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Islamism and Its African American Muslim Critics: Black Muslims in the Era of the Arab Cold War

Edward E. Curtis IV

Rather than treating African American Muslims as marginal Muslims, a species of Muslim largely separate from immigrant Muslims, this essay adopts black Muslim perspectives on the history of Islamism, the twentieth-century transnational ideology that sees Islam as both a political system and a religion. I argue that the contours of Islamic identity and practice among African Americans after the Second World War developed partly in response to nascent Islamist missionary efforts led by ideological participants in the so-called Arab cold war. During this era, Islamic missionary activity became a well-funded and well-organized component of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy. Several international organizations, local Islamic centers, and tract societies targeted U.S. blacks as potential allies in the struggle to construct Islamic religion as a response to Arab socialism and nationalism. As foreign and immigrant Muslim missionaries reached out to African American Muslims in the 1960s, they claimed the authority to interpret what constituted legitimate Islamic practice, encouraged African American Muslims to join their missionary organizations, and in some cases, challenged the Islamic authenticity of indigenous African American Muslim groups and leaders.

This contact and competition with the missionaries had far-reaching implications and important repercussions for African American Muslim religious practice and political identity. In one sense, African American Muslim reactions to the Islamist call reflected the ideological and cultural diversity of the thousands of African Americans who called themselves "Muslim." It is no surprise—given that there were more than a dozen different African American Muslim networks and groups by 1960—that African American Muslim responses would differ. In addition to creating the famous Nation of Islam and well-known Moorish Science Temple, African American Muslims by this date had either established or come to dominate the leadership of many Ahmadi Muslim mosques, the Islamic Brotherhood (or the State Street Mosque of

Brooklyn), the Addeynu Allahe Universal Arabic Association, the Fahamme Temple of Islam and Culture, and the First Mosque of Pittsburgh, which reportedly had subcharters in Kirkwood and St. Louis, Missouri; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Cleveland, Ohio; and Jacksonville, Florida.¹ Rather than attempting to describe all of these groups' reactions to the new missionary activity, however, I will limit my discussion to three strains of African American Muslim hermeneutics, exemplified respectively by Malcolm X, the Nation of Islam, and Shaikh Daoud Ahmed Faisal, the founder of the State Street Mosque. I show how Shaikh Daoud Ahmed Faisal aligned his community of believers with Islamist ideology; how Malcolm X became the student and ally of these new foreign and immigrant missionaries, though he resisted their politicized interpretation of Islam; and finally, how members of Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam rejected the missionaries' claims to ultimate religious authority and instead defended Elijah Muhammad's prophetic voice. These differing reactions are important, if for no other reason than they disprove the notion, at least implied in the arguments of many Islamophobes, that foreign Islamist missionaries have been pied pipers leading all indigenous U.S. Muslims toward the deadly ideology of violent jihad.

While restoring the historical agency of indigenous Muslims who responded in complex ways to foreign and immigrant Muslim groups and ideologies, this account also argues for some shared repercussions among African American Muslims. As a result of the increased immigrant and foreign Muslim presence in the United States, many more African American Muslims began to use canonical Islamic texts, including the Qur'an and in some cases, the *hadith* (the sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions) to articulate ethical, theological, political, and socioeconomic visions for themselves and other U.S. blacks. This adoption of sacred texts altered not only the aesthetics of African American Muslim religious practices, but also the communal identity of persons who now thrust themselves into an age-old, transnational conversation about the meaning of these texts. Increasing African American Muslim identification with the rest of the Muslim world also became manifest in African American Muslim visual art and poetry. Many African American Muslims literally drew and rhymed themselves closer to the imagined worldwide community of Muslim believers. Finally, I discuss how this shift in African American Muslim consciousness had significant but diverse political implications, as African American Muslims came to hold differing interpretations of their obligations to the worldwide community of Muslims and the heritage of Islam.

Twentieth-Century African American Islam in Transnational Context

After the Second World War, religious and cultural exchange between indigenous African American Muslims and foreign Muslims, especially from the Middle East, expanded dramatically. In one sense, this expansion of ties was an acceleration of trends that began decades before, during the flowering of Islam as a twentieth-century African American religious tradition.² As the modern anticolonial struggle among persons of African descent became an international black freedom discourse, more and more African Americans and English-speaking people of color began to link the self-determination of African-descended people to the fate of Muslim persons and Muslim-majority lands. The nineteenth-century pioneer in this regard was Edward Wilmot Blyden, the African American Liberian professor and politician, whose English-language works, read in Britain, the Americas, and West Africa, praised Islam, the Qur'an, and West African Muslim society as effective vehicles of modern black manhood and nationalism.³ Blyden's linkage of Islam and black nationalism was perpetuated in the English-speaking black world by the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Arnold Ford, the musical director of the UNIA, included allusions to Allah in some of his movement songs, and the UNIA's *Negro World* supported pan-Islamic attempts to resist European imperialism. Marcus Garvey, the UNIA's founder, even compared himself to the Prophet Muhammad, though he was careful to contrast what he deemed his political aspirations with the religious goals of the Prophet.⁴ Another African American leader, Timothy Drew, went further, proclaimed himself a Muslim prophet, and established the Moorish Science Temple in 1920s Chicago. Noble Drew Ali insisted that black Americans were Muslim in religion, Asiatic in race, and Moorish in nationality, and called on "Moors" to return to their original religion of Islam and their true national identity.⁵ Foreign Muslim missionaries also promoted the link between black peoplehood and Islam in the 1920s, and South Asian missionaries from the Ahmadiyya community of Muslims successfully recruited hundreds, if not thousands, of African Americans to Islam in this era.⁶ Established in 1889 in the Punjab by Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908), the Ahmadiyya movement was a modern messianic group that sought the revival of Islam. Many of Ahmad's followers believed him to be a *mujaddid*, or a renewer of religion; the Islamic *mahdi*, an important figure in Islamic eschatology; and the Christian messiah. Though the group would face claims of heresy from other Muslims, Ahmadis were among the most successful Muslim missionaries in the first half of the 1900s.⁷ In 1920,

South Asian Ahmadi missionary Muhammad Sadiq arrived in the United States, and as an astute observer of America's racist society, quickly focused his evangelizing on African Americans. He promised black converts that they would experience true brotherhood and equality in Islam, claiming that "there is no question of color" in the East.⁸ He also offered Islam as the cultural and religious heritage of African Americans, stolen from them when the "Christian profiteers brought you out of your native lands of Africa and in Christianizing you made you forget the religion and language of your forefathers—which were Islam and Arabic."⁹ The Ahmadi newspaper, the *Moslem Sunrise*, featured the stories of great black ancestors in Islam, persons such as Bilal ibn Rabah, the first prayer caller, and included pictures of black American Ahmadi leaders such as P. Nathaniel Johnson, or Sheik Ahmad Din.¹⁰ The Ahmadiyya also influenced many of the early independent African American mosques. The First Mosque of Pittsburgh, for example, supported an Ahmadi teacher for a time, and the First Cleveland Mosque was established by a former Ahmadi, African American Wali Akram, in the 1930s.¹¹ It is also possible that W. D. Fard, the mysterious Detroit salesman who established the Nation of Islam in 1930, was influenced by Ahmadi interpretations of Islam.¹² But whether or not Fard was touched by the Ahmadi missionaries, it is clear that Elijah Muhammad was. Muhammad and his cadre of intellectuals regularly quoted, verbatim, from Ahmadi literature, including Ahmadi translations of the Qur'an.¹³

