controls

From the time of induction the movement exerts social controls upon the induced individual by leading his expectations and by responding to him in a definite and particular way during his communication and contact with any member in the cult. At this time the individual withdraws all the habits and attitudes which contradict the norms and teachings of the cult. The question arises here, "How does this come about"? To answer this question we have to trace analytically the process of conversion itself. In order to avoid repeating, let us sketch briefly the process of building up these social controls in the behavior of the convert.

In our discussion of the causal process of conversion we had indicated through the process of induction the new individual comes to have a new framework of reference if the induction was effective enough in leading the expectations and adjustments of the induced individual. The content of this communication between the inducing agency and the induced individual, however, is constituted of the norms, values, beliefs, ideology, hopes and expectations of the group as a whole. Therefore, if the communication was cooperatively successful, the new adjustment of the induced individual will be patterned along lines directed somewhat within the limits of the constituent

patterns of behavior and beliefs recommended in the cult. This preliminary phase of control, exerted upon the induced individual indirectly by the cult through one of its followers, grows and expands its area in the behavior of the new convert through his increasing socialization with the members of the cult. This does not mean, however, as cultural determinists try to claim, that the patterning of the behavior of the new convert is exclusively wrought out by the norms and patterns of behavior of the cult. Rather, the patterning of the behavior of the new convert is an out-product of the mutual cooperation of both participants in the social process of induction, of conversion, and later on, of socialization with the members of the cult. Therefore, the new convert, in a sense, comes to control, in this process, his behavior with reference to the expectations of other participants with him in the social process. By this give-and-take process the new convert comes to have a new reference group for his conduct. This reference group constitutes what G. H. Mead has termed the "generalized other," with reference to which the individual controls his behavior.

Before passing to mention some of the social controls in the movement, I would like to answer the question, "How did these controls and mores arise in the cult"? The features of most of these controls and mores are Islamic features percolated to the cult, as it was clear from its history, through Fard himself, who was a Moslem. After he had sensitized their self-conceptions to be built up and derived from the attitudes of "their own people" in the East, Fard began to introduce in his communication with these Negroes the patterns of behavior and social controls dominating the "original people" in the East. When you derive or wish to derive your self-conception from a given reference group, then it will become easy or expected that you control your behavior with reference to the expectations of that group. Hence, the cooperative participants in the communicative process with Fard had received his suggestions and stimulations concerning these norms of behavior with full acceptance as long as they were part of the social base upon which they aspired to ground themselves. Now, the pertinent question concerning this development of the mores and controls is: Had these mores and controls been developed by the group in the course of seeking satisfaction of their basic needs in their living under a definite set of life conditions, as Sumner declares?; did they come through the process of diffusion, as the diffusionists pretend?; or are they "social facts" exerting restraints upon the behavior of the members of the cult, as Durkheim and his followers try to preach? It is interesting that the development of these mores and controls cannot be explained exclusively by any of these three schools of thought because these controls and norms are not exclusively exterior, as Durkheim thought, and they are not patterns of behavior manufactured outside the individual as a member of a social grouping which invaded him

through diffusion as the diffusionists try to claim, and still they were not developed exclusively by the collectivity in the course of their groupings for satisfying their basic needs, as Sumner's interpretation suggests.

The core of the matter is that these norms, mores, and controls had been introduced in the process of communication as necessary parts of a system of beliefs and expectations. Therefore, the stronger the beliefs, dogma, and expectations of an individual, the more effective these norms and controls and the more highly valued these mores in the behavior and attitudes of the believer or the convert. To make the point clear let us have an actual example which happened in an early stage of the development of the cult. When Fard was attending a function where pork was served, he addressed the audience: "Now, don't eat this kind of meat; it is poison to you; your own people there in the East do not eat it. That is why they are so healthy and strong." Ever since, the believers quit eating pork. But did they quit eating pork because Fard, who became Allah later on, said that, or because their own people there in the East do not eat pork and they aspire to behave as their own people do, or because pork is poison and not healthy? Did they quit eating pork because Fard told them that pork is rat, cat, and dog, or because, as one of my interviewees has said, "If I do what the devil does then what is the difference between me and him?" My contention is that none of these principles can explain why such control is effective and how it has come to be effective. It is true that some people might quit eating pork for the sheer belief that pork is not good for their health or because the pig lives a dirty life. But still one can continue asking why some people might drink alcohol when they have been told that drinking is not healthy, and why some people might eat snake meat while they know that snakes eat dead bodies, and so on. In order to cut off such an unending series of questions and come directly to the point, I would like to say that in the course of interaction with members of the cult the new convert builds up a system of expectations. Beside these expectations which he has formed with the cooperation of other participants, he has built up socially accepted ways of reaching these expectations. Therefore, as long as he attaches, aspires to, and believes in these expectations, he does not break any rule of behavior because this breach threatens, as he believes, the possibility of his realizing these expectations. That is why the minute the individual detects the fallacy of his expectations which he had built up in the course of his attachment to a group or cult he throws away all the social controls which the cult or the group recommended.

Let us give some examples which show the operation of the principle which I have already remarked upon. Brother Henry 3X states: "I really liked all the teachings because they promise that if I be truthful and faithful I will be able to go to the East and live among our own people, and I will be able to know everything in the world and not be as dumb as I were before Islam." Moreover,

the members have to attend all the meetings of the group, and they do attend, not because they might learn new things, because there is almost nothing new in these meetings, and not essentially because they enjoy meeting with other Brothers and Sisters, although this might have some influence upon the attendance of the member, but they do attend because of two essential factors: a) they attend because Allah might come back and appear in the meeting and then the absent member “will miss him”; b) some outsider might cause trouble to the Brothers and Sisters and hence he has to be there to help.

These members fast almost one-third of the year and most of them about half of the year by fasting “every other day.” They eat meat infrequently. When they are not fasting they eat only once a day. They do this not because Mr. W. D. Fard has told them the Apostle has taught them to do that (because in this case they are free not to do it), but because they expect to return to their native land, a journey which demands endurance of hunger and various hardships and difficulties. Therefore, the follower trains himself in the present to be ready and prepared for such sufferings and hardships. The follower does not enjoy the life of the people around him or “participate in the pleasures of the blind people” because “he has no time for that; he is busy to save his people and be a good example for them.” But suppose that these followers have been convinced that such expectation is a mere myth and fantasy; then do you think they will fast and abstain from eating meat, even pork? Certainly not. All the other social controls and norms of behavior in the cult are effective because they were based upon such expectations. If any of the followers commits adultery, drinks alcohol or eats pork, then he breaks the law of Islam and hence he will not be deported to his native land; he will not acquire his original name; he will be left with the devil to suffer destruction. His immediate punishment is to be dismissed from socializing with the chosen people and attending the sacred temple. On this point I would like to ask the Durkheimian school of thought, if this kind of restraint is an exterior one. And if it were, then in what sense? It seems to me that the restraint of these controls can never be based upon the exteriority principle unless the expectations of the individuals themselves are exterior, but such exteriority is highly questionable.

Let us now, after we have answered the question why these people control their behavior, turn to the other essential part of the question—namely, how did these controls and norms come about? We have already said, when we spoke about the development of leadership, that Fard was led by the expectations of his audience and they have been led by his response and suggestions. In this process Fard has introduced some of the controls and norms as part of the content of his communication with his audience. Through the transformation of his leadership from being a messenger from the East, from their own people, to being a racial leader to being a prophet and later on taking the form

of leadership of the Messiah and then Allah himself, his suggestions were acquiring prestige and had transformed from being mere suggestions and advice to becoming strict orders which the followers receive as words of God. Being “en rapport with the life around him,”¹⁸ giving “an intense form of expression,”¹⁹ and having a message of the nature that makes articulate all of the unexpressed yearnings and longings²⁰ of these Negroes, Fard, the prophet, had occupied a prominent place among his followers. The nature of such a relationship and such prestige might be more clear from the following example. The writer has asked many of the followers the following question: Suppose that the Apostle Elijah Mohammed told you to murder me; what will be your stand? These followers without exception answered that they would murder me. When I asked them “Why?,” their explanation was that because Elijah Mohammed would not give such an order unless Allah himself had told him to do that, and it is their duty to obey the will of Allah and do whatever He says.

The most important element in this process, it seems to me, is that Fard lifted the self-conceptions of these Negroes. Therefore, they in turn raised him to the position of their leader even in controlling their behavior. Some of the social controls in the movement concern the elimination of gluttony, drunkenness, illicit sexual relationships, smoking, gambling, going to the movies, eating pork, speaking indecent or “profane” language, and attending the temple carrying weapons, lipstick, or candy. The failure to report to the temple whenever the follower is unable to attend the meeting will be punished by elimination of the member from the cult. This report must take place before the definite meeting. All the punishments center around dismissal from the group, although they differ in the length of dismissal. Two of the members, for example, committed adultery and were punished by being dismissed from the temple for five years. I do not plan to continue enumerating the norms and controls in the cult because all the various aspects of the life of a sectarian are norms and controls. His beliefs, myths, hopes and expectations operate upon him as controls.

Institutionalized Features

In the course of the development of the movement a system of duties and obligations has been formed and structured. Various members in the cult have institutionalized roles, duties, and obligations which constitute the action structure of the group as a whole. If we dissect this action structure into sections, theoretically we will have what we termed institutionalized features, each of which is no more than the similar attitudes and responses of the followers in a definite situation. Hence, the standing up of the followers when the Apostle attends the temple, for example, is an institutionalized feature expressing the attitude of reverence and response of respect to the Apostle. Likewise, all the

other kinds of patterned behavior and expected responses of the followers which are organized as acts carried out with reference to the expectations and rules of the group are features of the institutionalized action structures of the cult.

The status system in terms of authority, or subordination and superordination, had reached its stable and final state, and taken its form since it has been established by Fard himself. In terms of functions this system is still in the course of growing, although some functional statuses had already become essential and fixed parts of the institutionalized pyramid functions. The school, its program, the ways of teaching, and procedures of administration, for example, had become institutionalized features of the organization since the time of Fard, who set all these details for the school. The policy of donations has grown up through the increasing suggestions of the Apostle until the structure of these weekly donations has amounted to ten different items or articles.

Status System

Since the rights of individuals in the cult are mostly assigned by the Apostle himself and hence have no system because they are derived from the personal whims of the Apostle, our discussion will not be concerned with the mechanisms of such a system, but with the actual structural organization of the group in terms of duties and patterns of behavior expected of these members.

The status system of this organization is a stratified one, beginning with the Apostle at the top as the source of all the authority, administration, and leadership. The Apostle in this status system is the actual operator or mechanism. He got angry, for example, at the minister who directed the movement in Chicago from 1936 to 1942; therefore he stripped him of his ministership and drove him down the scale to be a private; he raised a new follower to the rank of a captain after that the follower married his daughter; and he dismissed the Sister's captain because he changed his mind about her and therefore raised another Sister to be captain.

Under the Apostle comes the minister, whose duty is to preach in the temple and outside the temple in some of the places of agitation. He has to teach what the Apostle tells him. All the other ranks offer him respect, expressed by saluting him militaristically, and behave towards him with reverence. His duty is to organize the meetings and preside at them when the Apostle is absent, and to deliver the instructions of the Apostle to the captains. Under the minister comes the general in the status system, but the organization has no general as yet. Under the general there are two captains, one of them the Brothers' captain and the other the Sisters' captain from among the Sisters. Theoretically, the captain has to pass through all the preceding ranks before he becomes a captain, but the will of the Apostle is an exception to such an assumed rule. In the

absence of the Apostle and the minister, the captain teaches the Brothers whatever the Apostle tells him to teach. Moreover, he functions as the head of the "special detail," the duty of which we have already stated elsewhere, and arranges the guards in the temple during the meetings and as long as the doors of the temple are opened. In addition to this he gives all the information that he receives from those who are below him in the status system to the minister, who in turn offers this information to the Apostle. After the captain in the scale comes the second, then the first lieutenant, and then the private, who occupies the bottom of the scale. The followers are divided into divisions, each of which is presided over by a first lieutenant.

The functions of this status system in organizing communication within the collectivity, in stimulating the loyalty and attachment of the group, in maintaining appealing competition among the followers, and in imposing order and cooperative unity in addition to the development of sense of responsibility, need not be detailed.

Donations

The present income of the group comes from three sources: The donation, the restaurant, and the farm. Donations are paid weekly. They are as follows:

1. Donation for the University of Islam, which covers the salaries of the teachers and other expenses of the school.
2. Donation for the Apostle.
3. Minister's donation.
4. Donation for the restaurant.
5. Donation for the Apostle's family.
6. Secretary's donation.
7. Labor donation.
8. Emergency donation, which covers any emergency cause that needs money.
9. The farm donation.
10. General treasury donation, which settles any deficit account in all of the other sub-treasuries mentioned above when there is not enough money in them to cover these above-mentioned demands.

In addition to these donations, every member has to pay at least fifty dollars on the birthday of Allah, offered as a present to the Apostle on the twenty-fifth day of February, a day on which they hold their convention. On this day the various temples compete to beat each other by the quantity of money they raise for the

Apostle or by the kind of present they offer. During the year the group offers presents to him or his wife. The temple in Washington, D.C., for example, offered a Chrysler "New Yorker" to his wife two months ago.

Most of the above-mentioned donations are not set at a fixed amount. Hence, the members offer whatever they are able to offer. There are only two donations which are quantitatively assigned: 1) The donation for the University of Islam, which amounts to one dollar a week; 2) The donation for the general treasury, which amounts also to one dollar per week.

In the general meetings the secretary used to announce the names of those who paid their donations. But last March they began to announce the names of those who did not make donations during that week.

Collective Activities

Most of the collective activities which we are planning to discuss under this heading have already taken the form of being institutionalized, although some of them have not yet reached that stage.

