

Debunking the “White Devils” and Black Supremacy Myths in the Teaching and Spreading of Islam in America in the 1950s and 1960s

Mouhamed DIOP

Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar, Department of Anglophone Studies, Po BOX: 5005, Dakar, Senegal
Email: [mouhamed.rassoul\[at\]yahoo.fr](mailto:mouhamed.rassoul@yahoo.fr)

Abstract: *During the 1950s and 1960s in America, there emerged out of the steelworks of race relations several black activist groups of steel fighting for civil rights through direct vigorous actions. Among these groups the Nation of Islam (NOI) stood out because of its new religious, economic and political philosophy. The NOI was born in 1930 to teach and spread Islam across the United States of America (USA). With Elijah Muhammad at its head, the NOI taught its newly converted black Muslims to love themselves, to accept with pride their identity as Blacks, to respect themselves and to uplift themselves by avoiding all illicit and immoral things forbidden by Islam. When the NOI attempted to convert the wrongs overwhelming the African American community into right, the news media started harassing it, propagandizing against it and misrepresenting it. The NOI got bogged down in a doctrine it kept fostering through the passionate and incendiary speeches of Malcolm X, one of its most charismatic leaders. This study investigates the trajectory that led to that doctrine and debunks the two myths about “white devils” and black supremacy that had surrounded it.*

Keywords: American black Muslims, Islam, Nation of Islam (NOI), race hate.

“Extremism in the defence of liberty is no vice, moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue.”

Barry Morris Goldwater

1. Introduction

A myth is an unfounded or false notion (Merriam-Webster, 2024). In the context of the teaching and spreading of Islam in the United States of America (USA), myth had become a religious weapon. Just like white American racists' erroneous belief in white superiority, myths embodied the societal ideals of the Nation of Islam (NOI), a growing segment of the African American community. Founded in 1930 by Wallace D. Fard, who immigrated to the USA from Mecca (Melton, 2024), the NOI gained international prominence. With, at its head, Elijah Poole, affectionately called the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, and Malcolm X, as one of its most prominent and charismatic public speakers, the NOI spread the myths of “white devils” and black supremacy, especially during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, to convert the disenfranchised African Americans to Islam.

For the leaders of the NOI, cultivating the myths of “white devils” and black supremacy was fair enough for two main reasons. First, myths fed the NOI's separation and economic independence ideals from the white American society. Second, myths helped make newly converted black Muslims adhering to the philosophy of the NOI to love their origin and to develop race pride. There was in the attempt to teach and to spread Islam across the USA a strong need to depart from the teachings of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). The SCLC, under the leadership of Reverends Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph Abernathy, Fred Shuttlesworth, Jesse Jackson, etc., taught Christian love for all races and advocated integration into mainstream America.

The “white devils” and black supremacy myths with negative racial denotations did not surround the Islamic teachings of

the NOI for nothing. The black American Muslims' myths advocacy came out of the race hate they had been victims since slavery times. For a matter as serious as religion, it is important to debunk such myths with evidence from the Quran and prophetic hadiths, the only authentic references of Islam. This begs the question: Can we fight for one's race without being racist?

As I was born and raised Muslim and living in a country where more than 94% of its populations are Muslims, and as Islam expanded in my country from the 11th century (Sambe, 2023), I am naturally appalled at the 1950s and 1960s fiery speeches of race hate directed against white people in the USA. However, as a black African man living and working in Africa, who have never experienced racism, have never seen anyone overwhelmed with slurs, or trampled on by the heavy heel of discrimination, or have never had my personality split in two by the curtain of segregation, I must be wary about judgements. As Marley (1978) sang, “Who feels it knows it”. As far back as I can retrace my ascendance, none of my forefathers had been victim of the same political, economic and social plight African Americans had experienced during the starless nights of slavery and Jim Crow. Being black is one thing, being African and being African American is culturally and historically another.

To develop my ideas in this paper, I will investigate the rationale behind the myths of “white devils” and black supremacy. This will help shed light on the background and legitimate philosophy of the NOI. Then I will probe the discourse mechanisms that the prominent NOI's leaders used to label Whites as devils and to make Blacks adhere to the illusory supremacist project. I will sustain this probe with the Quran and prophetic hadiths to debunk the myths surrounding the NOI's efforts to convert as many African Americans as possible to Islam, a religion of love.