In sum, from the time of its origins as a topic in international black English-language discourse, Islam was associated if not with an explicit black political nationalism then at least with ideas of black self-determination and shared historical destiny. African American Islam was also an international discourse shaped in part by contact and exchange with persons from Muslim-majority lands. But after the Second World War, during the era of decolonization and the "rising tide of color," African American interests in the link between black nationalism and Islam became even more prominent.¹⁴ More and more persons in the African American diaspora identified Islam and Muslims as potential allies in the struggle against European neocolonialism and white supremacy, often framing the domestic struggle for civil rights as part of a global struggle for the self-determination of all persons of color. Malcolm X, for example, famously spoke of the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference of nonaligned countries in Bandung, Indonesia, as a turning point in the affairs of the world, as people of color everywhere vowed not only to reject the yoke of neocolonial political control, but also to eschew a colonized consciousness. After the 1956 Suez Crisis, Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser emerged as a powerful symbol

of victory in this third-world struggle against imperialism and inspired admiration among many African Americans, especially those associated with Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. When Nasser hosted the Afro-Asian conference in 1958, Elijah Muhammad telegraphed the Egyptian president to assure him that “freedom, justice and equality for all Africans and Asians is of far-reaching importance, not only to you of the East, but also to over 17,000,000 of your long-lost brothers of African-Asian descent here in the West.” Some members of the Nation of Islam hung Nasser’s picture in their homes. Nasser was received enthusiastically by Muslims and non-Muslims alike when he visited Harlem in 1960.¹⁵

Black American interests in Islam and the Muslim Orient went beyond the explicitly political, but even cultural and aesthetic identification with various things Islamic was often viewed as a form of political protest against the racial status quo. Several well-known African American jazzmen became converts in the 1940s and 1950s, largely under the missionary umbrella of the Ahmadiyya movement. Many of them played for Dizzy Gillespie. Antiguan Alfonso Nelson Rainey became Talib Dawud. Tenor saxophonist Bill Evans became Yusef Lateef. Lyn Hope converted and changed his name to Hajj Rashid. According to Gillespie, they converted in order to fight Jim Crow and the stigma of “being colored.” In 1953, *Ebony* covered this trend by publishing an article titled “Moslem Musicians Take Firm Stand against Racism.”¹⁶ During this period, the Nation of Islam also embraced jazz artist converts, and jazz groups played at temple and mosque events.¹⁷

The broader African American interest in things Islamic and Muslim and the heightened profile of black Muslims such as Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X also attracted the gaze of Muslims overseas. Nasser, for example, responded to Elijah Muhammad’s 1958 telegram, extending his “best wishes to our brothers of Africa and Asia living in the West.” Elijah Muhammad visited Egypt in 1959, and one of his sons, Akbar Muhammad, studied there during the 1960s.¹⁸ These contacts between Egypt and the NOI begin to indicate the extent to which African American Muslims became potential foreign policy allies and symbols of political struggle, not only in the grand struggle for the freedom of all formerly colonized peoples, but also in the more local and regional struggles waged by differing interest groups in the Middle East. To understand foreign and immigrant Muslim engagement, especially Arab Muslim engagement with African American Muslims, it is necessary to explore more deeply how the financial, diplomatic, and cultural outreach of Arab Muslims was often colored by these local and regional interests. In the postwar era, the neocolonial

elites and newly empowered military juntas who had seized authority within political boundaries initially drawn to serve European and U.S. interests were forced to negotiate the interference of superpowers, the pull of regional desires for pan-Arab unity, and the challenge of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.¹⁹ Part of their struggle was ideological, and although various national elites may have celebrated the solidarity of all formerly colonized peoples and touted both pan-Arabism and pan-Islamic unity, such rhetoric was often deployed to buoy their own national legitimacy and manage popular opinion.²⁰

One seldom mentioned but pivotal crucible of African American Muslim and foreign Muslim interaction was what Malcolm Kerr famously referred to as the “Arab Cold War.” The Arab cold war was a conflict waged primarily between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Nasser’s Egypt, which were locked in both ideological and military struggles from 1958 through the 1960s. The battle of ideas commenced shortly after Nasser successfully entered into a political union with Syria in the winter of 1958. The United Arab Republic (UAR), as the two states became known, signaled the growth of both revolutionary socialism and pan-Arabism, the movement to unite all Arab peoples into one political entity expressing their shared historical and linguistic roots. A few months later, when revolution overturned the Iraqi monarchy and an uprising occurred against President Sham’un in Lebanon, monarchs throughout the Middle East feared that Nasserism might actually succeed. The Arab cold war continued into the 1960s, perhaps reaching its apex in 1962, when Egypt sent troops to support the leftist revolution in Yemen. Saudi Arabia threw its financial and political clout behind the Yemeni monarchy.²¹

But Saudi Arabia and its allies also forged a secondary front in this war, an ideological effort designed to bolster its legitimacy in the West and among Muslim states and persons. This was a battle for hearts and minds, and it was joined through Saudi Arabia’s generous support and careful organization of global missionary activities. Up to this point, missionary societies such as the Muslim Brothers in Egypt and the Society of the Call and Guidance in South Asia aspired mostly to change Islamic practices within historically Islamic lands.²² By the 1960s, however, Saudi Arabia’s aid allowed these groups’ ideas to be broadcast, printed, and distributed around the world. In 1961, Saudi Arabia established a new university in Medina committed to the training of Muslim missionaries. The following year, as tension over Yemen escalated, the government also supported the founding of the Muslim World League, whose statement of purpose included a commitment to global missionary work. Not surprisingly, the conference was strongly anti-Nasser, promoting a vision of

pan-Islam that hoped to counter the powerful Arab populist.²³ An impressive array of Muslim personages attended the organization's inaugural meeting, including Mawlana Mawdudi of Pakistan and Said Ramadan of Egypt. One of the most influential intellectuals of Islamic reform and revival in the twentieth century, Pakistani ideologue and Jama 'at-i Islami (Islamic party) founder Mawdudi argued that the *shari'a*, or Islamic law and ethics, provides God's blueprint for all human societies, which should be organized into an Islamic state.²⁴ Egyptian representative Said Ramadan was the son-in-law of Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brothers, an Islamist organization that Nasser came to oppose as he consolidated power in postrevolutionary Egypt. Seeking refuge from Nasser's repression in 1958, Said Ramadan immigrated to Switzerland, where he established, with Saudi assistance, the Centre Islamique des Eaux-Vives, an institution that became one of the nodes in a transnational Islamist intellectual network.²⁵ Like other Muslim Brothers, Ramadan insisted that Islam was a total way of life, applicable as much to public affairs as to private morality.²⁶

Students, visitors, and refugees from the Middle East brought these Islamist ideas with them to the United States during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Confronting what they considered to be overly assimilated American Muslims, some Arab students immediately challenged the "liberal" and "Westernized" practices of various Muslim persons and organizations.²⁷ At the Islamic Center of New England, which had been built partly with a 1962 donation from King Saud, students made available various pieces of Islamic literature not previously translated into English.²⁸ In 1963, students from a variety of Muslim-majority countries gathered at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, to establish the Muslim Students Association (MSA). Among the founding members were three Muslim Brothers from Egypt. Using their positions on college campuses, these activists helped to make the MSA one of the most successful immigrant-led organizations in propagating Islamist ideas throughout North America.²⁹ In some cases, student advocates met African American Muslims who were already proponents of Islamist ideologies; in other cases, they confronted African American Muslims who had never heard the Islamist message.

African American Islamism in the Era of the Arab Cold War

One African American pioneer who had already articulated Islamist ideas in print by 1950 was Caribbean immigrant Shaikh Daoud Ahmed Faisal (d. 1980), reportedly the son of a Moroccan father and a Jamaican mother. Echoing the

Islamist call that all societies must be governed by the Islamic *shari'a*, his book, *Islam the True Faith: The Religion of Humanity*, proclaimed that human beings should submit their societies to the authority of God, the Prophet, and the *shari'a*.³⁰ Shaikh Daoud was a pioneer who successfully converted hundreds, if not thousands, of African Americans to a Sunni interpretation of Islam at his Brooklyn-based State Street mosque. His adventuresome spirit led him to establish a short-lived Muslim village in rural New York State, but he achieved his greatest success as leader of the mosque in Brooklyn. In 1939, he leased a brownstone at 143 State Street in Brooklyn Heights, just a block away from the heart of the Arab American community on Atlantic Avenue. He called his congregation the Islamic Mission of America in New York.³¹ Shaikh Daoud welcomed both indigenous and immigrant Muslims to his mosque, where he warned them not to let the allure of the material world take them away from their Islamic practice.³²

Before most Muslim missionaries had arrived from Afro-Eurasia, Shaikh Daoud's intellectual life bore the influence of Islamic reform and renewal movements. His publications, which often borrowed from other Muslim missionary tracts, sought to inform the American public on the basics of Islamic religion. They described the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, reproduced large excerpts from the Qur'an, taught believers how to make the *salat*, or daily prayers, and detailed and praised contemporary Muslim heads of state. As a New Yorker, Shaikh Daoud came to know Muslims who traveled to the city from various countries, especially diplomats who worked at the United Nations.³³ In the 1950 edition of *Islam the True Path*, he acknowledged the assistance not only of his wife, Khadijah, but also M. A. Faridi of Iran, Bashir Ahmed Khan of Pakistan, and others from Afro-Eurasia.³⁴ The sheikh was also pictured in this volume wearing light-colored Arab robes, sitting cross-legged on a prayer rug, or oriental carpet. In his hands he held the Qur'an, deeply contemplating its contents in the manner of an Old World Islamic scholar.