Collective activities of the group are the following types, classified according to their functions:

1. Meetings for service three days a week; Sunday afternoon, Wednesday evening, and Friday evening.
2. Meetings for teachings:
 - a) Monday evening: special for the Brothers.
 - b) Tuesday evening: special for the Sisters.
3. Socialization and recreational meetings:
 - a) Socialization at the restaurant.
 - b) Meetings for witnessing contests among the students of the University of Islam, which are held now and then, in various subjects of the school.

SERVICE MEETINGS:

Typical of these meetings is the one held on Sundays in which outsiders are allowed to attend the meeting. Members of the "special detail" are arranged in two lines, one facing the other, along the stair leading to the basement. Behind the door of the temple is a group of guards and inspectors. This door is always kept locked and two guards behind it are responsible for it. The door is made of glass and behind it is a shading curtain. Whenever any member or visitor comes, the door will be opened and then immediately closed after him. If the visitor is a member then the guards search him carefully to be sure that

he does not carry any kind of weapon, candy, any kind of stimulant, gum, or lipstick with him. If the visitor is not a member then he will be questioned as to his name, his address, why he wishes to attend, whether or not this is his first attendance, and who has sent him. Then, if he is a dark man they search him after recording all of his answers to the above-mentioned questions. After he has been searched, another group of guards will lead him to the door of the hall where the service takes place. The guard on this door, in turn, will lead the visitor to the place where he should sit. If the visitor is a white man, whether he was Moslem or not, they prevent him from attending the meeting after recording all of his answers to the above-mentioned questions.

Around the place of meeting, guards are kept inside the hall whose duty is to carefully watch everyone in the meeting. They have been taught to be alert and "on their feet" during the meeting. On the platform just beside the speaker's stand is a big blackboard on which is drawn the National, the American flag, a black man hanging from a tree, and beside him a cross, and a statement which runs as follows: "Which one will survive? The war of Armageddon." At two o'clock in the afternoon the minister advances toward the speaker's stand. At that moment one of the older brothers comes before the audience, gives them the order to stand up. Then they begin to sing what they call the "National Song," which has been put out by one of the Brothers and which runs as follows:

THE NATIONAL SONG

We are fighting for Islam
And we will surely win
With our Savior Allah
The Universal King
We are united with our nation
And is called by its name
So let us fight ye Moslems
Fight for your own
Let us fight for our nation
And we will all be free
Fight ye Moslems

Fight for your own
The earth belongs to the righteous
Fight for your own
Allah gave to you and I for a National
The sun, moon and star

The best of his creation
 He is giving to you
 So let us rise ye Moslems
 Fight for your own
 Freedom, justice and equality
 We now must have
 Four hundred years enslaved for the devils
 Lost from your own
 So let us rise ye Moslems
 Fight for your own.

This song had been introduced into the service two years ago. It was written by a Brother 78 years old. The Brothers obtained this song and they began to sing it and enjoy themselves whenever they felt like singing. This was not done in the temple because it was profane to sing in the temple. But it happened once that one of the brothers had asked the Apostle to sing while he was before the speaker's stand. All the other members had confirmed his request. Before such collective pressure the Apostle had submitted to their request, but he asked the whole group to sing with him, whereupon they sang the song with vigor and enthusiasm. Since that time the National Song has been introduced into the service and it has been put even before the prayer.

After singing the National Song all the audience face the East and begin to pray by reciting the first chapter in the Holy Koran. After that they take their seats and the minister begins his preaching. The function of the minister is to raise the heat of the meeting and to emotionalize the audience. His speech takes the form of contrast between the inferiority of the white race and the superiority of the original man. Then he makes a comparison between the National and the American flag, pretending that the National is so superior that "Truman carries it himself because he knows how sacred the National is." Then he claims that "Islam is the religion of all superior men in the world. Truman and most of the Senators are Moslems; Masons are Moslems," and so on. Then he comes to the injustices of the dark man in this country, saying, "Garvey was teaching that America is hell and God is planning to get the dark man out of hell." Then he begins to describe the American as "the beasts, savages, and the worst of all the animals in the world." Then he continues describing what the white man does to the dark people in the South and how he treats them, and how he calls them Coon, Nigger, Monkey, and so on. Later on, he comes to the picture before the audience saying: "Christianity tells you that Jesus was the one who had been crucified. This is not true. It is you and I who were crucified here in America." At about this time the Apostle appears, with the "special detail" around him, from a door leading immediately to the platform. On the appearance of the Apostle the second part of the drama begins. It is worthwhile to digress here so

as to remind the reader of some principles behind the ritualistic ceremony and procession.

Whenever the Apostle is among them, the followers are taught to be alert to everything in the temple. This issue had been taught to them in the Fruit meeting-class, where they learn militaristic training. It will be recalled that this militaristic organization had been established by W. D. Fard himself in order to stand against the attacks upon the group. Since that time this militaristic training has been carried on by the group on the basis of an emerging belief that some day they will have to fight with the devil and therefore they have to be prepared and ready for that day. Out of these members who constitute the Fruit of Islam a "special detail" was chosen from among the best trained members. This special detail had the duty of escorting the Apostle in the general meetings. They have another duty which is a ritual procession which runs as follows:

On Sundays when the Apostle attends the meeting the "special detail" members arrange themselves into two lines, A and B, waiting behind the door of the temple for the coming of the Apostle. The minute he comes they walk outside the temple, queing up into two lines extending from his car to the door of the temple. The Apostle gets out of his car and walks between these two lines, preceded by the captain. When the Apostle enters the temple these two lines merge into one line following the Apostle. The whole procession walks militaristically through the basement and then through a door leading to the rostrum. The minute the captain comes out of that door he shouts the command, "Attention," a command at which all the audience should stand up reverently and the minister who usually speaks at that time should stop speaking. The "special detail" continues walking forward while the Apostle steps out of the line to sit down on the rostrum. Then the captain, who is the commander of the escort, gives the command, "Left face." Then the captain walks toward the minister and salutes him militaristically to tell him that "Everything is O.K.," a statement to which the minister responds, saying, "Very well, take your place." Then the minister gives the command to the audience to sit down and continues his speech. The members of the special detail, after that, will be distributed to guard all around the temple, watching every individual in the meeting carefully. Whenever the Apostle plans to come to the temple he calls up before his coming to give opportunity for the captain to arrange the escort. When the minister ends his speech, the Apostle advances toward the speaker's stand, accompanied by very enthusiastic and highly emotional clapping matched with shouting, an opportunity through which the followers express their extreme attachment to their leader. After saying "As-Salaam Alaikum," to which the followers respond enthusiastically, "Alaikum As-Salaam," the Apostle begins "the record" which he repeats over and over again whenever he speaks to an audience. Examples of his speech follow:

You and I in this portion of the world are the people lost and cut off from our origin by the other man. We had been brought here before four centuries to be used as slaves, not to be civilized, to be taught or to be left Moslems. They taught us to drink, to eat pork . . . to do things that we were not doing in our native land in order to keep us blind, deaf and dumb.

The Bible, the poisoned book, teaches you that Jesus was crucified to save the people from their sins. You and I are Asiatics and Moslems, we have no sin. Therefore, Jesus was crucified because of the devil.

We are the colored people and are the original of people. White man is accidental. You know that black is an original color; you can derive white from black, but you cannot derive black from white. Allah told me out of his mouth that you and me are the original people. If a scientist told you that the world will come to an end, that does not mean our end but it is the end of the wicked white man. The original has no end nor he has beginning.

The white man taught us that we are Negro and we are the colored folks. We are not colored and we are not Negro. We are members of the Asiatic people. The white man with the blue eyes and red cheeks is the colored.

Our fathers came from the East, then why should we refuse to return to the East?

You and me were, before Adam, the inhabitants of the world. You were the people who built all the civilizations of the world. You, it is you, who have built the science. Our ancestors before 400 years were the masters of the world.

The devil tells you that you are ugly and look like monkeys. He is jealous of you. You are the most beautiful, charming, and the most attractive of all the people in the world. This black skin, and these beautiful black eyes represent the ideal beauty of nature; and not the ugly blue eyes of the skunk.

Mecca, the land of our ancestors, is a place of peace and virtue. They accuse us of being gamblers, criminals, thieves, murderers, drunkards, and people of vices. Our ancestors did not know such things. The devil himself brought us here and robbed us of our religion, our language, our names, and our virtues. He, the devil, himself taught us, and from who we have acquired such vices. The proof of this is that such vices are unknown among our people there in the East. You do find thieves, drunkards, and criminals here only in America and among the Caucasian race.

The audience respond to all of these statements shouting, "Yaa, that is right; Yes Sir"; and most of the time with approving neurotic clapping and affirming, laughing at the white man and his pretensions. Through such praise the Apostle arouses the "supporting feelings" of the audience. During the whole period of his speech, which lasts four to six hours, a pattern of what is called "circular stimulation" between the Apostle and the audience gets organized, expressing the interfusion of common attitudes of the audience with the focal stimulation. Mutual support of feelings heightens their attitudinal uniformity and community of feelings, which in their turn are projected upon the Apostle with all their collective vigor and appeal, stimulating him to act involingly on the basis of these supporting feelings.

The whole psychological scene is a collective parade of self-conceptions where you witness the aroused pride of these Negroes expressed in their bodily poise; they hold up their heads and raise their chests, looking around in a "showy" way, filled with joy, mirroring themselves after they have been projected through such pretended superior perspectives. This process of "conversational support of gestures" not only has the function of releasing repressed feelings of inferiority, but it also operates, through this mutual collective reaffirmation of such pretensions, to transform the pretensions and claims into actual realities in the minds of the audience. This is the basis of a prevailing social phenomenon, especially among the primitive people, which I like to term the "web of social hypocrisy."

If you ask the Christian what God looks like, he will tell you: "He does not look like anything we know; He is formless; He has no place and He is in every place; He is not a thing; no one can see him." If you ask the Jewish, he will tell you the same thing.

Then the Apostle remarked, "We are not in need of such funny formless God; a God who is nothing. . .!" And here his statements were supported by collective ridicule of Christianity and Judaism, mixed with gestures and remarks approving what the Apostle has stated concerning the God of Christianity and Judaism. However, "evidence by ridicule" is an essential tactic of the Apostle as a speaker.

INSTRUCTIONAL MEETINGS

On Monday evening the Brothers meet for a lecture by the Apostle or the captain for one hour, from 8 to 9. In this lecture interpretations of lesson No. 1 and Lesson No. 2 are carried out. Instructions about how to behave in the presence of the Apostle are also given during this period. From 9 to 10 there are gymnastics and military training. On Tuesday evening the Sisters meet to receive the instructions which we have already sketched briefly elsewhere in this study.

SOCIALIZATIONAL AND RECREATIONAL MEETINGS

When the Sisters end their lessons on Tuesday evening they go to the Shabazz restaurant where they meet with the Brothers. Because of that, this night is called the “unity night.” Other opportunities for collective meeting occur when they have contests among the students of the University of Islam in some of the subjects of their study. Rewards are given to the winners in these contests. As an example of such kind of meetings let me sketch briefly the meeting which was held on Tuesday evening, February 27, in which three kinds of activities took place:

1. Student’s achievements:

- a) A contest in the spelling of English words among the students of the school.
- b) A showing of the achievement of the students in the Arabic language through debates and telling stories and proverbs.

2. Movie: Showing films about the various countries of the East through which a Negro fellow who works in the Field Museum, addressed as Professor, actually a very small official there, was making such comments on the film as, for example, his statement, “Look, our ancestors were building such great pyramids [the scene was showing the pyramids in Egypt] even before the white man knows how to make a humble cottage.”

3. Speech by the leader: The leader has spoken, saying, “We are happy to hear our younger Brother speaking the language of our ancestors.” [He meant the Arabic language.] Then he addressed those young children, saying:

Be proud of this knowledge and speak Arabic among you all the time and use always “As-Salaam-Alaikum” instead of using good morning or good evening because we have no good evening unless we get freedom, justice, and equality. The devil and here he means the white man says to you “Good morning” to deceive you because you know that you, have not any good.

Then he began to comment on what they have already seen in the film, saying, “Our ancestors five thousand years ago had built these greatest civilizations at the time no one [knew] what the other man was doing.” Then he said:

The Arabic language is the greatest language in the world. You know that the English language is not a language. If it is a language then give me the permission to call it a bastard language because it is a product of thieving from here and there. If you know the Arabic language you can go all over the world and contact with all the people by it because this is the language of our nation and our nation is all over the world.

Then he began to speak about writing and he said. "Look for this universal writing from right to left where you can write universally; while you have, in the devil language, to raise your hand at the end of each line to begin another line, and so on." (Here the audience laughed approving this comment because the leader was showing them the difference pantominingly.) Then he said: "We will be soon in our ancestor's land because the other man, the Caucasian, is coming to his end; that is because the Caucasian is a race and not a nation; and the race has a beginning and therefore has an end, but we are a nation and the nation has no beginning and hence no end." Then he said, addressing the audience, "You have to know yourself, and if you know yourself then he himself comes to you." [Here he means that the white man comes to the member seeking his assent and what not.]

I have sketched this sample of his speech just to show the reader to what extent these followers have been hypnotized by this kind of leadership, how they are extremely uncritical of whatever he says, and how they are very enthusiastic and highly aroused even when he utters the most nonsensical statement. For example, there is the one that he made in the last convention where he meditated for about three minutes and then said, "The waves of the ocean do not come to us; they go to the moon," a statement which aroused the approval of the audience to a great extent. This unintelligibility of his speech oftentimes reminds me of what Cooley has stated; namely, "The first requisite of a leader is, not to be right, but to lead, to show a way."²¹

In addition to these collective activities, they hold an annual meeting every year on the 25th of February, the birthday of Allah [W. D. Fard], in which representatives from all the other branches attend the meeting or the convention. This convention does not differ so much from the meetings of Sunday except in the size of the audience and some other slight arrangements. This year they held their convention in a big Christian church whose minister had met the Apostle in the prison and developed an intimate friendship with him. He spoke in the convention and referred to the Apostle as the prophet. Surprisingly enough, he attacked Christianity and the white race boldly.

The University of Islam

Since the beginning of the cult in Detroit, Fard organized a school called the "University of Islam" in which the children of the cult learn the "knowledge of their own." Today there is a school for each branch of the cult. In Chicago, the University of Islam is constituted of 56 students, distributed as follows:

TABLE 4
Student Distribution, University of Islam,
According to Gender and Education Level

The high school in the University of Islam is regarded as equal to the eleventh grade of the public schools. The junior level is equal to the tenth grade; the intermediary is equal to the ninth grade and the primary is equal to the eighth grade of the ordinary public school.

Level of Education	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
High School	2	0	2
Junior High School	1	4	5
Intermediate School	4	6	10
Primary School	11	12	23
Kindergarten	9	7	16
Total	27	29	56

According to their general programs, the subjects which are taught in the University of Islam are as follows: “Penmanship, Reading and Spelling, Language and General Civilization, Arithmetic and Simple and Metric System, Advanced Arithmetic, Algebra, Advanced Algebra, General Geometry and Trigonometry, Astronomy, Chronological History from 1300 B.C., Solar System, Spook being Displayed for 6000 Years, Ending of the Spook Civilization, and Chronology.” About a year ago they introduced Arabic, Physics, Chemistry, and Elementary Sociology into the program.

The University of Islam has a principal whose duty is to administrate and teach, an assistant principal whose duty is to do all the secretarial work and to teach also, and a “professor” who teaches Physics and Arabic language. The texts used in this university are as follows:

- a) For the high school and junior high school
 - 1) Milne, *Algebra* (1936)
 - 2) Strayer Upton, *Junior Mathematics* (1946)
 - 3) Schock, *Grammar Essential of English* (1937)
 - 4) Atwood and Thomas, *Geography—The North and Its People* (1947)
 - 5) Beauchamp, *Science Problems, Book I* (1938)
 - 6) Horn, *Progress in Spelling* (1946)
 - 7) A. N. Palmer, *Penmanship*

- b) For primary and intermediate schools
 - 1) Hamilton, *Primary and Intermediate Arithmetic* (1936)
 - 2) Carpenter, *Geography—Our Little Neighbor* (1946)
 - 3) B. Tressler, *Intermediate English* (1938)
 - 4) Wheeler Moore, *Spelling to Write* (1946)

NOTES

- ¹ H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1929), 65-66.
- ² Personal interview, Brother James 3X.
- ³ William Graham Sumner, *Folkways* (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1906), 96 ff.
- ⁴ I refer here to their experiments concerning the recall of interrupted tasks and duties.
- ⁵ Freud's treatment of blockage and emotional identification is nearer to this analysis.
- ⁶ Nathan Miller, in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1934), s.v. "Secret Society."
- ⁷ W. D. Fard, *The Book of Thirty-four Problems*, Problem No. 30 (Detroit, 1933). It is worthy of mention here that these pamphlets are not accessible to the whites or the non-Negro Moslems because Mr. W. D. Fard has warned the Apostle against doing that.
- ⁸ W. D. Fard, *Teaching for the Lost Found Nation of Islam in a Mathematical Way*, Problem No. 6.
- ⁹ W. D. Fard, *Lost-Found Moslem*, Lesson 1, Question 6. This pamphlet constitutes the "first term examination" of Elijah by W. D. Fard.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Question 8.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, Lesson No. 2, Question No. 10. This pamphlet constitutes the "second term examination" of Elijah by Mr. W. D. Fard. It is worthy of notice that Mr. W. D. Fard wrote on the pamphlet the following statement: "this lesson is answered very near correct and all students should read it and study until he or she can recite it by heart."
- ¹² *Ibid.*, Question 11.
- ¹³ Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1926), 231.
- ¹⁴ Ruth Benedict, in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, s. v. "Myth."
- ¹⁵ Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1948), 78.
- ¹⁶ Personal interview with Brother Lucius, first minister of the temple.
- ¹⁷ Sahib was apparently unaware that, from the 1920s onward, Ahmadi Muslim missionaries to the United States did in fact stress the non-racial character of Islam to potential African American proselytes. See Richard B. Turner, "The Ahmadiyya Mission to Blacks in the United States in the 1920s," *Journal of Religious Thought* 44 (Winter-Spring 1988): 50-60. [Ed.]
- ¹⁸ S. Kincheloe, "The Prophet: A Study of the Sociology of Leadership" (Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, 1929), 77.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ Charles Horton Cooley, *Human Nature and the Social Order* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), 343.

4. THE CONVERSION PROCESS

THE MAIN CONCERN OF this chapter is that of tracing the process of conversion through which these Asiatic followers passed, to show the causal configuration that operated in the individual cases. In order to cover the general process and situation in which the convert was involved in the preparatory stage of conversion, I find it pertinent to describe first the forms and contents of induction and agitation, which are the media through which the non-member receives the new appeal and influences.

Agitation

Through agitation and induction the individual receives claims which compel him to reconsider his traditional beliefs and attachments. This is a process through which the individual might come to make a gradual or radical change in his traditional attitudinal system and beliefs.

Everyone familiar with the situation of the Negro in America, especially the South, realizes quite well that loosening the hold of Christianity upon the Negro is a very easy task if the agitator is clever enough to associate the misfortune of the Negro and his difficulties with Christianity. "The church," E. R. Embree states, "baffled by inability to practice or even to preach the central Christian doctrines of brotherly love and the Golden Rule, tends to be thrown back onto a deadening fundamentalism which worships the letter of Old Testament history rather than the spirit of the New Testament Gospel."¹

Being ignorant of his religion, poor, with all the shortcomings of the churchmen who run his church, frustrated in his living in such big urban centers, the Negro is easily pulled out of his religious attachment in the face of new appeals.

Form and Content

In general, the tactics of agitation in the cult consist of arousing the race consciousness of the audience and their hostility to the white men and the Caucasian race, attacking the churchmen, editing some texts from the Bible to prove that they are the Chosen People mentioned there, glorifying their history and the potentialities of the Negro in contrast to the savagery of the whites and their past history in the cave, and trying "to raise the ignorant and the blind from mental death."

In their agitation they use the Bible frequently as a proof of their claim. This is perhaps because these Negroes have great attachment to the Bible in addition to the fact that it is the only sacred book with which they are familiar. Moreover, the Bible is of great advantage, although on the basis of very vague inferences, in supporting the claim that such a cult and such a prophet will come

later, whereas there is no such possibility in the Koran, which has laid down that “there will never be any prophet after Mohammed; and that Mohammed is the seal of the Prophets.” In contrast to this the Bible serves as a good source for prophecy as long as it mentions that somebody will come after Jesus.

Moreover, among the lower classes and whenever the caste controls are strict, the protest is usually framed in the Christian ideals of human brotherhood and the fundamental equality of all men before God. Church and religion are a much needed front to give respectability and acceptability to suppressed Negro protest. The world can safely be claimed to be wrong in the light of Christian ideals.² Therefore, agitation in this phase takes the form of sensitizing the Negro and directing his attention to seeing quite clearly just where the white man’s professions of Christianity and his practice of the code in his relations with the darker brother in Christ do not harmonize.

A constant part of their education on Sundays is put on the platform before the audience a blackboard on which a Negro is shown as hanging from a tree and beside him is the Cross. The speaker addresses the audience thus: “It was not Jesus who was hanged and crucified, but it was the dark man; it was you and I, here in America.” On this blackboard the American flag is drawn beside the National. Later in the service contrast is made between these two flags. The American flag is mentioned as a “symbol of slavery, savagery, vice, injustice, ignorant people and the sterile beast civilization.” The National is mentioned as the “symbol of the glory of the dark race, the symbol of justice, freedom and equality, and the enigma of the Chosen people.” This contrast is utilized to stimulate the visitors to join the cult because the speaker explicitly remarks at the end of his speech that “if you like to be kept inferior, blind, ignorant, mentally dead and enslaved, then you follow this one.” And here the speaker indicates with a stick in his hand that he means the American flag. The speaker continues, “And if you want to be free and equal, then you have to join this one here” [that is, the National].

Success and Effectiveness of Agitation

It is a well known fact in social psychology that when the individual is restless and excited, he is more suggestible and his social controls are more likely to break down easily under appealing suggestions. In the meetings, especially in the temple on Sunday, the newcomers are kept restless and excited through the impact of the exciting gestures of the speaker, his hitting on the sensitivities of the dark man, his picturing the injustices and inequalities to which the dark man is submitted in this country, his analysis of the history of the slavery and how the white man had deceived them for four centuries and enslaved them in his mean way by killing the first parents and robbing the children of their original names and religion, and how the white man has wrought to keep the dark man ignorant of his glorious history, of his real native land, of his people

in the East, and of his language, the language of his ancestors. With a big picture of a dark man hanging by the neck from a tree beside him, the speaker arouses the emotions of his audience to a very high pitch. The protesting gestures of the speaker, his emphatic tone, his revenge and hostility, the stimulating style of expressing himself, his repetition of these feelings, the arousing and stirring-up statements over and over again with slight variation in the style and rewording, and the mutual enthusiastic and deep support of the speaker by the audience operate together in fusing the newcomer with the group on the level of feelings and sentiments, in stimulating his restlessness, in exciting him, and in heightening his dissatisfaction.

In the next stage of agitation, the speaker begins to offer him suggestions in a quasi-intellectual way which operates on the listener to break down gradually and loosen his attachments to Christianity and the Bible through representing Christianity as the religion of the white man, whom the speaker refers to as "the Devil," and through mentioning some of the contradictions in the Bible and attacking the validity of the Bible and Christianity, a scheme predicted to arouse suspicion in both. With this goes the attack upon the church and churchmen "who work with the Devil and cooperate with him to keep the dark man blind and ignorant." Then comes the phase of representing Islam as the religion of their ancestors, and how Allah, whom the Apostle, Elijah Mohammed, has seen and lived with for four years, has delegated him to carry his message to the dark people, and how in the near future the dark man will be given his original name, and how Allah has promised them to come back to lead them to their native land, to save them from the Devil, and to ruin the Caucasian race who worked against the will of God.

In this atmosphere of collective implementation of feelings and sentiments, through offering of new definitions of the dark man, through arousing new hopes of salvation in him, through implanting in his mind the idea that he is not that "inferior nigger" but the descendant of the "Original" and superior stock of humanity, the visitor leaves the meeting with a somewhat new frame of reference, with great confusion, with new appeals of status and superiority which keep him restless and excited, and prepare him to be a self operator along this new line of experience and outlook.

It is worth mentioning here before leaving the subject of agitation, and in order to include the various mechanisms and factors operating in the situation and influencing the newcomer, that the new individual who attends the meeting comes intentionally to listen to the Apostle, who has been described to him as "the small man but with great wisdom." Coming curiously with such background about the Apostle and listening to him speaking in a vague style of symbolism, the newcomer develops suspicion about his own knowledge and his own ability to understand the high wisdom and deep philosophy of the Apostle.

Under such conditions, the newcomer imputes to the Apostle a high-caliber, divine source of knowledge and superior philosophic insight. Hence, anything such curious visitors do not understand they interpret as being a kind of very deep wisdom which they are not able to comprehend. Through this process which takes place within such a collective atmosphere, the visitor might develop immediate attachments to the Apostle and to what he is teaching. This is, in fact, one of the most frequent occurrences which the interviews have revealed about the process of conversion of these so-called Asiatics.

In the following discussion of conversion, we shall see how the agitator pulls these Negroes out of their Christian background just by providing them with new self-conceptions; and how the whole process of conversion through building such a new frame of reference is pictured clearly by such illuminating recurrent brief statements which these interviewees repeat, namely, "The minute I heard him saying that 'we are not Negroes and that these are not our original names,' I knew that he was telling the truth."

Conversion of the Asiatics

Now let us turn from this consideration of the form and content of agitation to the consideration of conversion of these Negroes. Before beginning our analysis, we should keep in mind that his movement is not a purely religious movement. Hence, conversion in this case, especially at its beginning stages, is not purely religious conversion, but, in fact, a societal-nationalistic type of conversion. This point will be more clear in the course of this analysis.

Definition of Conversion

Before passing to the presentation of individual cases of conversion, the term conversion, as it will be used in this treatment should be defined. Hence, I mean by conversion in general, the change of one's social attachment which might manifest itself in changing one's referent social group. Therefore, conversion, religiously speaking, will be used to mean the change of one's religious attachment which might manifest itself in changing one's referent religious group.

Process and Causes of Conversion

According to our scheme, the causes of conversion arise in the process of intercommunication between the individual and some of the members of the group; therefore let us trace this process from its very beginning, when the convert heard about this group and their religion for the first time in his life. This process of intercommunication we term induction.

My interviews show two major types of approach to induction:

- a) A religious approach, which takes the form of challenging Christianity or attacking the Bible by the member of the group in the presence of non-members. This approach to induction is rarely successful in winning the inducted member to the movement, and if it is, the process takes, on the average, a longer time than the second type of approach.
- b) A new self-conception-creating approach, where the tactics and techniques are designed to remodel the identification of the Negro, to give him a glorious nationalistic background, and to arouse in him the repressed hostility toward the white man. This approach is more successful and direct because it offers him new definition for himself and his race and molds a new self-conception in him. To make the comparison between the effectiveness of these two types of induction clear, let us have some examples of both.

Brother Carl X stated:

It had happened to me to step into the apartment of my neighbor Andrew X who was visited that evening by another friend of his in the movement. Through our casual discussion we came to a point when we began to discuss religion, on which occasion they attacked the Bible. At this moment I had been really aroused and began to defend the Bible enthusiastically and with vigor. At that discussion I found how little I know about Christianity and even less about the Bible. I was astonished by these two men who taught me more truth in about less than one hour than I had learned in twenty-seven years. In that discussion, it came to a point where I could think of nothing more to say in defense of Christianity. When these two men found out that I was exhausted for words they invited me to the temple for further knowledge. After that discussion, I began to meditate about what I had learned so far about my religion. In fact, it was the first time in my life to have such shocking discussion in a religious matter. Therefore, I bought a Bible and began to read myself and I began to attend the church and question the minister about what I do not understand in the Bible; and I thought to visit the temple these Moslems itself to bring some new points in defense of Christianity.