His mission was devoted to converting everyone in the United States to what he considered to be the only true religion of humankind. The profession of Islamic faith, he said, was a prerequisite to peace and security, as was Islam's implementation as a form of government and law based on the Qur'an. The holy book, he argued, "contains the complete Revelations of 'Allah,' the 'Almighty God,' the Lord of the worlds with the complete Laws for the government and guidance of humanity and as a protection for us from evil. The Criterion of all Laws is enclosed in the Holy Quran."³⁵ Shaikh Daoud's old-time missionary techniques, evangelical in tone, were harshly critical of Jews

and Christians who ignored the truth that would set them free. He practically begged them to convert to Islam, warning that no one would be saved, no one would have “true religion,” unless and until they became Muslims. Attacking the growing ecumenism among some American monotheists after the Second World War, Shaikh Daoud explicitly rejected the idea that all Abrahamic faiths were equally valid paths to salvation.³⁶ His criticism of Jews and Christians was grounded both in an Islamic critique of Jewish and Christian religious claims and in his experience as an African American New Yorker who had faced discrimination at the hands of some Jews and Christians. “The Jews of America are the proudest of all the people,” he claimed. “If by chance a man of colour would move into their neighborhood they would raise such a rumpus which would give one cause to believe that that one person had committed murder.”³⁷ He also criticized Christianity as a form of white supremacy. “Christianity,” he claimed, is but a “social order, a philosophy, based on certain principles of White Supremacy, that White people are superior to their human brethren who are not White.” Like other twentieth-century African American converts to Islam, he viewed Christianity as “an instrument of conquest.”³⁸

On the one hand, Shaikh Daoud’s comments about Jews and Christians sound similar to other Islamic traditions of anti-Jewish and anti-Christian polemic grounded in a sense of religious superiority and particularity—a rhetorical mode hardly unique to Islam.³⁹ On the other hand, Faisal’s critique also reflects a reading of history shaped by the racist contexts in which he was living—in 1950 and after, white Jews and Christians, from this black man’s point of view, did indeed seem like godless creatures when they discriminated against people of color in their own neighborhoods and in foreign lands.⁴⁰ In asserting that Islam was the solution to such problems, Shaikh Daoud was participating in multiple discourses international and local in scope. He did not resort to violence to achieve his end; instead, he relied on quintessentially American missionary techniques: he wrote missionary tracts, preached of divine justice and the chance of salvation, and established a successful congregation devoted to his teachings.⁴¹ According to one scholar, he assiduously avoided any politically subversive activities and instructed his followers to follow all U.S. laws.⁴²

In fact, some of his followers left the Islamic Mission precisely because they believed Shaikh Daoud to be overly supportive of the political status quo.⁴³ Many of them found their fellow congregants at the State Street mosque to be morally lax and insufficiently pious. In the 1960s, some of Faisal’s followers broke away to form the Ya-Sin (pronounced yah-seen) mosque, which sought

to separate from mainstream society so that believers could adhere as strictly as possible to *shari'a*. They were influenced in part by Hafis Mahbub, a Pakistani member of the Tablighi Jama'at, a Muslim reform group known mainly for its emphasis on spiritual purification and world renunciation over political entanglements. In 1960, Faisal reportedly hired Mahbub as a religious teacher. African American followers Rijab Mahmud and Yahya Abdul-Karim adopted Mahbub's call for "personal transformation" by living a life in strict adherence with the ethical example of the Prophet Muhammad of Arabia.⁴⁴ Women at Ya-Sin often covered themselves with both a head scarf and a face veil. Some men practiced polygamy.⁴⁵ Their movement would become known as Darul Islam, or the abode of Islam. By the 1970s, leader Yahya Abdul-Karim would declare that Muslims should avoid participation in U.S. politics and eschew friendships with all Americans, non-Muslim and Muslim, alike, if they did not practice the "correct" form of Islam. Eventually, the movement spawned other African American Muslim groups, including the network of twenty mosques led by Jamil al-Amin, the former H. Rap Brown, who became known for his urban revitalization work in Atlanta.⁴⁶ All of these African American Islamist groups dreamed of a morally revived Islamic society, but they sought to realize that goal largely by personal example and the organization of utopian communities, not through violent *jihad*. Though many of these African American Muslims shared the same basic Islamist ideas, they were fractured into different groups with different leaders, and they often translated Islamism into an American idiom.

Malcolm X in the Missionary Maelstrom

Despite the growing power of Islamist ideas, many African American Muslims in the age of the Arab cold war rejected the arguments and authority of the Muslim missionaries and the ideology of Islamism. This was especially true in Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam (NOI), which was harshly criticized by Sunni Muslims of all stripes for its black separatist version of Islam. The rise of the NOI's profile as the most popular African American Muslim movement in the United States coincided with the increased presence and impact of foreign and immigrant Muslim missionaries. Most Americans, including immigrant Muslims, knew little about the NOI until the late 1950s. Then, in 1959, New York's WNTA-TV aired a five-part series about the movement, hosted by Mike Wallace, titled "The Hate That Hate Produced."⁴⁷ Following that program, stories about the NOI appeared in national magazines such as *Time* and *U.S.*

News and World Report. This coverage was generally negative, criticizing the movement as an anti-American or black supremacist organization. African American civil rights leaders, including Roy Wilkins of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), denounced the NOI as a hate group.⁴⁸

As negative portrayals in the mainstream press and criticism from black leaders increased, more and more Muslims in the United States joined to condemn, dispute, and reject the teachings of Elijah Muhammad and the NOI. Their criticism of the NOI was a public performance of Muslim identity that expressed the growing cultural power of foreign and immigrant Muslims. By making such public pronouncements, whether they had been formally trained in the Islamic religious sciences or not, these self-appointed spokesmen for Islam attempted to define the doctrinal boundaries of Islamic religion. As Malcolm X, the chief spokesperson for Elijah Muhammad, made his way around the college lecture circuit, he was constantly hounded by Muslim students and others who considered themselves the guardians of “true” Islam. He mustered Qur’anic verses and his best exegetical rhetoric to defend Elijah Muhammad’s unique Islamic mythos, but to little avail among his critics. Malcolm’s inability to bring them over to his side seemed to bother him or at least to intrigue the famous debater. In 1962, for example, one Muslim student at Dartmouth, Ahmed Osman, traveled to NOI Mosque No. 7 to question Malcolm about Islam. After grilling Malcolm in the question-and-answer section of his talk, Osman came away “unsatisfied.” When Osman began to send Malcolm literature from the Centre Islamique des Eaux-Vives in Geneva, Malcolm read it and asked for more. In another incident, Arab students from UCLA surrounded Malcolm after a March 1963 appearance on the Ben Hunter Show in Los Angeles. After hearing the students argue that his belief in white devils was un-Islamic, Malcolm became quite disturbed, according to journalist Louis Lomax, who was accompanying Malcolm at the time.⁴⁹

These students and the larger trend of which they were part had a profound influence on Malcolm’s religious life.⁵⁰ Perhaps their criticism of Elijah Muhammad’s Islamic legitimacy was one contributing factor in Malcolm’s defection from the NOI in 1964. But even if Malcolm left for other reasons—such as Elijah Muhammad’s moral failings and the NOI’s lack of direct political action⁵¹—his subsequent profession of Islam certainly adopted the ideas and symbols of the new Muslim missionaries. After Malcolm X broke away, he turned to Dr. Mahmoud Youssef Shawarbi, a University of Cairo professor and Fulbright Fellow in the United States who was teaching at