About three weeks later Andrew X asked me to go with him to the temple and I did. When I attended the service at that Sunday, and listened to the minister speaking I was really aroused because he disrobed Christianity completely. In addition to this, I came to the temple having in mind to defend Christianity and attack the movement but when the minister asked whether there is any question I found that I had nothing to say and I had no point to defend. Since that meeting, I began to be doubtful about my Christian belief because they really have put me on the top of the fence. After that I began to read in the Bible seriously because until that time all what I had read in the Bible was about only two pages.

Andrew X was helping me in the study and he was showing me various passages in the Bible that churchmen run over. Andrew showed me various contradictory passages in the Bible as for example verses concerning eating pork. He showed me that the Bible has [prohibited?] eating pork in some passages while it had permitted this in some other passages. Here he addressed me, "Do you think that God has changed his mind?" In comparison with this, he was showing me the persistence of their teachings and their unchangeability.

During that period I began to be more doubtful about Christianity and I began to go to ask my religious Christian friends about the verses that I had doubts about. But most of the time they were telling me that I am crazy and they were not willing to discuss the Bible with me because as they said, "It is God's words." To tell you the truth, I began gradually to quit eating pork or drinking and many other bad habits. It was my interest to attend the meetings in the temple to know more about the Bible. At that time my friend Andrew has been sentenced to prison because of his refusing to go to the Army. This event has strengthened my desire to attend the meetings in the temple because it showed me the virility and courage of the members in such matters as going to the Army. On March, 1942, I went to visit my friend Andrew in his imprisonment and he told me, "Don't worry, Allah is with me." I admired his courage and I felt at that time that I had to join this group. So I went on the following Sunday and I registered as a member.

This process of induction took almost a year to win a new member to the movement.

A second example is that of Sister Sylvia X, a beautiful 16 year-old mulatto girl in her twelfth grade of school. She said:

I went to the temple after I met a very handsome guy in Washington Park who told me about the movement. I heard the minister speaking, saying, "How can they call us Negro when there is no such country as Negro land or when people take their names from their country?" He said, "Our current names are not our original names but they are names given to us by the devil; and we have lost our original language and that is why we have this difficulty in pronouncing the English words." He said that the Bible describes the chosen people as the enslaved, the lost, the underprivileged, the people whom no one loves or cares about; describes them as the people who lost the knowledge of themselves. At that time I knew he was telling the truth because when you look over in present-day conditions you find that the Bible could have been speaking of none other than the so-called American Negro. Since that time I have felt that I am another person.

Another example is that of Brother Horace X, a man of 39 years of age who was mobile before joining the Asiatic movement. He was moving from

church to church, from the Peace Movement of Ethiopia to the Israelite Movement, frequently visiting Washington Park, a place for agitation in Chicago, to listen to the various speakers, “searching for the truth.” After he had listened to one of the followers of the Asiatic movement speaking in Washington Park proving what he said by reference to the Bible, he decided to visit the temple and listen to the Apostle himself. Brother Horace said:

When I went to the temple for the first time they searched me at the door. I was carrying with me at that time a small pistol which I carried with me so as to shoot any white man that I could get hold of whenever I had a chance for that. They took that pistol from me and I went to the meeting hall. The minister began to speak, telling us that these names we have are not our original names, and that Allah is a man. Then he told us about our ancestors and about our native lands and the glorious history of our own people. I felt at that time that I was finding myself through his speech. Then he told us about the history of the devil who lived in the cave for a long time; and he told us how the devil planned to keep us slaves and inferior so as to rule us and use us as tools. Then he mentioned that we have the true messenger whom Allah sent to us to raise us from mental death, a messenger who spoke to Allah mouth to mouth, and who knows everything in the world. At that time I was so happy to know that I was not that “dirty nigger” but I am “Asiatic.” I knew that he was speaking the truth because I had read the Bible.

In the first type of approach the inducer offers claims upon the belief of the other person, who begins to challenge his own belief if he ever cared for the criticisms and attacks of the inducer. This phase of induction is what we like to term “the instigating phase.” Consequent upon those criticisms, the Christian believer reconsiders these criticisms and attacks. This process of reconsideration takes the form of reflective discussion with one’s self, a process through which the Christian fellow tries to make some adjustment in his system of belief so as to meet these demands and claims made upon his belief, by the other participant in the communicative sect. In the course of this process of readjustment and reconsideration, which might take place for long or short time, a new framework of reference is built according to which the individual might tend to convert or stick to his belief, or might become confused about religion in general. Not the decisive causality emerges out of this framework of reference which I have discussed as being built in what is called perspective-building process. It is my contention that the causality of conversion lies in the pattern of the organization of various elemental factors in the framework of reference, on which basis the individual comes to join or not to join the new movement, new principle or new religion.

In the second type of approach, the frame through mutual support of the act by both of the participants—the inducer and the induced. In this type

of approach, the inducer does not give stimulus to call out response in his subject, but he offers responses to call out their stimuli in the mind of the induced; his role is like that of the actor described by G. H. Mead in his *Mind, Self, and Society*.³

In the process of building up these frames of perspectives, many factors, situations, and experiences which the person had during his life might rise in his mind and operate as parts of the whole complex determiner of the pattern or organization of the constituents of the frame. All of those factors operating in building or determining the organization of the frame are indirect causal factors which constitute what I will term as the "background causality." All kinds of self-discussion and conversation of gestures take place in the phase of the process. The leading principle in the phase of the process is that of seeking for more satisfying definition of himself or his problem.

In order to make this phase of the problem clear, let me repeat that it is not the new factor(s) which entered the situation which constitute(s) the cause. But the cause is the way this factor is organized with many other factors in the situation. Each new way of organization results in new emergent perspective in which the process of conversion of gestures with one's own self or with the others takes place. In this "forum of selves" causality is an emerging quality. This is what we mean when we say that the causes arise in the process and that causality of each act carried consciously is social. All that the intruding factor, which seemingly appears as the cause of the whole process, does is just "to modify, check, facilitate or redirect certain already operative processes";⁴ what this intruding factor does is "to precipitate or to reinforce certain tendencies"⁵ within the frame.

The substratum of all this discussion is that the casual agency is not a factor and even not a group of factors, but it is an emerging quality of network of relationships of such factors and considerations as related to a person in a given situation. All of this complex network of social relationships in which he is always busy seeking better adjustment. Hence he changes continuously his points of emphasis and therefore some new factors enter the picture and some others sink into the background. This process results in new networks of relationships with new configuration or new aspect of causation which might be sharp and decisive or blurred, confusing and discouraging.

It might be of great use to trace the process of induction and conversion of Elijah Mohammed, the current Apostle, as an example, to make clear the details of this process through which the framework of reference is built in the mind of the individual.

Elijah Mohammed who lived the poor and hard life that we described in the second chapter, had been told by his father that a man by the name of Abdul Mohammed had told him about Fard and his teachings. The teachings

appealed to Elijah, who began to be curious and had visited Abdul Mohammed and listened to him. Then he came to the meeting to listen to Fard. Elijah Mohammed said:

The minute I heard him saying that we are not Negro, and that these are not our original names and that this is not our country and that we will soon return to our native land, I was deeply aroused, and I felt that my blood was stirred up and my heart was filled with happiness because my mother used to tell me that there would come a savior in the near future. I know that this is the one she meant. He impressed me so deeply because although I read the books written by various philosophers and writers and listened, during my life, to the ablest lecturers, none of them were able to reveal such facts because they do not know the truth. But this man knew and therefore he must be in contact with a supreme power and he has a message.

Let us continue listening to Elijah Mohammed telling us his story of conversion through which we can see the dynamic process of perspective-building and how the organization of the elemental factors in his life experience took place very clearly. Elijah continued, stating:

After I heard him, I began to think and to remember all what I have seen and heard of in my life. All of it came to my mind. I thought over many events that I had experienced myself in my life and others that I had heard.

And here, Elijah Mohammed began to tell the story of the lynching which he had seen in Georgia when he was a child of ten years and the other lynching when he was 23 years old. These two lynchings that he had seen had impressed him very deeply and aroused in him a very vigorous, repressed, hostile attitude towards the white man and the life with the white man. He remembered the stories that his grandmother and his grandfather told him concerning the conditions of slavery and the cruel treatment of the white people to his own people. Then he remembered the "savage" treatment of the police to his "own people" in Detroit and how they killed the dark people "right there on the street without any justice what-so-ever and without any effort on the part of our own people to do anything to help with weapons." Elijah stated: "My reflection upon the teachings which I had heard that day from the mouth of Mr. W. D. Fard had led me to say, 'This is really the salvation that I had prayed for.' It came now to me in person."

Hence, the perspective which had been built was of the nature that the dominant guiding attitude in it was the belief that Fard is the Savior and that his teachings are the teachings of the Savior.

Conversion, then, is not confined to one factor or cause, and not even to many exclusively external factors or exclusively psychological or physiological, etc., but the causation lies in the organization of the various factors, the configuration of various significations and conditions which conceptually is called the “framework of reference.”

These constituent or contributory factors have been constructed, so to speak, into a frame or network of significations in terms of which the individual judges and evaluates his “being” and his “becoming” as related to a set of social considerations which stand in the mind of the individual. In such dynamic frame of selected adjustments and significations the cause of conversion emerges.

NOTES

- ¹ Edwin R. Embree, *American Negroes, A Handbook* (Cornwell, New York: Cornwell Press, 1942), 56.
- ² Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*, 23 ff.
- ³ See G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950) 65-66.
- ⁴ R. M. MacIver, *Social Causation* (New York: Ginn & Co., 1942), 370.
- ⁵ Ibid.

5. GROUP PARTICIPATION

PARTICIPATION IN THE SOCIAL processes of the group serves to satisfy some of the most profound needs of these members. Instead of his feeling lost and suffering from the lack of satisfying social relationships, the follower finds himself gradually rooted and grounded in the web of social relations among members of the group who have approximately the same hopes, desires, racial difficulties, and experiences as he does. Enjoying the same social life, attending the same meetings and rituals, aspiring to the same hopes, reading the same types of literature, pursuing the same goals, experiencing the same feelings, tensions and general social conditions, and enjoying the same sentimental appeals are some of the unifying and assimilating factors in the social life of the cult. This similarity of the social conditions brings the members to have increasingly similar attitudes and inclinations out of which an *esprit de corps* and high morale arise. A sense of mental, moral, emotional, racial and attitudinal kinship is one of the outcomes of such collective life. C. C. Church has referred to such social relationships built up among the members of a sect as “congenial social relationships.”¹ Social solidarity due to the continuous mutual reinforcement of the social ties through direct interpersonal relationships comes to be a mark of such social grouping.

In the course of his participation in the new group life with a new social setting the new convert finds new opportunities for building up new social relationships with the members of the sect. New friendships arise out of such social participation with a new perspective and new referent group and cliques. In addition to this gradual increasing of common understandings and shared, mutual expectations, the participation in the life of the cult gives these Negroes hope for changing their conditions and for changing their status and fate.

Moreover, through his participation in the collective life of the cult the psychology of the individual changes gradually. Continuous reinforcement of his interest in joining the cult takes place. The original mechanisms which direct him to join the movement might be replaced by others, or strengthen or weaken his loyalty and attachment to the movement and his interest in its collective life. New aspirations for social differentiation in terms of status or function get hold of the convert and maintain his attachment to the group. Members of this cult look upon themselves as brothers and sisters, even to the extent of calling one another by such terms. A proof of their devotion to the cult lies in their strict conformity to its rules and teachings and in the bequests and high donations they make.

Ritual of Accepting the New Member

When the induced individual decides to join the cult, he has to fill out a form in which he lists his name and his address. After doing so the induced person will receive from the secretary the following letter:

6116 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago 37, Illinois
(Date) _____

Mr. _____
(Street No.) _____
Chicago, Illinois
As-Salaam-Alaikum:

In the name of Allah, and in the name of his true Messenger, Mr. Elijah Mohammed.

Dear Brother,

We have your letter of _____, seeking to be united again to your own. We the Labors of Islam are very pleased. The same has passed our inspection, and it now awaits the inspection of Almighty God, Allah. Until He gives to you your holy name, you will be known among us as Brother _____ -X

Please report to 824 East 43rd Street for further information concerning your letter.

As I say to you in the name of Allah, and in the name of His true Messenger, Mr. Elijah Mohammed.

As-Salaam-Alaikum
Sec'y.

The member does not usually receive this letter before being requested many times to fill the form in a correct way. During this period the new convert will be very anxious to receive his letter of acceptance. After showing him his mistakes many times, the newcomer receives this above-mentioned letter of acceptance. As a result of this ritualistic procedure, the new convert gets an impression that the cult is very highly organized and that it has “really something to teach.”

With the letter of acceptance the new convert receives the following identification card:

My name _____

Street No. _____

City and State _____

In case of accident or serious illness, notify:

M _____

Street No. _____

City and State _____

The bearer is a registered Moslem.

Kindly retain this card of said Bearer. If found other than Righteous

Assimilation of New Members

“The more I stay in the this group the more I feel happy and the more I get knowledge of myself,” is the frequently repeated statement by the members of the cult concerning its influence upon them. The source of this happiness can be explained by analyzing the nature of the social process itself among these members and the role of social interaction and participation in the development of that sense of happiness and satisfaction which the individual attains in the course of his joining the group. G. H. Mead’s analysis of the process of communication and interaction serves as a very useful tool for interpreting this socio-psychological phenomenon of satisfaction and happiness. The core of the matter is that these participants in the social processes of the group are increasingly developing their common understanding and shared meanings and expectations through the process of taking the role of others in the course of the social act. Mutual modifications of behavior and increasing sympathy are some of the results of this continuous role-taking process to which is due the increasing similarity and likeness of the members. In such an increasingly solidified web of social relationships the individual occupies a particular status held and supported by the whole system of roles and relations. This feeling of group support and group involvement is the source of that felt happiness and rising self-conception.

New Self-Conception

Those who have accepted the teachings feel that they are new men and women, or, as they express it themselves, they were restored to their original and true selves. Some of them adopted Arabic names and value them as their greatest treasure: “I wouldn’t give up my righteous name. That name is my life.” They are so much ashamed of their old slave names that they considered that they could suffer no greater insult than to be addressed by those names. The members acquired the idea that

the Negro is superior mentally and physically to the white man and that is why the devil tries to keep him down, ignorant of himself and his own, blind and mentally dead. The devil knows quite well that if he gave the dark man a chance for competing with him he would soon lose his superficial supremacy. He knows that the original man is superior to him in every respect. That is why he injects himself with our blood all the time. All that blood they use in the hospitals is our blood because we are very strong by nature.²

Breaking with the Negro world in which he was denied status and satisfying social recognition, his attachment to the cult made him feel that he is distinct, he is not that lost man any more, and that he is acquiring status. Through the mythical belief in his glorious history, in the superiority of his race, and that he is a member of the Chosen People with whom God is much concerned, the member acquires a self-conception derived from his referent group. He holds much confidence in himself and his group, speaks emphatically, dresses well, keeps himself clean, and attacks the white race with courage and extreme boldness.

Prior to his participation in this group the Negro derived his self-conception mostly from the attitudes of the whites toward his caste as a whole. His personality was valued in terms of his color, which stood as a brand of this human being. In terms of this brand his character, mentality, status, and position were projected in the minds of the whites who contacted him and who behaved according to the caste-system implications. His definition of himself and his role, then, was based mostly on the assumptions behind the caste system. But when he got in touch with this movement he revolted against this imposed caste system and its social implications, finding himself with a new social frame of reference which offered him opportunity for redefining himself and his social role. This fantastic redefinition was not available to him before that. He knows quite well from earlier experiences that no segmental change in his personality or in his social conditions will cause whites to regard him as well-educated, clean, intelligent, etc., because being a Negro "gestaltly" invokes in the attitudes of whites a negative definition.

This conscious or unconscious striving of these sensitive Negroes to such personality problems is the only explanation for the frequent reiteration in their speech (and especially after glorifying the achievements of the Negro as a race) of such statements as, "you have to know yourself; you have to know who are you; be careful not to be deceived by what the devil white says about you," and the like. The "intention-operator" of such common-sense statements is that you have been defined by the whites as inferior:

Here is your glorified history, your greatest achievements, and here you see the civilizations that your ancestors had built. The devil

white defined you as ignorant, stupid, primitive, and so on, but you are the most advanced and intelligent people as the history of your ancestors shows. You and I are the people who built America, therefore you have to reject the definition of yourselves by the whites and re-define yourselves in terms of this lost glory, your great past, the superiority of your race, and in terms of the fact that we are the original and the chosen people.

Such new definitions of their status and self-conception made them even more belligerent and extremist in their contemptuous outlook towards the white man. The following citation is an example of such an attitude: "The white man himself and not us is the one who lived in the caves, who had a tail, and lived for centuries with the beasts climbing trees. But after all he tries to convince us that we were monkeys and we were climbing the trees."

The myths that they have developed concerning the white man have pictured whites in a very sarcastic and ridiculous way. This mythical history made them very courageous and aggressive people whenever they come in contact with the whites. "I will never have any fear of the devil no more since I have known what he is,"³ is a sample of the ever recurrent statements which they make in this respect.

Members of the cult refer to themselves as having been lifted up through joining the cult. Brother Horace 2X declares: "Since I have joined Islam the devil seems to have more respect for me and he gives me more concern than before. My own people have also great respect for me." Brother Horace X states:

When I listened to the minister saying that "we have the true messenger whom Allah sent to us to raise us from slavery and mental death, a messenger who spoke to Allah mouth to mouth, a messenger who knows everything that will happen in the world at any time," I knew that he was telling the truth. More than that, he told us that "we are not Negroes but we are Asiatics." I was so happy to know that I am not the dirty nigger.

Brother Joseph 8X said: "When I accepted Islam, people began to treat me as a man. I have no fear of the devil no more." And Brother Albert declares: "These teachings have created in me aspirations to higher jobs. More than that, the people with whom I work have changed their behavior toward me and, they try to be more polite and respectful to me. The foreman always tries to find me better jobs."

New Habits and Attitudes

Since joining the group the new participant begins to direct his acts by the expectations of the other members in the group, and according to the norms

of behavior set by the teachings in the movement. The new convert gradually adopts an attitude of antagonism towards attitudes and habits which characterized him before his conversion, because these ways of doing things and of thinking have been interdicted by the teachings of the new group. Therefore most of the old conceptions, habits and attitudes which obstruct the convert's development in the direction which the teachings and norms of the new group assign are pushed out of the way by the development of new ones. This process gradually takes the form of systematization of attitudes, of habits and actions as a function of involving the subject's living his everyday life in certain social groups rather than others; and hence he is obliged to make the necessary adjustment to the demands and expectations of these groups. Through such patterns of behavior the new religious group establishes in the new convert its way of thinking, beliefs, and doing things.

The question might arise, Why does the convert leave some of his past-held attitudes and habits and comply to the demands of the new teachings or religion? Part of the answer for this question has been implied in our explanation of how this process occurs. However, the stimulus for this change is the social judgment of the other members of the group regarding one's action; and the motive is to acquire the social approval of the other participants in the group as long as the convert is willing to participate cooperatively in the concerted action of the group.

"The group not only imposes barriers and presents opportunities, suggests ideals and restrictions and dictates values," Malinowski states, "but the community as a whole, through its system of legal rules, ethical and religious principles, and such concepts as honor, virtue and sin, affects even the physiological attitude of man to woman."⁴ The women in the group are no longer objects of sexual satisfaction to be chased and dated, but are "Sisters." Smoking, gambling, and drinking are no longer habits of these followers, but they are vices and bad habits to be thrown away. "Having nice times with girls" is no more an objective of the convert, but is considered a great sin. Being loyal to the American flag is no more a sign of being a good citizen, but an indication of cowardice and of "breaking the law of Islam."

Recreation

Before coming into the movement these members, generally speaking, engaged in habits of recreation such as gambling, dancing, drinking, "going with women," going to the movies, gossiping on the street corners, infrequently going to church, going to the night-clubs, playing billiards, or going around on the streets or in the parks. But since they joined the movement the converts gradually stopped most of these lines of behavior as interdicted by the teachings. Their current recreation is confined to visiting the temple, reading their assignments, visiting each other, and dwelling on some verses in the Bible

or some problem in the “Secret Ritual for the Lost Found People in a Mathematical Way,” going to the Shabazz Restaurant, practicing sports and gymnastics, studying Arabic, reading the Koran, arranging visits to branches of the cult in the other cities, or attending a contest held among the students of the University of Islam. The young ones among them, those in their earliest teens, hold parties and practice dancing sometimes. On Tuesday night of each week all the followers are supposed to meet in Shabazz Restaurant for “socialization.” In order to encourage the followers to attend on this night the Apostle calls it “the Unity Night.”

Food Habits

The converts do not eat pork “because pork is dog, cat and rat.” They do not eat meat often because W. D. Fard taught them to eat only fish and chicken. Therefore, most of their food consists of vegetables. They have been taught not to eat white bread because it makes them fat and “fishy.” Hence they eat brown bread. They eat only one meal a day and most of them fast a day and take one meal the other day. The followers put the reason for having one meal a day as follows:

We try to live up to the teachings of Allah and his Messenger, Mr. Elijah Mohammed. We keep up on one meal a day so as when we have to leave this country, when Allah comes back, and we do not have enough food then we will be able to stand the situation without suffering hunger.

The members of the cult eat only meat slaughtered according to Islamic or Jewish rules. Therefore, they do eat kosher meat. It is worthy of mention here that the followers do not smoke or drink. They have been taught to fast for at least three days out of each month. They begin fasting for 24 hours, from five o’clock in the morning until five o’clock the next morning. When I asked one of my interviewees, “Why do you eat so early at five o’clock?,” he told me:

Because we do not do what the devil does, because we do not want to die with him and be ruined. You know that the devil counts his time on the basis of six and therefore we eat at five in the morning and after six in the evening when we are not fasting.

They fast during Ramadan (the month of fasting among Moslems) but their fasting is different from that of the Moslems. They fast the whole month of September, beginning their fast at seven o’clock in the evening and continuing until the next evening, and so on. During this fast they do not eat meat. All of their food is made up of vegetables. Ramadan among the Moslems of the East is counted according to the lunar calendar and therefore it might be in the summer sometimes and in the winter some other times. More than that,

the Moslems fast from dawn until sunset. Further, they do not omit meat from their food during Ramadan.

Dress

The Sisters in the movement wear long dresses and turbans for their head-wear. Their dresses must be either white in color or green or red because Fard taught them that. The Brothers dress as other Americans do. They are dressed well and clean and carry the badge of the "National" on their chests.

Learning the Language of their Ancestors

Members of the cult have deep cravings for learning the Arabic language, "the language of their ancestors and their own people." Although the Arabic language is taught in their school, the University of Islam, during the day, most of the members who cannot attend the school at that time have arranged a night class for this purpose.

The followers call themselves Carl X or Carl 2X in the order of their joining the movement. Therefore if the convert was called Henry James his new name would be Henry 1X if he was the first Henry to join the movement. The second Henry will be called Henry 2X, and so on. These names are temporary ones until Allah comes back and gives them their original Arabic names. Some of them have adopted Arabian names and they are very proud to be called by them, as, for example, "Carl Hassan," or "Henry Salih," or "James Mohammed," and so on.

Some of the members keep Arabic records in their homes and enjoy listening to them. In their rooms they keep some of the scenes and pictures of Arabian or Islamic buildings or life. In the home of each member is a big picture of the National or some other board on which the name of Allah is written in the Arabic language.

Imputations

The members of the cult claim that they secure work much more easily than other Negroes. They believe that this is an evidence of the blessing of the new religion and favor of Allah. One of the earliest Sisters in the cult told the writer that she was so poor before joining the cult that she had only one old dress and one pair of old shoes. But after she had joined the cult her life conditions began to improve. She forgot that this was the condition of the dominant majority of the Negroes at that time (1934), when the depression was so severe—especially on the Negroes who were living mostly on relief. She said, further, that after she had joined the movement the general conditions began to improve somewhat. At any rate, such statements expressing their beliefs in the blessings they have gotten after they have joined the cult are frequently announced by the followers.

Another kind of imputation is that of attributing everything that Elijah Mohammed does as something Allah has ordered. They go to such an extreme that they impute even the harms and sufferings to the will of Allah. Brother Jacob, for example, stated:

After the Apostle made his rounds about seven years ago he was arrested in Washington, D.C., and sentenced to prison for five years because of the righteous teachings of Allah who had sent him. He knows that he will be arrested because he told the truth. Allah himself told him that he would go to jail.

Military and Educational Training

When the new member first joins the cult he passes through various ranks and various levels of teaching. He begins by being a private, then proceeds upwards to a captaincy, after he becomes first lieutenant and second lieutenant. The new member does not get the teachings of W. D. Fard which had been printed in a very small pamphlet unless he finishes the following requirements:

- a) "Student Enrollment," a "course" in which the new members get the first knowledge about the teachings.
- b) "Actual Facts" and Lessons No. 1 and No. 2. After finishing these requirements the new member is entitled to begin with the first book written by Fard, which is the "Secret Rituals to the Lost Found People in a Mathematical Way." This included thirty-four problems "in various field of knowledge."

The Sisters themselves have these military ranks also. They begin as a private and then pass through the same order as the Brothers. They also have a captain who delivers the messages and instruction of the Apostle to the Sisters and who arranges and directs the special meetings of the Sisters according to the orders of the Apostle. The Sisters receive gymnastic training, cooking lessons, instructions in sewing, nursing, how to take care of the house and the family, and some other elementary educational knowledge in a course called "Culture and Civilization." The Sisters are segregated from the Brothers, as they have been taught, according to the teachings of the Apostle, not to shake hands with men or to "mix with them as the Christians do."

The Sisters meet at the temple two nights each week—Tuesday night for nursing training given by one of the Brothers who pretends that he is a physician, and Thursday night for the class which they call "Culture and Civilization." In this last class the Captain of the Sisters teaches the Sisters what the Apostle has prepared to be taught. Each Monday evening the Brothers have

a meeting in which they receive gymnastic training and some teachings prepared by the Apostle and delivered by the Captain of the Brothers. At this meeting they also receive teachings about how to behave with the apostle and with the other Brothers of rank.

The content of the three texts used in developing the ideology of the members will be mentioned when we deal with the ideology of the group—if such nonsensical compilation can be regarded as ideology.

Working Hard

My study reveals that the majority of the followers hold more than one job. The principal of the University of Islam, for example, administratēs and teaches in the school during the day and works as a guard in one of the storage places downtown at night. The private secretary of the Apostle works as a secretary during the days where she arranges all the correspondence between the Apostle and all the other branches of the cult. At night she serves the customers at Shabazz Restaurant. Complying with the rules of eating one meal a day, lack of sufficient meat in her diet, and working hard caused her to have a severe nervous breakdown. Carl IX works days as a driver, as a barber at night, and does painting, carpentering, and “fixing grass” on his days off. Moreover, he fills his leisure time by learning Arabic and Spanish languages. He now speaks Spanish fluently. Since his release from prison in 1945, he has built a two-story house in addition to providing for a family with five children. Every year he adds another room to the house. He and his children cooperatively do all the building, painting, and carpentering that the construction needs. In addition to this, he owns a car and his house is very well furnished. This variation of skill is due, in my judgment, to the fact that the Negro performs the unskilled labor and hence he is mobile on the job. This occupational mobility offers him the opportunity to develop various lines of occupational careers. Most of them he has time to practice after he joins the cult. This is due to at least the following two factors:

- a) The member is no longer wasting his leisure time gambling, drinking, going to the movies, or chasing women; but, rather, behaves seriously according to the teachings of the Apostle, who encourages the members to be more active, clean, and to seek the betterment of their life conditions.
- b) This insistent encouragement drives the members to seek the betterment of their economic conditions first by working hard and by striving as much as possible to raise their income. If the Apostle saw somebody with a dirty shirt, for example, he will call him and reprimand

him, saying, "This is not the appearance of a Moslem; if you do not take care of yourself then you must know that this is not your place." And he tries to drive him out of the Nation of Islam unless the individual is poor and needs help to better his condition, in which case the Apostle will try to help him out.