Fordham University.⁵² Malcolm knew of Shawarbi through the numerous immigrant Muslims, especially students, who had been confronting him after his various lectures and appearances. “Those orthodox Muslims whom I had met, one after another, had urged me to meet and talk with a Dr. Mahmoud Youssef Shawarbi,” he said in his *Autobiography*.⁵³ Shawarbi encouraged Malcolm to make the *hajj*, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, and instructed him in the fundamental elements of Sunni Islam.⁵⁴ After training Malcolm in the rudiments of Sunni Islamic thought and practice, Shawarbi gave Malcolm a letter of recommendation, a copy of *The Eternal Message of Muhammad* by the renowned pan-Islamist Abd al-Rahman Azzam, and the phone number of Azzam’s son, who happened to be married to the daughter of Saudi Prince Faysal.⁵⁵ The elder Azzam was one of pan-Islam’s most important figures. A father of Arab nationalism and a distinguished Egyptian diplomat, Azzam was a chief architect of the Arab League and served as its first secretary general from 1945 to 1952. But like so many others, he lost favor after Nasser came to power, finding refuge in Saudi Arabia, where he became a leading polemicist and author.⁵⁶ His *Eternal Message of Muhammad*, available in a 1993 edition, was a prime example of a popular modern Islamic polemic that both defended Islam against Western critics and advocated a vision of the ideal Islamic nation-state. Islam, Azzam said, was a “faith, a law, a way of life, a nation, and state.” Contrary to Western assumptions, Azzam implied, Islam was a highly modern religious tradition that promoted tolerance, removed superstition, and encouraged mercy, charity, industriousness, fairness, and brotherhood in the hearts and minds of its adherents.⁵⁷

Malcolm read the book while flying over the Atlantic Ocean on his way to Mecca, and then met Azzam himself during the pilgrimage. On April 13, 1964, Malcolm departed JFK International Airport with a one-way plane ticket to Jidda, Saudi Arabia.⁵⁸ When Malcolm arrived on the Arabian Peninsula, Saudi authorities detained him for special interrogation. After fretting for some time, Malcolm telephoned Azzam’s son, Dr. Omar Azzam. The Azzams immediately interceded with the proper authorities, vouching for Malcolm when he faced an examination by the *hajj* court, the legal entity that decides whether one is a legitimate Muslim able to participate in the pilgrimage. In addition, the elder Azzam insisted that Malcolm stay in his suite at the Jedda Palace Hotel. Later, the Saudi government officially extended its welcome when the deputy chief of protocol, Muhammad Abdul Azziz Maged, gave Malcolm a private car for his travels around the kingdom.⁵⁹

Because of the Saudis’ hospitality, and because of what he witnessed during the pilgrimage rites, Malcolm issued a strong endorsement of Sunni Islam.

He argued, famously, that Islam was a religion of racial equality and brotherhood—which is what his Saudi hosts hoped to hear. After Malcolm completed the pilgrimage, Prince Faysal invited him for an audience. The prince quizzed Malcolm about the Nation of Islam, carefully suggesting that if what he had read in Egyptian papers were true, they did not practice the real Islam. Further, the prince reminded Malcolm that due to the abundance of English literature on Islam “there was no excuse for ignorance, and no reason for sincere people to allow themselves to be misled.”⁶⁰ Prince Faysal, constructing himself as an authority on proper Islamic practice, apparently wanted to make sure that Malcolm understood the meaning of his royal hospitality.

Malcolm sustained these relationships with various Saudi-financed missionary groups until his untimely death. During September 1964, Malcolm left for another pilgrimage to Mecca.⁶¹ During this *umra*, or “lesser” pilgrimage, Malcolm underwent training as an evangelist by the Muslim World League, the organization that had been established in 1962 to propagate an Islamist interpretation of Islam around the world. Shaykh Muhammad Sarur al-Sabban, secretary general of the organization and a descendant of black slaves, supervised his education. The University of Medina granted Malcolm several scholarships for U.S. students who wanted to study there. According to Richard W. Murphy, then second secretary at the U.S. embassy in Jidda, Malcolm granted an interview to a Jiddan newspaper, *al-Bilad*, in which he “took pains . . . to deprecate his reputation as a political activist and dwelt mainly on his interest in bringing sounder appreciation of Islam to American Negroes.”⁶²

Though these missionaries had a profound effect on Malcolm, he had a serious disagreement with some of them about the question of black political liberation in the United States. One of Malcolm X’s last press interviews was given to *Al-Muslimoon*, a journal published by Said Ramadan’s Centre Islamique des Eaux-Vives in Geneva. Malcolm had visited the Islamic center’s director, Said Ramadan, in 1964. As mentioned above, Ramadan, son-in-law of Muslim Brothers’ founder Hasan al-Banna, was one of several persons who helped to establish the league with the support of Saudi Arabia. Like Dr. Omar Azzam, Ramadan strongly asserted the view that Islam was both a religion and a state, the solution to all of humanity’s economic, cultural, and political problems, including the oppression of black persons in the United States. In his written questionnaire, Ramadan challenged Malcolm about his continued focus on racial identity and the need for black liberation, asserting that the conversion of Americans to Islam would solve such problems. Malcolm X completed his answers to Ramadan’s questions on February 20, 1965, one day before his as-

sassination. Malcolm disagreed with Ramadan's view and insisted that while he would always be a devout Muslim, his first duty in life was to work for the political liberation of all black persons around the globe.⁶³ While Malcolm was no less committed to Islam as a religious and spiritual path, he rejected the view that Islam could offer a specific solution to every political problem. "My fight is two-fold, my burden is double, my responsibilities multiple . . . material as well as spiritual, political as well as religious, racial as well as non-racial," he told a crowd in Cairo. "I will never hesitate to let the entire world know the hell my people suffer from America's deceit and her hypocrisy, as well as her oppression."⁶⁴ Malcolm remained as committed as ever to a program of political liberation that remained outside the purview of his commitments as a Sunni Muslim. Though he had received Arab Muslims' financial support, their religious imprimatur, and their friendship, Malcolm resisted the Islamist view of his allies and sponsors.

Instead, Malcolm's break with the Nation of Islam freed him to articulate a powerful pan-Africanist politics.⁶⁵ By the time he had declared his independence from Elijah Muhammad in 1964, Malcolm had already cultivated ties to other black nationalists in New York and had met several leaders of the nonaligned movement, including President Sukarno of Indonesia, President Castro of Cuba, and President Nasser of Egypt.⁶⁶ He furthered such connections throughout his travels in 1964, much of which he spent in Africa. During his May visit to Nigeria, he proudly acquired a new title, "Omowale," or the son who had come home. That year, Malcolm also met with Kwame Nkrumah, president of Ghana; Milton Obote, president of Uganda; and Jomo Kenyatta, president of Kenya; and he attended two Africa Summit Conferences, where he represented his own Organization of Afro-American Unity, a group he had modeled on the Organization of African Unity.⁶⁷ Until his death in February 1965, Malcolm also sharply criticized U.S. foreign policy toward Africa, especially U.S. support for Moise Tshombe's regime in the Congo. He stated, correctly it turns out, that the United States had supported the overthrow of Patrice Lumumba, who had helped to expel Belgian forces, and he wondered aloud whether he should recruit African American freedom fighters to fight Tshombe's regime.⁶⁸ In a similar way, his domestic politics focused on finding black solutions to black problems, and his rearticulations of black nationalist themes included calls for racial solidarity in the face of white supremacy. His politics may have been radical, but they were not Islamist. Malcolm X did not believe Islamism was the solution to the problems of black people. Only black people, reaching across continents and across confessional lines, could solve black problems.