Generally speaking, attachment to the cult results in improvement of life conditions of these Negroes.

Hatred for the White Man

Any bad luck, defect or trouble in the life of the race is attributed to the "tricknology" of the white man and his bad will towards the Negro. From his first contact with the teachings of the cult the member is essentially attracted to join because of his aroused hatred towards white people. During the period of induction and later through his participation in the movement the convert develops deep hostility towards the white race. As an example of this hatred and hostility, let us listen to Brother Horace X, who began to tell the writer about the ways of the white man and how "the devil" tries to keep the dark man living under such bad conditions. Brother Horace stated: "They call America the land of promise. This is true because this devil promises you everything but he never gives you anything." Then he made another remark: "They call it the United States. It is really funny, but they are right because they are united against the dark man." Then he said: "You do not know [addressing the writer] how this devil works against us. I hope that Allah removes him from the planet. He will be removed from the earth soon. That is what Allah promises us."

Segregation, wherever it operates, implies the attitude of the undesirability on which it is founded. One of the basic assumptions of segregation is the assumption of inferiority which accompanies its practice. Segregation and discrimination which the Negro is subjected to in America has itself produced a definite race consciousness among all its members.⁵ If the segregated people who are regarded as inferior by the other part of society were living in a society which left levels of aspirations loose and free for all groups, the so-called inferior group would resent the attitude of inferiority towards them and aspire to move up the social ladder. If this resentment did not influence the dominant group to change its negative outlook toward the inferior group then this resentment would give rise to a latent or concrete hatred which would spread through the inferior group by mutual sensitization and circular stimulation until all or the majority of the inferior group would come to have common feelings of resentment and hatred on a high level. The collectivizing process of these feelings might be speeded up and projected onto the antagonistic group through such efforts of agitation if the social unrest was already there. This is

actually the very function which agitation serves among these Negroes.

Caste training imposed by social pressure upon the Negro Caste determines the social controls of the behavior of each member of the caste and his status position in the general status structure of the society. The members of this group have been sensitized, as it has been clear from the previous discussion based on interviews of the members of the group, through the stage of induction to revolt; they resent and reject these social controls (which are caste controls in this situation) and find the way out of such determined and imposed status position. This rebellion against the social controls of the larger society is the source of various kinds of difficulty and problems for these converts, especially in their occupational life, where the opportunity for conflict with the white people around on the job is full of such possibility. For these Negroes, in addition to their highly-toned aggressiveness against whites, have acquired new conceptions of themselves and new conceptions about the white man himself filled with suspicions and bad will.

Their Apostle said in one of his speeches to the followers: "I do not trust the white. The devil cannot be trusted, and that is why I do not accept them here in the temple." In one of his Sunday speeches he said, "In the day of resurrection God said, 'The guilty with blue eyes will be ruined'." Brother Horace said: "I never trust the devil. Although some times I say yes and show him obedience or [agree] that he is right, I still have my own ideas." In regard to the Chinese and Korean War, for example, they believe in the victory of these people against America not because they wish that only, but that this wish has been projected by their Apostle as something told to him by Allah (Mr. W. D. Fard) himself. Out of this prospective victory of the Chinese and Koreans these Negroes get hostility-satisfaction and enjoy vicarious revenge.

Mr. W. D. Fard had taught their Apostle, who preaches what his God told him, that the "Caucasian race is so devilish that prophet Mohammed and all the other prophets were not able to convert them or change their nature." Brother Joseph X stated:

Since I heard the teachings I felt that I have peace of mind and I have no fear of the devil no more. I really like to see him ruined. The poisoned book, the Bible, told us that there is no peace as long as the devil exists. I wish I had the power, then the first thing I would do is to annihilate the white man in the South. You don't know [addresses the writer here] what this devil calls us in the South. He invented the worst words for that, he calls us nigger, grown-hog, coon and Sambo. He says that "we were monkeys climbing the trees." The devil forgot his life in the cave and his socialization with the beast.

The Apostle once told the writer with enthusiasm:

We do not like our names because they are not our original names, and we do not like the English language because it is the devil language. This language of the devil is a bastard language. The proof of what I am saying is in the dictionary where you find the roots of the various words. There the dictionary tells you that this word is Spanish that is French and this Arabian and so on.

In one of the Sunday speeches the minister said: “America is hell and wilderness, and the devil is the beast. This devil is uncivilized, he is long way from civilization. You do not find drunkards, thieves and robbers, gamblers and savages all over the world but here in America.” In his comparison between the American flag and the National, the minister declared: “This flag [the American] is the flag of the beast, of the uncivilized people. But this one here [that is, the National] is the flag of civilized people all over the world. The Masonic people use it, Truman himself carries it.” Brother Howard 2X told the writer:

You do not know Brother, even my sleep is not good because of the devil: I begin to see terrifying dreams the minute I sleep, as for example, I see, and this is what I dream about most of the time, that I went to work late and the devil has fired me and hence I feel deeply sad and disappointed and I might weep. Then I awake from the dream, then I try to sleep again and to see another terrifying dream and so on.

Their hostility to the white race is so deep that they attribute all of their troubles, difficulties and bad luck to the whites. When I asked Brother Carl X why the movement here in Chicago has no more than 300 members, he said:

You don't know our people. They just do not understand, they are dumb and stupid, they are ignorant. This devil has deceived them and kept them blind. They just do not understand. Illiteracy of the Negro, his poverty, disease, and all aspects of his backwardness is due to the wicked Caucasian “tricknology.”

Myrdal, in his *An American Dilemma*, states: “The standard explanation of Negro failures, and the only one publicly accepted, is to place the responsibility upon the caste system and the whites who uphold it . . . : “white people won't give the Negro a chance” . . . is almost a slogan among these Negroes.⁶

Such bitter feelings and attitudes toward the white man, although they are dominant among Negroes, become essential elements in the agitation and tactics of the cult. This hostility is the central theme and axis of the teachings. As an example let us cite the answer of Elijah Mohammed to the question, “Why does the devil keep our people blind, illiterate, and mentally dead?” “So he can use them as a tool. He keeps them blind to themselves so that he can enslave

them and master them.”⁷ Fard himself repeated such statements whenever he delivered a speech to the followers, as: “The one you walk side by side every day, he is the devil, and I am going to destroy him from the face of the earth.”⁸

In short, the hostile attitudes towards the whites and the desire to take revenge upon them are explicitly expressed by the members at all times and on whatever subject they speak. Brother Joseph 8X, for example, remarked: “If the God as I see him in the pictures hanging in the churches, [is] like this devil [he means that he is white] then I have no chance with him there in heaven.” Brother Horace X says:

You don't know the devil works against us. Whenever I hear about a job I prepare myself to it until I am sure that I am the only one who will succeed in getting it. But the minute I go to the probation test and the employer looks at me, my face fails me. Many times I wished to be dead and not to be a nigger.

Horace X mentioned that his wife cannot be pregnant anymore “because the devil operated on her and removed both of her ovaries so as not to be pregnant anymore and have more children.”

Their hostility to the white race functions as the basic factor in their cohesion. To represent the white man as the greatest enemy—the devil, the wicked, the one who killed their first ancestors brought to America, the one who robbed the race of its virtues, of its religion and language, the one who enslaved the race for four centuries during which he had kept the race “blind and dead mentally”—is another mechanism which provides the group with strong unity and high morale and maintains the charge of emotional attachment.

Myths as Mechanisms of Behavior

In the following discussion I plan to show how strongly myths control the moral and social behavior of these followers; how these myths have been projected in various lines of their reasoning; how they work as stimulants for action; and how they activate the converts to behave according to the vivid imagery which they evoke. As releasing or relieving agencies these myths serve to unite the fancy of the Negro, to arouse the interest of outsider to join, and to sustain the interest of the member in the movement. In short, the influence of these myths upon the participant-follower is that of stimulating him to project his behavior and even himself reflexively in this backward and forward-looking reference. Hence, the individual tries to control his behavior with reference to the (near-future) consequences and expectations which he has come to believe as decisive actualities which will inevitably follow.

They have been taught, for example, to be prepared and be ready to

meet Allah when he comes back. Brother Jordan X, for example, told the writer that what is bothering him is that he has to attend all the meetings at the temple because he does not know when Allah will appear and that he might miss him if he were not attending. Therefore, Brother Jordan, a 73-year-old man, concluded: "I keep going to the temple regularly although sometimes I am very tired and I do not feel like going."

Members of the group carry the National on their chests as a sacred symbol standing for the shared hopes and expectations of returning to the native land, the land of justice, freedom and equality. The members are very proud of this land because it is the source of civilization and contains "every good thing in the world" in the past, present and future. Its history is the most glorious history, its language is the "father of all languages of the world," its people are the "originals," the "most strong," powerful and "the most highly civilized people of the planet." The National stands for all this structure of meanings developed in the earliest period of the movement and symbolized by W. D. Fard himself. This National became sacred not only because it expressed the shared hopes, images and growing perspective of the collectivity, but because its origin has been surrounded by mythical atmosphere as well. This myth of origin makes this flag a symbol of the hidden glory of the race or its historical superiority.

These myths have changed even their attitudes and their outlooks towards the white man very deeply. "Before I heard these teachings and knowledge about the devil I was living in fear of him [the white man] all the time. But since I have known what he is and what he was I do never fear him no more."⁹ Brother Howard 2X, who does not differ so much from other Brothers in this respect, also stated: "These teachings changed all of my outlooks on life, and ever since I heard the story of the white man and the history of the original, I began to have more respect toward my own people and I came to know why I should respect them."

New Vocabulary

The collectivity has developed a special vocabulary which makes each of them quite unintelligible to any outsider who is not familiar with the ideological background of the group from which these words pool their meanings. When they refer to the Christian Negroes, they term them "the blind and the mentally deaf"; they refer to the white man as "the skunk," "the devil," or "the wicked"; they refer to the English language as the "bastard language," to the Bible as the "poisoned book," to the Christian preachers as the "ice-makers," meaning that they freeze the minds of those who come to listen to them. Hence, they refer to the church as the "ice-house." They refer to their flag as the National and to themselves as "originals," meaning that they are the people who have no "beginning and no end," they were before Adam.

Sometimes they refer to themselves as “Asiatics,” meaning that they are from Asia originally before they had been brought to America.

Often they refer to themselves as “Lazarus,” who was dead for three days before Jesus raised him from death. These three days symbolize the three centuries of their being here in America as dead and now Allah has sent them Elijah Mohammed to “raise them from death.” In contrast to this, they refer to the Negro Christian as Lazarus also, meaning by that that he is the beggar in the parable of the white man waiting for whatever food he throws from his table. Hence, when a follower speaks to an outsider telling him “the devil caught one of our Brothers in 1936 just because he was carrying the National; that skunk was sent by the ice-maker because those people work and cooperate with the devil; because they are still blind and mentally dead,” etc., etc. The outsider might think of that follower as insane or speaking in a strange tongue if he was not familiar with the vocabulary of the cult.

They refer to their English names as “slave names” and they are ashamed of them. They refer to their lost Arabian names as the “original names.” “Tricknology” is the science which the white man developed to harm the dark man, control him, and keep him inferior so as to use him as a tool. Hence, they believe that the white man has coined the word “Negro,” meaning that the dark man is neutral, that is to say, that he is not masculine or feminine, but “he is neutral like the stone or the wood.” The Sisters are “the mothers of civilization.” The skunk will be bombed at the end of time by “the Mother Planes,” which we described earlier.

Functional Differentiation

Within the movement some of the members have developed special functions and new careers for themselves. One of the members, for example, learned to draw pictures symbolically expressing the hopes and feelings of the members which have developed through the course of the collective enterprise. Another member drives the “car of the Sisters” which carries the Sisters back and forth between their residences and the temple or restaurant.

The Apostle has appointed one of the Sisters as secretary to help him in organizing the records of the group, presenting to him the requests of new members to join the movement, and typing instructions, teachings, and answers to questions concerning the interpretation of Bible verses or the Apostle’s teachings. The Apostle himself answers these questions and gives teachings and instructions to the whole group. Guarding the temple, working in the restaurant, engaging in farm work, teaching in the University of Islam, and preaching the beliefs and ideology of the cult are some of the functions which have been developed in the sect and became some of the careers of these members.

Beliefs

In the course of his participation in the movement the convert comes to believe that Mr. W. D. Fard is Allah who appeared in North America in July, 1930 in the form of an Asiatic human being. He taught one of them to carry his teachings among the Negroes until He returns in the near future, and "at the end of the time," to ruin the devil and lead the dark people out of America to their native land.

Elijah Mohammed is his messenger to the dark people. This is expressed in their prayer, which runs as follows:

Say He Allah is one; Allah is He of whom nothing is independent but upon whom we all depend. He begets not nor is he begotten. And I bear witness that nothing deserves to be worshipped beside Allah. And I bear witness that Mr. Elijah Mohammed is his servant and apostle.

Everyone familiar with the Koran should have noticed that distorted verses from its second chapter have been introduced in this prayer and that this kind of Allah as described in this prayer is so far from being Mr. W. D. Fard because they know very well, and as he himself has told them, that he was born. Their beliefs are filled with just such contradictions to which they are not attentive. This might be due to the fact that religion is not logical, especially among these illiterate Negroes. The source of such contradictions, it seems to me, is that these sensitized and highly status-conscious Negroes do not draw on one homogeneous and coherent evaluative system but they pick up, selectively, elements pertaining by their very nature to various systems. They try to fit them together just to satisfy their imagination and fantasies rather than build up critically a systematic scheme of ideology or belief. Such contradictions are prevailing in the various aspects of Negro life.¹⁰ According to the cult the Bible is the "poisoned book," but when it comes to the various kinds of imaginative prophecies the Bible is speaking the truth and it is the only source for validating their pretentious claims.

They believe that the Torah, Bible, and Koran were written by twenty-three scientists. Each of these sacred books had been completed by these scientists ten thousand years before the appearance of the prophet who preaches it. Among their beliefs is that Jesus was a son of Joseph El-Nejjar from Mary. Allah (Mr. W. D. Fard) had told them that they are the chosen people and that they are the "originals" and the white man was derived from them by a scientist, whose name was Yacob, 6,000 years ago. The story of this derivation will be mentioned under the treatment of the mythology of the group. The devilish nature of the white man has been described as follows:

Mr. W. D. Fard has taught us [the Apostle states] that prophet Mohammed was given the history of the Caucasian when he came to Mecca. Prophet Mohammed planned to organize a great army to kill these Caucasian devils because of their unbelieving in Islam. But the scientists told him that these are devils and they are not capable of believing in Islam and therefore they told him to leave them because he cannot convert them at all unless he made them again. That is why Prophet Mohammed grieved for that and died with heart trouble. Jesus himself tried to convert them and he was not able to but he told that El-Mahdi will come and destroy them all. W. D. Fard told me that he is El-Mahdi whom Jesus spoke of.

In fine, their belief in the deity of Fard and in the prophecy of Elijah has been expressed in written form on a board that each member keeps in his home. The statement on this board runs as follows: "Allah is our dear Savior come all the way from heaven to save his lost people, God Himself, Elijah Mohammed, is His last prophet."

NOTES

- ¹ C. C. Church, "Congenial Social Groups" (M.A. thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, 1917), 28.
- ² Personal interview with Brother Lester 6X.
- ³ Cited from personal interviews with the members who fell within my sample.
- ⁴ Bronislaw Malinowski, "The Group and the Individual in Functional Analysis," *American Journal of Sociology* 49 (1939): 944.
- ⁵ Robert Russa Moton, *What the Negro Thinks* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1929), 44.
- ⁶ Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, 759.
- ⁷ Answer to question No. 6, Lesson No. 1.
- ⁸ Personal interview with Brother Jacob Allah.
- ⁹ Personal interview with Brother Howard 2X.
- ¹⁰ Professor Everett Hughes of the University of Chicago has stated in his typewritten lectures about "Race and Culture Contacts" that "one gets thus the contradictions in the Negro press that its news and editorial columns are devoted to the struggle for equality, and for race desires of Negroes to be like white people, while the rest of the paper protests that they shouldn't have to be like them. Well, contradictions of that kind are common enough, perhaps they are inevitable." Class notes, winter quarter, 1950, p. 40.

6. ORGANIZATIONAL ROLES

THE ROLE OF EACH MEMBER in the group is defined by all that he does along a particular line of activity to meet the expectations of the other members in the group. Hence, each individual might have or play many roles. The leader, for example, is the spokesman of the group in the temple, but he washes dishes, serves the clients, and works as cashier in the restaurant. He plans and designs the steps for the group, and so on. Accordingly, the action structure of the group is the organization of these roles of its various members.

Role of the Apostle

The current Apostle is a leader by induction, indoctrination, and imitation. Since the time when Elijah, the poor and ignorant Negro, met W. D. Fard and told him that “he knows who is W. D. Fard,” and since that very first meeting with Fard when Elijah told him that “he knows that he is the promised Messiah that Bible told about,” Elijah Poole attracted the attention of Fard and set him to act on the basis of such an expectation. It was natural, then, that W. D. Fard should have told him to begin preaching his idea among the Negroes in Detroit about Fard in order to have more expansive social support for his unexpected claim. After he had been convinced that this disciple was sincere and serious in what he said, Fard chose him to be the minister of the temple. At that time Fard began to announce that he was the promised Messiah, and he began to indoctrinate Elijah with all that he was to say in preaching. Fard was tricky enough to act before Elijah on the basis of his expectation, to play the role of the promised Messiah, to convince Elijah by his tricky methods, which we have mentioned elsewhere in this study, that he knew the unknown and that he was a being of miracles, and to implant in Elijah’s primitive mind that he was really “incarnated supreme being.” This trend of belief advanced later on along the whole line and reached its end that Fard is Allah himself. At that end Elijah emerges as messenger and prophet.

Elijah Mohammed now follows the steps of Fard in all the details of his thought and actions. His leadership has been developed and established by the support that he has acquired from Fard first and by his exact imitation of Fard himself later on. Because Fard used to speak for five or six hours in the meetings, he feels obligated to speak for that long a time, although he has not that calibre. Because Fard used to speak and approach his subject “in a mathematical way,” he should follow him in that respect; as long as Fard used to offer some money now and then to some of the police just to “keep them quiet,” he should do the same, and so on. However, the Apostle does not do any kind of work outside the area of the cult. He devotes his entire time to the organization, answering questions sent to him by various individuals or various ministers of the other

branches, commanding the restaurant and sometimes serving the clients there working in the kitchen, delivering lectures to his followers (a duty that takes much time because he never speaks less than four hours), and traveling around to see what is going on in the other branches, which are scattered all over the North and West of the United States.

Moreover, he offers in his conduct and his sincerity to the organization . . . the best example for his followers. That is what made the followers attach themselves to him with extreme love and loyalty. They are proud of him and admire his personality because "he is not like the ministers of the churches," as their recurrent statement runs, "who teach something and do everything against it," but "he is a man of great wisdom." It is worthwhile to mention here that the leader is not merely executive of integrator of the group's purposes and decision, but he is, as it is clear from the nature of his relationship to the group, the stimulant and the director of the activities of the group. More than that, he has been the maintainer of the ideology and morale of the group since his emergence as a leader.

Generally speaking, the Apostle as an administrative leader determines the objectives of the cult. As to the realization of plans and decisions, although he gathers all the followers and acts on the basis of the majority rule, he is actually the determiner in the process of making the general or final decision. He controls and manipulates all the instrumentalities of action in the organization, and he is the stimulator of any kind of coordinated and collective action. He has the last word, not only in everything that bears any kind of relationship with the organization, but even in most of the personal affairs of the followers themselves. In general, he is a dictator whose will is the absolute law in any decision. He himself assigns the duties of various persons, their privileges and status in the group.

His role as agitator is one of his most important roles. He sets methods of agitating for his ministers and for all the other followers in the movement. His agitation has been patterned and formalized after the type of agitation which Fard used to follow. This pattern can be envisaged roughly as follows. He acts upon the audience by presenting the existing conditions, describing the potential future, and revealing hidden glorious and superior status of the Negro in the history of the world. By following this pattern over and over again, the Apostle draws to his cause those who find in the claim some satisfaction which commands their adherence. In this realm the Apostle is a man of experience and ability.

The effectiveness of the communication between the Apostle and his followers is due to the fact that he speaks about what they wish to hear. Hence, the followers do not receive from their leader a wide variety of stimulations, but they receive a narrow set of structures or patterned stimuli, or what Lewin has termed "atmospheres," which infringe upon the listener and operate upon him

as a whole under such highly emotionally-charged conditions. Anyone who has any experience with the Negroes should know how it is relieving and highly interesting to the dark man when somebody adopts his frame of reference and begins to tell him the story of his troubles and difficulties in living and coping with the white man. This explains why the speaker to the Negro audience can raise the level of anxiety of the audience just by focusing the content of his speech around the Negro problem. And this is exactly what the leader does when he speaks to his followers collectively.

The speeches of the Apostle play the following psychological roles:

- a) They furnish the hostile attitudes of the followers toward the white man with rationalizations which buttress these attitudes.
- b) They furnish a type of fantastic life to members through enhancing their hopes and enriching their day dreams.
- c) They raise the self-conceptions of the followers by using myths, legendary, and false imputations.

These are the effects of his speech upon the individual follower. From the Apostle's point of view, delivering a speech is not, in my judgment, an end in itself; it is actually more than that because it has at least the following functions:

- a) It is a method through which the Apostle tries to establish the validity of his prophecy. The implied assumption in his speech, beyond that of imitating Allah, is that the more he speaks the more he shows the audience his superior and exceptional potentialities, potentialities of a prophet. In answering my question, "How can you speak for such a long time?" the Apostle said, "Because Allah was speaking for such a long time," and since his duty, as a messenger of Allah to the dark people, is to deliver His message, "it takes at least," as the Apostle said, "five or six hours [. . .] I have tried time and again to do it in less than that and I was not able."
- b) It is a medium through which the Apostle senses and feels the responsiveness and mutual support of the audience to his leadership and hence gets satisfaction of his leadership cravings.

His role as a messenger of W. D. Fard to the dark people implies the function of interpreting what Mr. W. D. Fard has said or written. This function makes of Elijah Mohammed the intellectual of the movement. His potentiality

of interpreting Fard can best be shown by the following example, which the Apostle himself told the writer:

W. D. Fard has said that every word he says has so much meaning. On the basis of this statement, I try to get into that meaning. Mr. W. D. Fard was giving so much meaning in brief remarks which I try to give their full meanings to the followers in my teachings. For example, he was giving us the oceans, the weights of ages of the planets and so on. So he did mention that the weight of the earth is six (sextrillion). My duty is to tell the full meaning of this. So I teach the followers that this statement has another interpretation that Fard tries to give; namely, that the weight of civilization on this planet is six thousand years. This does not mean that I understand or am able to interpret all the teachings of W. D. Fard, because there are at least four problems in the "Secret Ritual for the Lost Found People in a Mathematical Way" that I do not understand yet.

I have already mentioned elsewhere that the current leader of the cult has had no schooling background but a mid-term only and that all the forms and contents of his ideology, beliefs, and speeches have been acquired through his attachment to Fard, who was not trying to educate Elijah, as it is clear from the comments he was making upon the opinions of Elijah, but to mold his thoughts and beliefs in a way so as to get advantage of him as a disciple to a prophet and later on as a prophet for God.

This period of induction made of Elijah a man of blind faith in his own message and the deity of Fard. I asked him once whether he knew what Elijah¹ meant. His answer was, "Elijah means the one that comes after the prophets." Whether this belief has something to do with playing such a role in the movement I cannot tell. But it is clear from the social setting of his childhood that he was taken regularly by his father and grandfather, who were preachers, to the church "since he was a child of four of age," as he said. This social setting was of great importance, as I stated elsewhere, in developing his aspiration to be a preacher. However, from the way he approaches the followers, the proofs he offers about his prophecy, and the analogies between the Negroes as a oppressed people and the ancient Jews, and hence between him and the prophets of the Jews, it is clear that he believes that he is a messenger to dark people.

One of my interviewees told me, "The Bible spoke of this prophet in the fourth chapter of the Bible. The fifth verse in Malachi states: "Before the dreary day of the Lord come I send a prophet by the name of Elijah Mohammed."² So many pretentious verses have been expressed by the followers that I need not go to the trouble of mentioning them here. But the most important point in this respect is that these verses have been mostly entrenched

in the minds of these followers by the Apostle himself and then by his disciples and ministers. In one of his discussions with the writer, the leader mentioned the story of Moses and Israel and the conditions under which they left Egypt. He said:

The history repeats itself. There is no use telling this story in Koran beyond its historical value and its social implication to the future generations. I am sure that the second value is what has been emphasized in this story told in Koran. The people of Moses were oppressed in Egypt and they were lost people among the Egyptians. Allah sent Moses to rescue them from such injustices. They were the best people at the time and they have to be rescued. Further, the Red Sea was separating between the Jewish and their native land and they have to cross it so as to get rid of the unjust people. Do you see [addressing me] this great similarity between us and between these people? We have been brought here from our native land. We are the lost people, and there is the sea, the Atlantic Sea, between us and our native land. We will leave this country and get rid of the devil [he means the white people] shortly.

It is clear by implication and from the general content of the discussion that he believes that he is a prophet and that his duty concerning his people is as was the duty of Moses with respect to Israel in ancient Egypt. This is clear from his first statement that “history repeats itself,” and from his challenging, in the same discussion, one of the verses in Koran declaring that Prophet Mohammed is the final prophet. He said, “What made the people in need for a prophet in the ancient times still exists today and the people may be more sinful, unjust and more devilish today than they ever had been in the whole history.” If the leader knows that I am a Moslem myself and that the leader cannot dare to express explicitly his prophecy before me, then he knows that such roundabout discussion implies that the leader believes that he is a prophet. More than that, the members of the group address him as “the prophet so and so” and he does not protest even in my presence.

In one of his discussions with the writer he referred to a verse in the Bible as saying, “I take them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.” He commented on this verse, saying, “Allah does not mean the Hebrews in this verse but he means the dark man here in America, this is Egypt here.” In rationalizing his pretension, Elijah Mohammed refers to a verse in the Bible which all the followers believe as a proof of his prophecy—namely, “I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.”³ The other proof of his prophecy is that Mr. W. D. Fard, who later became Allah himself, had told him to “teach the dark people and prepare them until [his] return back.” Anyhow, his consciousness of his prophetic role can be

proved by the content of the card which they distribute to propagate for the validity of his prophecy. The content of the card is as follows:

Mr. Elijah Mohammed

The Messenger of God to the Black People of America. Come and hear the Messenger of God. A man that was sent: Not through a vision, nor a dream, but from God Almighty Himself to teach and warn us to flee to our own God and Nation, to escape the Destruction of this Wicked Western World of Christianity. Get out of the Slave Names of this World. Freedom, Justice, and Equality awaits you in your Nation of Islam. Hear him give the true interpretation of the Signs of Time. And also of the Bible and Koran interpreted. Temples in Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Washington, New York, St. Louis and California.