Transnational Reverberations in the Nation of Islam

The rejection of the Islamists' authority was even more profound in the NOI, which would not permit other Muslims to define what it meant to be an authentic Muslim, as Elijah Muhammad himself made clear: "Neither Jeddah or Mecca have sent me! I am sent from Allah and not from the Secretary General of the Muslim League," he said, referring to the Muslim World League, created in 1962.⁶⁹ The NOI had its own system of rituals and code of ethics, which relied more on the prophecies of Elijah Muhammad than on the *shari'a*. But intellectuals in the NOI were not indifferent to the criticisms of other Muslims. Elijah Muhammad and his lieutenants were extremely sensitive to public opinion and vulnerable to attacks from other Muslims, as outlined in the examination of Malcolm X's efforts to defend Elijah Muhammad above. Like Malcolm X, they were also influenced by the new ideas, texts, pamphlets, translations, stories, and symbols circulated by the Muslim missionaries in the United States. The NOI's reactions show just how important the missionaries and their ideas were to the development of African American Islam and American Islam as a whole.

For example, *Muhammad Speaks*, the NOI's newspaper of record from 1961 until the middle 1970s, frequently published endorsements of Elijah Muhammad and the NOI by mainstream Asian Muslim leaders. Like other so-called new religious movements, the NOI used appeals to traditional religious authorities in an effort to legitimate their movement.⁷⁰ In addition to citing foreign authorities to counter charges of illegitimacy, a whole cadre of intellectuals inside the organization, including NOI ministers and newspaper columnists, responded to Muslim criticisms of Elijah Muhammad's Islamic bona fides by constructing him as a qur'anically sanctioned prophet. For example, the prominent Nation of Islam cartoonist Eugene XXX, or Eugene Majied, frequently incorporated images and passages from the Qur'an into his drawings of Elijah Muhammad, who was depicted variously as a doctor healing the "deaf and dumb Negro," as a Daniel fighting off critics, or as a Moses plaguing Pharaoh Lyndon Johnson.⁷¹ Others, including Minister Abdul Salaam and columnist Tynnetta Deanar, fiercely defended their prophet by citing the Qur'an.⁷² A few NOI intellectuals sought ideological rapprochement with the critics by reinterpreting the mission of Elijah Muhammad in terms more suitable to Sunni orthodoxy or asking the critics to adopt a more sympathetic, theologically pluralistic view of Elijah Muhammad's claims.⁷³

This engagement with Elijah Muhammad's critics represented a remarkable moment of contact and confrontation. As a result, NOI intellectuals increas-

ingly read Islamic texts, especially the Qur'an. In some cases, this deeper engagement with Islamic texts and traditions led to dissension and outright rebellion among NOI intellectuals, as was the case with Elijah Muhammad's son, Wallace D. Muhammad.⁷⁴ However they answered the question of Elijah Muhammad's legitimacy, all of these intellectuals, card-carrying members of the NOI and defectors alike, had something in common. They had become part of an old Islamic tradition—a transnational conversation about the meaning of the Holy Qur'an.⁷⁵

This moment of contact and confrontation also led to a shift in the mental geography of many African American Muslims in the NOI, as artists and poets incorporated new Islamic names, places, dates, figures, and ideas in their historical imaginings of black identity. This deployment of Islamic signs was part of a larger trend in black American culture that represented a re-Orient-ation of African American politics and religion toward the Middle East more generally, as Melani McAlister has argued.⁷⁶ But for African American Muslim members of the NOI, this was a collective reorientation not only toward the Middle East, but also toward other places and times in which blacks/Muslims had lived. African American Muslims in the NOI located the story of black/Muslim people in many epochs and locales, including ancient Egypt, Muslim West Africa, Asia, a mythical Arabia, and the classical period of Islam during and immediately after the time of Prophet Muhammad of Arabia. These black Muslims “moved across” time and space, constructing their contemporary identities by imagining who they had been in the past.⁷⁷

Such re-Orient-ation is expressed perfectly in a 1967 poem by William E. X published in *Muhammad Speaks*:

From the Land of the Hot Sun
 The Tigris and the Nile
 From the Sun Baked Valleys of Egypt
 To the Faraway Himalayas
 Down Again into Tibet
 And China
 And then Pygmy Country
 Where Tiny Black People Grow Very Tall
 In their Smallness
 Of Stature
 Black Man!
 Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Persia
 Lands of Splendor
 And the Prayer is to Allah
 And the Tongue is Arabic

Sometimes Different
 But the Melodic Beauty
 Is One and Same
 Black Man!
 Black Man
 Giant of Giants.⁷⁸

In this poem, titled “Black Man,” black/Muslim geography includes Asia, which had been constructed as a racial home by African American Muslims at least since the 1927 publication of Noble Drew Ali’s *Holy Koran of the Moorish Science Temple*. Brother William’s poem recognizes the diverse linguistic, phenotypical, and geographic roots of blacks/Muslims, but insists that on the whole blacks are still one and the same. In his poetic romp around Asia and Africa, Brother William sees the Muslim “black man” as possessing a common god, language, and character—all of which are viewed as Islamic. Whether the black man lives in the Middle East, China, or even Tibet, he is, at heart, a Muslim. There are countless other examples of this re-siting of black Muslim identity, including several cartoons by NOI artist Eugene Majied that drew on elements of classical Islamic history to create and celebrate black Muslim time and space.

In one such cartoon, Majied retold the story of Khawlah bint Azdar, a heroine of the campaign to conquer Damascus in 634–35 CE. The likely source for Majied’s narrative was Syed Sulaiman Nadwi’s *Heroic Deeds of Muslim Women*, a book offered for sale in *Muhammad Speaks* by Books and Things, a Muslim bookstore on Lenox Avenue in New York City.⁷⁹ Majied’s transliterations of Arabic names and his recounting of the story parallel the Nadwi version in precise fashion. This reliance on Nadwi’s text helps to illustrate the flow of ideas from the missionaries to African American Muslims inside the NOI, since Nadwi was a prominent Sunni Muslim scholar from India.⁸⁰

In Majied’s cartoon, a male teacher at the University of Islam, the primary and secondary school of the NOI, addresses veiled female students in a history class. He proclaims that “no woman of the Caucasian West can compare in bravery, valor, or martyrdom with our Muslim sister[s] of that time!”⁸¹ Women, according to the teacher, followed men into war and tended to horses, weapons, and the wounded. They buried the dead and fed the living. But in the siege of Damascus, the teacher explained, women were forced into a more aggressive role. “The people,” the teacher said, “were under the heels of the Romans, and were being fed Christianity (much like the American so-called Negro today).”⁸²

Abu Bakr, the first caliph of Islam, “directed Khalid Bin Walid [a general] to lay siege on Damascus—and remove the death-grip of Christianity.”

Such parallels, drawn between the Muslims of Arabia and the black Muslims of the United States, were a frequent feature of NOI discourse during the 1960s, as NOI members reached into the history of Islam to understand their own history and the trials of their prophet in America. The comparison of Muslims in the golden age of Islam and Muslims in North America also shows how the introduction of Islamic ideas from abroad does not necessarily lead to widespread agreement on their meaning. The signs, once present, can be appropriated in any number of ways.

As Majied’s tale continues, we learn that Muslim forces had effectively sealed the ancient city of Damascus, when another “Roman” army of ninety thousand marched on Muslim forces in a place south of Damascus called Ajnadayn. The Muslims, only twenty-four thousand strong, were outnumbered. In response, Khalid ibn al-Walid ended the siege on Damascus and turned his forces toward Ajnadayn. The Damascenes, however, saw a chance for revenge and attacked the contingent’s rearguard, the section in which Muslim women were traveling. One particularly brave woman, Khawlah bint Azdar, swore in the name of God to fight the “infidels” unto death. Under attack, Khawlah grabbed a tent pole and subdued one of the assailants, crying “Allah is the Greatest!”⁸³ Soon her comrades followed suit. By the time they had finished, thirty Damascenes were dead and the honor of the Muslim women was saved. “Thus,” the teacher announced, “the names of those brave women of Islam—Khawlah . . . Afira . . . Afara . . . Salmah—will live in history.” He added that “by following Messenger Elijah Muhammad, today’s black woman will make history!”⁸⁴

Whether it was through cartoons or poems, this kind of re-Orienting of African American mental geography toward the Muslim world had important implications for NOI members’ sense of religious community. Though some of their symbols, texts, and narratives had been adopted from foreign and immigrant missionaries, members of the NOI reappropriated such raw materials in their own understandings of what it meant to be a Muslim. Black Muslims in the NOI looked beyond the black Atlantic world to form their communal identities and created narratives that linked the history of black people to this history of Islam. They felt allegiance not only to the black nation but also to a community of Muslims who might be members of several different nations. Elijah Muhammad and many of his followers did not define the collective identity of blacks *exclusively* in terms of a desire for a separate nation or polity. Many in the NOI constructed black identity in terms of a shared

history that was defined by its Islamic character. Of course, members offered differing understandings of their shared black/Islamic heritage, and they sited Islam in multiple times and places. Refusing to locate the history of blacks in one country or even on one continent, these stories adopted a transnational perspective toward black identity that rested upon its common Islamic roots. The radical implications of such identity making would become clear in the 1970s and beyond, when some black intellectuals, especially Chancellor Williams, Molefi Asante, and later, Henry Louis Gates Jr., came to depict Islam as an enemy to or at least a foreign element within African cultures and civilizations.⁸⁵ Such reactions, dubbed “black orientalism” by Sherman Jackson, are difficult to imagine in the absence of a culturally influential and institutionally successful African American Islam. At the least, it is clear that Islam, however constituted, had become a potent signifier of black identity for some African Americans and that other African Americans resisted this remaking of black identity in Islamic terms.

Conclusion: Political Refractions of Transnational Encounters

But the political implications of African American re-Orientations toward Islam were not as clear. Several scholars of the NOI have insisted, for decades now, that the insular, “cultic” qualities of Elijah Muhammad’s NOI, in addition to the organization’s millennialism and Victorian gender relations, as well as its Puritanism and embrace of the Protestant work ethic, rendered the group an unwitting, decidedly conservative agent of the political status quo.⁸⁶ Such approaches seem to reflect the view, stated famously by Sacvan Bercovitch, that groups like the Nation of Islam, though appearing at first to look like manifestations of dissent, have actually functioned in U.S. history as vehicles of social control, since their teachings have not attacked the root causes of oppression.⁸⁷ This argument, that the absence of a direct and organized assault on the political economy and patriarchy of the United States effectively sustains the status quo, reflects only a partial view of political action and resistance. Rebellion, as Robin D. G. Kelley argues, also includes cultural acts of resistance that reject the values and expectations of the powerful.⁸⁸ In this sense, the NOI’s activities, and the growth of Islam more generally among black Americans, were extremely rebellious in the 1960s. During the 1950s, as Penny Von Eschen has pointed out, “the Nation of Islam permitted a space—for the most part unthinkable in the Cold War era—for an anti-American critique of the Cold War.”⁸⁹ During the Vietnam era, in the middle of a civil rights movement that

was an important component of U.S. foreign policy, many in the Nation of Islam and other African American Muslims rejected American nationalism, refused to serve in Vietnam, criticized the civil rights movement as hollow, and challenged the legitimacy of the nonofficial state religion, Christianity. The way these Muslims dressed and talked—in addition to the pictures they drew and the poems they wrote—questioned the cultural foundations of the state and its legitimacy to rule. The fact that U.S. government officials associated members of the NOI with violent revolution, despite the lack of any organized effort in the movement to confront authorities with violence, indicates the extent of the ideological challenge.⁹⁰ According to one observer, the NOI was among the most watched organizations in the government's Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO).⁹¹ Surely, this evidence indicates that the message of the Nation of Islam and its members was politically dangerous in some way.

The political implications of this Islamist flowering were also multivalent. The radical call for God's sovereignty over all the earth and the establishment of the United States as an Islamic nation was reflected and refracted in an array of community programs and political platforms. Shaikh Daoud, as we have seen, preached the necessity of establishing God's rule over all the earth, but relied on nonviolent missionary work as his means to accomplish this end. The younger critics of Daoud's supposed passivity cried even more loudly about the moral bankruptcy of the West and its evil ways, but in most cases, they sought separation from mainstream society, not violent revolution. For example, Sheik Tawfiq (d. 1988), an African American from Florida, founded the Mosque of the Islamic Brotherhood in Harlem, New York. Stressing the call of Islamic universalism, the idea that Islam crossed all racial barriers, African Americans, Hispanics, and others prayed together, established housing and education programs, and ran small businesses in the heart of the United States' largest city. In 1971, Yusuf Muzaffaruddin Hamid, who was a student of Pakistan's Jama'at-i Islami, established the Islamic Party of North America, which advocated the creation of an Islamic state in North America through a mass religious revival.⁹² These African American Sunni Muslim leaders mingled regularly with foreign and immigrant *imams*, who were now entering the United States in larger numbers, due to 1965 reforms in immigration policy and financial support from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. After the 1973 and 1974 OPEC oil embargo, the price of oil skyrocketed, and at least some of those petrodollars were used to support the missionary efforts created during the Arab cold war. By the early 1980s, according to one scholar,

twenty-six communities “were receiving the services of leaders provided by the Muslim World League.”⁹³ While infused with a powerful jeremiad and the call for an Islamic revolution, however, their rhetoric led mainly to a moral revival, not violent *jihad*. Even when African American Muslims engaged in violent *jihad* during this era, it was directed toward other African American Muslim groups, not the government or larger society.⁹⁴ There is simply no hard evidence indicating that their radical rhetoric led to organized terrorism or violent revolution on a mass scale.

As in the case of the Nation of Islam, it might be tempting to conclude that the political impact of these utopian groups was conservative, but such arguments would once again ignore the ideological and cultural resistance that the groups offered. Some African American Islamists became effective spokespersons in the United States for foreign Muslim causes, including those in Palestine, Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Chechnya, and while some funds were raised for these causes, American Muslim support was mainly moral in nature, as supporters gave fiery speeches from the pulpit on Fridays and discussed the issues in conferences and study groups.⁹⁵ Some American Muslims, including African American Muslims, would eventually become entangled in violent jihadist networks, and a few African American Muslims have even been convicted of aiding al-Qa’ida or other terrorist groups, but these are rare, if dramatic cases.⁹⁶

In some ways, the culture of African American Islam from the 1970s until today has borne the imprint of the contact and confrontation with foreign and immigrant Muslims during the 1960s. In the 1970s, W. D. Muhammad, the son of Elijah Muhammad, would change the name of the Nation of Islam to the World Community of al-Islam in the West and ask his followers to observe the ethical, theological, and ritual directives of Sunni Islam.⁹⁷ He also reached out to foreign Muslims, accepted Egyptian president Anwar Sadat’s offer of scholarships to attend Egyptian universities, and placed a Sudanese shaykh educated at the University of Medina as the prayer leader of the Chicago temple.⁹⁸ But despite these ties, he would tailor Sunni Islamic teachings to the African American experience, advocating a platform of political, economic, and social reforms that were transnational in style but local/national in their content.⁹⁹ In a sense, he had truly internalized the reformist attitudes of the Muslim missionaries by focusing so intently on the scriptures of Islam; but his close readings did not always agree with theirs. The same was true for other African Americans who sought to apply the texts of Islam to their own circumstances. By the 1990s, some of these efforts produced progressive political positions

on a variety of issues, especially on gender. Islamic studies professor Amina Wadud issued an academic manifesto called *Qur'an and Woman*.¹⁰⁰ Eventually, she would challenge the taboo of a woman leading a mixed gender prayer.¹⁰¹ Similarly, African American women at the grass roots interpreted the Qur'an and *hadith* as documents of womanist liberation.¹⁰² More and more African American Muslims would travel abroad to study the classical Islamic sciences in the aftermath of the Arab cold war, but when they came back from foreign *madrasas* and Muslim universities, their interpretations of Islam were still infused with an African American sensibility focused on the problems facing Muslims in the United States.¹⁰³

The interaction of African American Muslims with ideological players in the Arab cold war may have changed the contours of African American Islamic culture, but it did not undermine African American Muslim religious or political agency. On the contrary, African American Muslims often appropriated the cultural and intellectual resources of the missionaries into an Islam that reflected their own interests. Greater transnational ties between African American Muslims and Muslims abroad have led to an ever larger variety of Islamic religious expression in black America. Some African American Muslims have joined both new and traditional Sufi orders, the mystical groups of Islam, including the West African-based Tijaniyya and the Philadelphia-based fellowship of Shaykh M. R. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen.¹⁰⁴ There is an important, if small, number of black Shi'a Muslims as well—the result of Shi'i outreach from the 1970s until today.¹⁰⁵ Minister Louis Farrakhan, who reconstituted the Nation of Islam in 1978, has incorporated more and more Sunni Islamic texts and traditions into his religious practice and sought strong ties to foreign Muslim leaders, but he has also continued to claim a special place for black inter/nationalism and his own interpretations of Elijah Muhammad's teachings within the Nation of Islam.¹⁰⁶ All of these groups, and their differing religious and political outlooks, reflect the vitality of an African American Islam both transnational and local.