All of these pretensions fit quite well within their general myth about the Bible of Christianity. The American Bible, according to their belief, is:

A Bible created by King James the Virgin, who was king of Britain in the eighteenth century, who changed the original Bible writing it in symbols so as to blind our people from knowing their status in the Bible. King James the Virgin has omitted from the Bible all what was relating to the history of the dark man. In addition to this he replaced the expression "dark people" by the term Jews throughout all the Bible. This change of the Bible and distorting it made it difficult for the dark man to understand the Bible and to know the sacred status which he occupies in the history of the world.

Every individual who is familiar with the Messianic myths among the Jews knows very well the implications of the name and prophecy of the Apostle. To make these implications clear let me mention the following Messianic story which the Jews tell among themselves:

Three days before Messiah's arrival a horn will be blown upon a high mountain by Elijah, the forerunner of Messiah. The signal will be heard throughout the world. After three days when Messiah will arrive, he will exclaim: "Let the dead arise!" And all the dead will rise and follow him to Palestine.⁴

Moreover, S. Pittik declared that "Moses was a prototype of the Messiah" and that the "Messianic Complex" had been originated in the Moses-Pharaoh story.⁵ Moses, among the Jews, was their redeemer and the man who would lead them to the "promised land." These historical Messianic myths and the oppression of the Jews by the Egyptians and the analogy between them and the Negroes in America made the leader perpetuate the Messianic myth so as to picture

himself as the expected Messiah mentioned in the Bible, once he established the fact that the language of the Bible is a symbolic language which no one can understand but the exceptional elites.

As to the reasoning through which the Apostle achieves his agitating and teaching role, I can grasp two of its peculiar characteristics:

a) What I would like to term as “evidence by analogy,” which pervades most of his speech and arguments. An example for this is what I have already said about the claim that the Bible has meant the Negroes by the word Jews because, there was a sea between the Jews and the promised land, so there is also a sea between the Negroes in America and their native land. This is in addition to the fact that Negroes are kept inferior as the Jews were in Egypt.

During the history of humanity many times God dissipated the people and kept some of them. In the time of Pharaoh, and in the flood where eight individuals kept alive with Noah. It has been mentioned in the Bible that these people will be ruined and only 144,000 will be saved. Those people who will be saved are the lost people who have been lost for 4 centuries. By implication, these are the dark people. The indication of this ruin is that we got a messenger right now because God does not ruin a people unless he gives them a warn before that. And this is what we have on the scene right now.

Such evidence by analogy sometimes takes the form of vague and unintelligible remarks, as, for example, when he told the writer that “there were 144,000 pilgrims with the prophet Mohammed in the last pilgrimage before his death.” Then he remarks to the writer, “You know what does this mean?” To which I answered, asking him, “what do you think it means?” He said:

You know that the square foot is 144 square inches and that the cubic foot is 1,728 square inches. This cubic foot is used in the structure of the building. That is what it does mean. It is spiritually expressed in a mathematical way. In terms of prophecy and prediction it means the coming of our own people at the end of the time which is just now.

b) Symbolic approach, as, for example, when he discussed in a Sunday meeting the verse in the Koran in which Allah says that “in the doomsday Allah will resurrect the dead.” The Apostle said:

Allah cannot resurrect the dead because this is quite unreasonable. However, the verse is right. Because the dead means the mentally dead, that is, the dark people of America; and to resurrect is to raise up

the dark people from mental health. That is what the verse meant, and that is now, today is the resurrection day where Allah has sent to you a messenger from among your own people.

To resort to the symbolic derivations, it seems to me, is a technique the purpose of which is to heighten the distinctiveness of the speaker in comparison to the audience. The evidence of such a proposition is in the way the speaker emphasizes his interpretation and in the way of “showing” pride after consummating the parade of his inventive superiority and his highly inspired insight and intellectuality. The recurrent usage of this technique by the Apostle has the function of supporting the dogma of the followers in his exceptional potentialities.

Roles of Others

The roles of the followers are differentiated along four lines of activities or specializations: religion, teaching, administration, and labor. Besides the Apostle there are two ministers and four missionary Sisters. The ministers play the role of preaching according to the instruction of the Apostle. Their duty outside the temple is to go to the various places where agitation or induction is possible and deliver speeches. During the summer they are accustomed to go to Washington Park and have a “circle” there. The role of the missionary Sisters is to go around among the Negro community in Chicago preaching the new religion and heralding the appearance of the prophet which the Bible has told about. Their job is confined to preaching among the females; hence, they go visiting from house to house.

The teaching roles are of two types:

a) Teaching in the University of Islam.

b) Teaching the ideology of the movement which is predicated by the Apostle along the lines of what Fard has taught. The captain of the Brothers delivers these teachings to the Brothers, and the captain of the Sisters to the Sisters. In addition to these teachings, the Brothers and Sisters receive military training, delivered by two of the Brothers to the Brothers and by the captain of the Sisters to the Sisters. Moreover, there are other members whose roles are teaching boxing and wrestling to the Brothers. Two of the Sisters teach the Sisters cooking and sewing. And an old man teaches the Sisters nursing.

In the realm of administration they have a special secretary to the Apostle, and ten other secretaries, each for a definite item of donations. The

captain of the Brothers has, beside delivering instructions and keeping control during the meetings, the role of arranging the guarding of the temple. In addition to the administrative staff, there is a group of the members whose duty is to spy and offer reports to the Apostle about the various members in the cult.

Other roles in the cult are as follows:

1. Farming on the land which the cult owns. Five of the Brothers are playing this role and live on the farm with their families.
2. The Sisters attend the temple wearing long dresses. This attracts the attention of people whenever they walk on the street or come to the temple on any means of transportation. Because of this inconvenience the Apostle bought a station wagon which they call the Sisters' Car. One of the Brothers has the role of driving this car, bringing the Sisters back and forth between their homes and the temple. This driver himself cleans the temple every day in addition to his driving.
3. In the restaurant five of the Sisters do cooking; two others serve, in addition to another brother who serves and cleans the restaurant and the store each day. Washing dishes is an expected role of all; it is a job carried out voluntarily and cooperatively. The Apostle himself plays many roles in the restaurant. Sometimes he serves the customers, sometimes he washes dishes, and most of the time he is the cashier.

Differentiation of Roles and Division of Labor

In this discussion I plan to trace the process of functional differentiation and division of labor throughout the history of the movement in Chicago. This will show clearly the transformation of the cooperative attitude into an utilitarian one and the addition of the profit principle to the original mechanism—namely, acquiring status for offering any service to the group. Our presentation will show that the preliminary phase of division of labor is not due to “a certain propensity in human nature which has in view no extensive utility; the propensity to truck, barter and exchange one thing for another,”⁶ but it has behind it the propensity to acquire status, prestige, and later on material profit. Moreover, during the development of the group, achieving a particular function shifts from being voluntarily done to being assigned by the leader of the group or through election, in which case the group assigns the person for a given job.

The process of functional differentiation begins with personal spontaneity: some of the members volunteer to offer some kind of services to the group. This voluntary activity has no mechanism behind it but the spontaneous

tendency of the member to cooperate, and through that cooperation to feel that he is acquiring some status in the action structure of the group. The volunteers do these activities in a free and informal way as long as the functions they achieve in the general action structure have yet no important place—or, to be more precise, the roles of these functions have not been recognized as yet by the group as having much importance, because of the still recent emergence of these activities and functions, which need some time to be known as expected roles accruing some necessities, rights, duties, and obligations. This stage I would like to call the stage of spontaneous cooperation in the process of functional differentiation.

At this time the function takes a formal way of achievement and becomes an expected role of a given individual or a group of individuals who begin to be conscious of their roles as having social import in the action structure of the group. Hence the role-achievement begins to acquire role-consciousness matched with satisfying feelings springing from the fact that the role began to be socially recognized by the other members of the group. The essence of the matter here is the fact that to be role-conscious means to be self-conscious, and the latter means that the person represents himself in the presence of the others' selves. Therefore, the individual playing a recognized role builds up his self-conception, which he derives from the attitudes of others toward his role and hence towards him. This stage I would call the stage of cooperation for status and prestige.

In the third stage, where the function or activity acquires the character of being necessary to the group and being an important part of the general action structure, the group, and sometimes the leader, begins to feel some kind of obligation toward the member who achieves that activity on the one hand, and on the other, the member himself develops the feeling of having a right to be paid for what he is doing. This last stage does not arise at once but it has a history through which the free achievement of the duty develops to have particular rights and obligations upon the group as a whole or upon the members individually as members of that group. This process takes place as follows: a member volunteers to help the leader, for example, in doing the clerical work in the movement. This volunteer gradually acquires the character of being a secretary, but an unpaid secretary. The leader decides to give him something as a gift to recompense his efforts in that respect. This gift, which was not given in the name of salary at all, begins to be expected, although not regularly. In the next stage this gift acquires regularity and comes to be regularly expected by the secretary. Out of this last phase of the process an assigned salary for the secretary will develop.

Another example is that of functional differentiation in the restaurant. When the group bought the restaurant the followers were competing enthusi-

astically in doing various works in the restaurant: some of them washed dishes, others cooked, some others served customers, and still others cleaned, and so on. During the days when the older Brothers and most of the Sisters go to their jobs, the children and the other free Sisters were running the restaurant. Being familiar with cooking and having lectures in the temple about how to cook, the women specialized in cooking while the children, helped by older Brothers who had no jobs or were having their rest day, were assigned other tasks in the restaurant. These older Brothers and Sisters were coming more regularly than children because children have to attend the "University of Islam." What was encouraging these Brothers and Sisters to cooperate to this extent was the fact that the Apostle himself was serving there cooperatively with them.

By this time a selective process began to operate. Several persons could not volunteer regularly because of the jobs they held outside of the temple. A few continued to carry out assigned tasks in the restaurant with regularity. Eventually, the Apostle began to pay some of them in an informal and irregular way. Thereafter, he began to pay them regular salaries and they assumed particular functions in the body of the movement.

One of the earliest followers in the movement became interested in drawing the National [the Nation of Islam flag] after he saw it for the first time while attending the first meeting of the group. Once he made a big National from cloth which he offered to the Apostle as a present. The Apostle thanked him and encouraged him. Consequent upon this encouragement, Yacob (the name of the man) began to make metal badges on which the National was drawn and offer them free to his intimate friends. Other members begun to ask Brother Yacob to do them the favor of making such badges for them. These Brothers were rewarding Brother Yacob by giving him some gifts or offering to him some few dollars. Brother Yacob began to be involved in this line of activity and he began to be creative in this field. He made another different badge for the Sisters, he began to make rings on which he engraves the National, and he began to make various pictures representing symbolically various myths or showing some sacred place as Mecca, for example, or presenting a slogan, a sacred statement or prayer. The followers compete for obtaining what Brother Yacob makes. In fact, all the symbols, slogans, and badges which every follower carries or keeps at home were made by Brother Yacob, who is paid a regular price for each piece.

The Sisters used to wrap their heads with a piece of cloth. In the summer this kind of head-wear is very inconvenient. The Sisters under such conditions developed dissatisfaction with this kind of head-wear. They raised this complaint to the Apostle who planned to see a Christian designer for this purpose. One of the Sisters is an expert in making hats. In fact, she makes hats for some of the well-known stores in Chicago. She said:

I heard about the decision of the Apostle and so I said, "Why do we resort to a Christian girl to do our head-wear while we are supposed to know better than them because they are still ignorant and blind?" That night, after thinking deeply about designing the Sisters' head-wear, I dreamed that I saw myself designing it. So I awoke and put on paper what I have designed in the dream. Next morning I showed it to the Apostle, who O.K.'d it. Ever since I began to make them and give them free to some of my acquaintances without any charge but the cost of the material. Later on I began to sell them to the Sisters. This new head-wear had been developed since one year.

When the group bought a farm, three of the brothers volunteered to work there. During the first three years no one was paid for his work. They were living on the farm with their families, trying to get their food from whatever they grew. For about a year the Apostle has assigned a little salary to be paid to each of them. The story is the same with the servant of the temple, the driver of the Sisters' car, the secretaries, the captains, the ministers, the missionary Sisters and all the others who play functional roles in the movement. Among all of these mentioned above, the only one paid a regular salary is the secretary of the Apostle, who began to receive her salary regularly since two years only. That means that all the secretaries who worked since 1932 until 1949 were unpaid workers.

Beside this spontaneous process of functional differentiation, I have noticed another process which is set in work by the selection of the Apostle himself. Through this selection the member who is selected and his role acquire status and recognition of the group from the moment of his selection. Therefore, the essential "operator" in this prestige-differentiation process, which follows the assignment of role, is the will of the leader himself, which acquires its basis from the impressions the leader has about the follower. To state it clearly and frankly, the determiner of this will is the loyalty of the follower to the Apostle, which proves itself by the support which a follower shows to the self-conception of the Apostle. The greater this support, the better the role of the supporter will be in terms of office and the higher the rank that he will occupy. The best example of this is that of Elijah, whom Fard raised from an unknown, ignorant follower to the rank of the preacher outside the temple, then to the rank of a regular minister in the temple, and later on to the rank of a messenger to the dark people.

Such functional action structure, then, began by the spontaneous elementary division of labor, which has crystallized and taken form through the course of the development of mutual expectation which resulted in differentiated functions and functionaries.

NOTES

- ¹ Elijah is a name of one of the prophets of the Jews around the ninth century B.C.
- ² Statement by Brother Joseph 8X, personal interview.
- ³ Deut. 18:17-18.
- ⁴ Samuel Pittik, "The Messianic Myth" (M.A. thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, 1918), 11.
- ⁵ Ibid., 2.
- ⁶ Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations* (London: Cannon's edition, 1904), Book I, Chapter 2.