Notes

1. See Aminah Beverly McCloud, *African American Islam* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 9–40.
2. See Michael A. Gomez, *Black Crescent: The Experience and Legacy of African Muslims in the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 274; Sylviane A. Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), and Allan D. Austin, *African Muslims in Antebellum America: Transatlantic Stories and Spiritual Struggles* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

3. See Edward Wilmot Blyden, *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race* (1887; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1967); Hollis Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot, 1832–1912* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967); Hollis Lynch, ed., *Selected Letters of Edward Wilmot Blyden* (Millwood, N.Y.: KTO Press, 1978); and Richard Brent Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 47–59.
4. Randall K. Burkett, *Garveyism as a Religious Movement* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1978), 178–81. Garvey's pan-Africanism was influenced partly by Dusé Mohammed Ali, publisher of the *African Times and Orient Review*.
5. See Susan Nance, "Respectability and Representation: The Moorish Science Temple, Morocco, and Black Public Culture in 1920s Chicago," *American Quarterly* 54.4 (December 2002): 623–59, and "Mystery of the Moorish Science Temple: Southern Blacks and American Alternative Spirituality in 1920s Chicago," *Religion and American Culture* 12.2 (Summer 2002): 123–66; Arthur Huff Fauset, *Black Gods of the Metropolis: Negro Religious Cults of the Urban North* (1944; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 41–51; Peter Lamborn Wilson, *Sacred Drift: Essays on the Margins of Islam* (San Francisco: City Light Books, 1993); Yvonne Y. Haddad and Jane I. Smith, *Mission to America: Five Islamic Sectarian Communities in North America* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 79–104; Ernest Allen Jr., "Identity and Destiny: The Formative Views of the Moorish Science Temple and the Nation of Islam," in *Muslims on the Americanization Path?* ed. Yvonne Y. Haddad and John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 163–214; Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience*, 71–108; Edward E. Curtis IV, *Islam in Black America: Identity, Liberation, and Difference in African-American Islamic Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 45–62; and Gomez, *Black Crescent*, 203–75.
6. See Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience*, 109–46; Haddad and Smith, *Mission to America*, 49–78; and cf. Robert Dannin, *Black Pilgrimage to Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 34–40, 99–103.
7. See further Yohanan Friedman, *Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and Its Medieval Background* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).
8. *Moslem Sunrise*, October 1921, 41.
9. *Moslem Sunrise*, April and May 1923, 184.
10. See *Moslem Sunrise*, October 1932/January 1933, 31–33, and July 1922, 119.
11. See, respectively, McCloud, *African American Islam*, 24–27, and Dannin, *Black Pilgrimage to Islam*, 96–108.
12. See Elijah Muhammad, *Message to the Blackman in America* (1965; Newport News, Va.: United Brothers Communication System, 1992), 164.
13. Compare "The Holy Qur'an," *Muhammad Speaks*, February 12, 1965, 8, with Ahmadi Qur'an scholar Muhammad Ali, *The Holy Qur'an*, 2nd ed. (Columbus, Ohio, and Lahore: Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Isha'at Islam, 1951), and *Muhammad Speaks*, September 9, 1963, 9, with Maulana Muhammad Ali, chap. 19, "Jihad (Hadith)," in *A Manual of Hadith* (Lahore: Ahmadiyyah Movement for the Propagation of Islam, n.d.), 256n3.
14. See "The Middle East in African American Cultural Politics, 1955–1972," in Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945*, updated ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).
15. See Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1935–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 257–66, 285, and C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1994), 225.
16. See McCloud, *African American Islam*, 20; Dannin, *Pilgrimage to Islam*, 58–59; Dizzy Gillespie and Al Frazer, *To Be or Not to Bop* (New York: DaCapo, 1979), 293; Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience*, 139; Mustafa Bayoumi, "East of the Sun (West of the Moon): Islam, the Ahmadis, and African America," *Journal of African American Studies* (October 2001): 259; and "Moslem Musicians Take Firm Stand against Racism," *Ebony* (April 1953): 111.
17. Robin D. G. Kelley, "House Negroes on the Loose: Malcolm X and the Black Bourgeoisie," *Callaloo* 21.2 (1998): 425; Louis Lomax, *When the Word Is Given* (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1963), 191; and Edward E. Curtis IV, *Black Muslim Religion in the Nation of Islam, 1960–1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 170–173.

18. Lincoln, *Black Muslims*, 226, 227; and Claude Andrew Clegg III, *An Original Man: The Life and Times of Elijah Muhammad* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 135–136, 189.
19. See further Fawaz A. Gerges, *The Superpowers and the Middle East: Regional and International Politics, 1955–1967* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1984).
20. See Malik Mufti, *Sovereign Creations: Pan-Arabism and Political Order in Syria and Iraq* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press: 1996).
21. Malcolm H. Kerr, *The Arab Cold War, 1958–1964: A Study of Ideology in Politics*, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 21–22, 53; and see also Michael C. Hudson, *Arab Politics: The Search for Legitimacy* (New Haven, Ct.: Yale University Press, 1977).
22. Reinhard Schulze, “Institutionalization [of *da'wa*]” in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press), 1:346–50; and James P. Piscatori, *Islam in a World of Nation-States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
23. Reinhard Schulze, “Muslim World League,” in *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* 3:208–10.
24. See Charles J. Adams, “The Ideology of Mawlana Mawdudi,” in *South Asian Politics and Religion*, ed. Donald E. Smith (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), 371–97; Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), 101–10; John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press), 129–35.
25. Hans Mahnig, “Islam in Switzerland: Fragmented Accommodation in a Federal Country,” in *Muslims in the West: From Sojourner to Citizens*, ed. Yvonne Y. Haddad (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 75–76. And for a contrast, see Said Ramadan's son, Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
26. See Geneive Abdo, *No God but God: Egypt and the Triumph of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Nazih N. Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (London: Routledge, 1991); and Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and the Pharaoh* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).
27. Yvonne Y. Haddad and Jane I. Smith, eds., *Muslim Communities in North America* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), xxi.
28. Mary Lahaj, “The Islamic Center of New England,” in *Muslim Communities*, ed. Haddad and Smith, 299–300.
29. Larry Poston, *Islamic Da'wah in the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 79.
30. See further Shaikh Daoud Ahmed Faisal, *Islam the True Faith: The Religion of Humanity* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Islamic Mission of America, 1965), n.p.
31. Marc Ferris, “To ‘Achieve the Pleasure of Allah’: Immigrant Muslims in New York City, 1893–1991,” in *Muslim Communities*, ed. Haddad and Smith, 212.
32. See McCloud, *African American Islam*, 21–24; and Dannin, *Black Pilgrimage to Islam*, 63–67.
33. Ferris, “To ‘Achieve the Pleasure of Allah,’” 214.
34. “Author's Note,” in Shaikh Daoud Ahmed Faisal, *Al-Islam: The Religion of Humanity* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Islamic Mission of America, 1950), 7–8.
35. *Ibid.*, 51.
36. *Ibid.*, 15–16. Compare Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, and Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955).
37. *Ibid.*, 49–50.
38. *Ibid.*, 60.
39. See, for example, Regina M. Schwartz, *The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).
40. For accounts of the relationships between blacks and Jews in the United States, see V. P. Franklin et al., eds., *African Americans and Jews in the Twentieth Century: Studies in Convergence and Conflict* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998); Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006); and Eric J. Sundquist, *Strangers in the Land: Blacks, Jews, Post-Holocaust America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005).
41. For classic accounts of these “American” missionary strategies, see, for example, William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); William G. McLoughlin Jr., *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform* (Chicago: University of

- Chicago Press, 1978); and Edith Blumhofer and Randall Balmer, eds., *Modern Christian Revivals* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).
42. Dannin, *Black Pilgrimage to Islam*, 64.
 43. R. M. Mukhtar Curtis, "The Formation of the Dar ul-Islam Movement," in *Muslim Communities in North America*, 54.
 44. Dannin, *Black Pilgrimage to Islam*, 66–68.
 45. McCloud, *African American Islam*, 71.
 46. See Sherman A. Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking Toward the Third Resurrection* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 48–49.
 47. Louis E. Lomax et al., "The Hate That Hate Produced," on "Newsbeat," WNTA-TV, July 23, 1959, a transcript of which is available in a declassified FBI report. See SAC, New York, office memorandum to director, FBI, July 16, 1959, available through <http://wonderwheel.net/work/foia/1959/071659hthp-transcript.pdf> (accessed May 1, 2007).
 48. E. U. Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism: A Search for an Identity in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 73–74.
 49. Louis A. DeCaro Jr., *On the Side of My People: A Religious Life of Malcolm X* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 159–60, 201–2.
 50. See DeCaro, *On the Side of My People*, especially 159–293. And compare Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience*, 174–237, and Curtis, *Islam in Black America*, 85–105.
 51. See Malcolm X and Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Ballantine, 1965), 266–317.
 52. Ferris, "To 'Achieve the Pleasure of Allah,'" 215.
 53. Malcolm X and Haley, *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, 318.
 54. Bruce Perry, *Malcolm: The Life of a Man Who Changed Black America* (Barrytown, N.Y.: Station Hill, 1991), 261–64; and DeCaro, *On the Side of My People*, 202–3.
 55. Malcolm X and Haley, *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, 320.
 56. Yaacov Shimoni, *Political Dictionary of the Arab World* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 105–6.
 57. Abd al-Rahman 'Azzam, *The Eternal Message of Muhammad*, trans. Caesar E. Farah (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993).
 58. DeCaro, *On the Side of My People*, 206.
 59. Malcolm X and Haley, *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, 331–33.
 60. *Ibid.*, 348.
 61. Perry, *Malcolm*, 322.
 62. DeCaro, *On the Side of My People*, 336.
 63. The interview is reproduced in *February 1965: The Final Speeches*, ed. Steve Clark (New York: Pathfinder, 1992), 252–55, and on the Web at Malcolm-X.Org: http://www.malcolm-x.org/docs/int_almus.htm (accessed August 28, 2006).
 64. DeCaro, *On the Side of My People*, 233, 238–39.
 65. See "Notes on the Invention of Malcolm X" and "Malcolm X and the Failure of Afrocentrism" in Gerald Early, *The Culture of Bruising* (Hopewell, N.J.: Ecco Press, 1994), 233–58.
 66. See George M. Fredrickson, *Black Liberation: A Comparative History of Black Ideologies in the United States and South Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 277–97; and Gomez, *Black Crescent*, 348–55.
 67. Malcolm X and Haley, *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, 323–72; Gomez, *Black Crescent*, 372; Curtis, *Islam in Black America*, 96–99.
 68. See Malcolm X, *February 1965: The Final Speeches*, ed. Clark, 20–21; and Clayborne Carson, *Malcolm X: The FBI File* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 1991), 79–80.
 69. "Mr. Muhammad Answers Critics: Authority from Allah, None Other," *Muhammad Speaks*, August 2, 1962, 3.
 70. James R. Lewis, *Legitimizing New Religions* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 13–14. For an NOI example, Sylvester Leaks, "the Messenger of Allah as Seen by an Islamic Leader from Pakistan," *Muhammad Speaks*, May 8, 1964, 3.
 71. See "Our Great Physician," *Muhammad Speaks*, June 1962, 14; "As It Was in the Days of Daniel, So It Is Today," *Muhammad Speaks*, June 19, 1964, 9; and "As It Was with Pharaoh So It Is Today," *Muhammad Speaks*, July 17, 1964, 9.

72. See "First Printing of Holy Qur'an in U.S.," *Muhammad Speaks*, August 17, 1973, 23, and "Women in Islam: Is the Honorable Elijah Muhammad the Last Messenger of Allah?" *Muhammad Speaks*, September 16, 1965, 19.
73. See "Allah and His Messenger," *Muhammad Speaks*, January 1, 1965, 1; and "Where Others Fail, Our Messenger Succeeds," *Muhammad Speaks*, May 14, 1965, 3.
74. See Zafar Ishaq Ansari, "W. D. Muhammad: The Making of a 'Black Muslim' Leader (1933–1961)," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 2.2 (1985): 248–62.
75. See further Curtis, *Black Muslim Religion*, 65.
76. McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, 86.
77. See Thomas A. Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006); and Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).
78. *Muhammad Speaks*, July 7, 1967, 22.
79. See *Muhammad Speaks*, February 14, 1969, 26.
80. According to Robert Coolidge, Nadwi was the rector of Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama in Lucknow, India; personal correspondence with the author, December 22, 2004.
81. *Muhammad Speaks*, December 17, 1965, 27.
82. "Muhammad's Message," *Muhammad Speaks*, December 24, 1995, 27. See also "Dimashk," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2:277.
83. *Muhammad Speaks*, January 28, 1966, 27.
84. *Muhammad Speaks*, February 4, 1966, 27.
85. Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican*, 99–129.
86. One argument for the movement's gender conservatism can be found in E. Frances White, *Dark Continent of Our Bodies: Black Feminism and the Politics of Respectability* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 2001), 43. For counterarguments and qualifications, see Cynthia S'themble West, "Nation Builders: Female Activism in the Nation of Islam, 1960–1970" (PhD diss., Temple University, 1994); and Curtis, *Black Muslim Religion*, 95–130. For critiques of the NOI on other scores, see Es-sien-Udom, *Black Nationalism*, 286–87, 339; and Hans A. Baer and Merrill Singer, *African-American Religion in the Twentieth Century: Varieties of Protest and Accommodation* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 143.
87. See further Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978).
88. Ibid.
89. Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997), 174.
90. See "Nation of Islam: Cult of the Black Muslims," May 1965, available through the FBI's Web site at http://foia.fbi.gov/nation_of_islam/nation_of_islam_part02.pdf (accessed May 1, 2007).
91. In 1967, the FBI included "black nationalist hate groups" in COINTELPRO. See Frank T. Donner, *The Age of Surveillance: The Aims and Methods of America's Political Intelligence System* (New York: Knopf, 1980), 178, 212–13.
92. See McCloud, *African-American Islam*, 64–72; and Dannin, *Black Pilgrimage to Islam*, 66–71.
93. Poston, *Islamic Da'wah in the West*, 39.
94. See Dannin, *Black Pilgrimage to Islam*.
95. See Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican*, 73.
96. See, for example, United States District Court, Western District of Washington at Seattle, *United States of America v. Earnest James Ujaama*, at <http://fl1.findlaw.com/news.findlaw.com/hdocs/docs/terrorism/usujaama82802ind.pdf> (accessed May 1, 2007).
97. For background, see Clifton E. Marsh, *The Lost-Found Nation of Islam in America* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 67–78, 101–28.
98. Curtis, *Islam in Black America*, 115, 120–21.
99. See, for example, W. Deen Mohammed, *Focus on Al-Islam* (Chicago: Zakat Publications, 1988).
100. Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
101. See Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

102. See Carolyn Rouse, *Engaged Surrender: African American Women and Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
103. See Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican*, and Imam Zaid Shakir, *Scattered Pictures: Reflections of an American Muslim* (Haywood, Calif.: Zaytuna Institute, 2005).
104. See McCloud, *African American Islam*, 88–94, 248; Dannin, *Black Pilgrimage to Islam*, 248, 255–56; and Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican*, 50–51, 191–98. For one example of the influence of the Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship on an African American Muslim, see Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons, “Are We Up to the Challenge? The Need for a Radical Re-ordering of the Islamic Discourse on Women,” in *Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender, and Pluralism*, ed. Omid Safi (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003), esp. 235–39.
105. Poston, *Islamic Da'wah in the West*, 108–9.
106. See further Mattias Gardell, *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad: Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996).