Volume 13 Issue 5, May 2024

Fully Refereed | Open Access | Double Blind Peer Reviewed Journal

www.ijsr.net

2. The Hate that Produced Hate

In 1959, the two distinguished journalists Mike Wallace and Louis Lomax produced a television documentary titled “The Hate That Hate Produced,” about Black Nationalism in the USA focusing on the NOI (Wikipedia, 2023). The documentary featured Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad, the two charismatic leaders of the NOI, and other sequences involving Louis X (later known as Louis Farrakhan). Wallace and Lomax emphasized the fiery speeches of hate that these Muslim ministers preached in the street corners and insisted on the fact that these calls for hate did not arouse the curiosity of the police.

The title of this section draws its inspiration from this television documentary. Instead of focusing on the “The Hate That Hate Produced,” it rather concentrates on the “The Hate That Produced Hate”. Though virulent the NOI leaders might be, they were still the victims of race hate. African Americans were so much victims of hate because of their skin color that they did not fear death or imprisonment. As Malcolm X put it:

You don't have to go behind bars to be in jail in this country. If you are born in this country with black skin you are already in jail, you are already confined, you are already watched over by a warden who poses as your mayor and poses as your governor and poses as your President.

(Malcolm X, 2000, p. 107)

In the African American experience of racialism, their white slave owners had used the Bible as a springboard to reach their domination goals. They managed to dominate the Africans newly arrived on the shores of New England (now USA) through brainwashing and indoctrination. In addition to depriving them with their real African names, they imposed them a distorted tailor-made Christianity that promised Whites paradise on earth and Blacks hell on earth and salvation in the hereafter. Next to racism, economic exploitation and social injustice underpinned the predicament of African Americans. Martin Luther King, Jr., summarized this human tragedy in this passage:

The first Negroes landed on the shores of this nation in 1619, one year ahead of the Pilgrim Fathers. They were brought here from Africa and, unlike the Pilgrims, they were brought against their will, as slaves. Throughout the era of slavery the Negro was treated in inhuman fashion. He was considered a thing to be used, not a person to be respected. He was merely a depersonalized cog in a vast plantation machine. The famous Dred Scott decision of 1857 well illustrates his status during slavery. In this decision the Supreme Court of the United States said, in substance, that the Negro is not a citizen of the United States; he is merely property subject to the dictates of his owner. After his emancipation in 1863, the Negro still confronted oppression and inequality. It is true that for a time, while the army of occupation remained in the South and Reconstruction ruled, he had a brief period of eminence and political power. But he was quickly overwhelmed by the white

majority. Then in 1896, through the Plessy vs Ferguson decision, a new kind of slavery came into being. In this decision the Supreme Court of the nation established the doctrine of “separate but equal” as the law of the land. Very soon it was discovered that the concrete result of this doctrine was strict enforcement of the “separate,” without the slightest intention to abide by the “equal.” So the Plessy doctrine ended up plunging the Negro into the abyss of exploitation where he experienced the bleakness of nagging injustice.

(King, 1991, p. 6)

The “separate but equal” doctrine that stemmed from the Plessy vs Ferguson court decision replaced slavery for almost a century. In 1951, Big Bill Broonzy sang about America's Jim Crow laws system that consisted in discriminating and segregating African Americans minimizing their civil rights opportunities. He sang that, “If you are White, it is alright; if you are brown, you can stick around; but if you are Black, get back” (Broonzy, 1951). When you analyze the African American experience carefully, you realize that slavery never died, it is just in a perpetual sophisticated mutation. Through thick and thin, African Americans experienced all kinds of hatred from the Whites. In his own way to narrate white hate on black people, Malcolm X declared:

The Negro was taught to speak the white man's tongue, worship the white God, and accept the white man as his superior. This is a white man's country. And the Negro is nothing but an ex-slave who is now trying to get himself integrated into the slave master's house. And the slave master doesn't want you! You fought and bled and died in every war the white man waged, and he still won't give you justice. You nursed his baby and cleaned behind his wife, and he still won't give you freedom; you turned the other cheek while he lynched you and raped your women, but he still won't give you equality. Now, you integration-minded Negroes are trying to force yourselves on your former slave master, trying to make him accept you in his drawing room; you want to hang out with his women rather than the women of your own kind.

(Malcolm X, 2000, p. 166)

Next to the political methods used to curb African Americans' civil rights and disfranchise them, the White Citizens' Council and the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) were born again using respectively the laws and physical elimination as their most expressive methods. The situation of African Americans was such that they were the last hired first fired; they were the first come last served; and they were the last in line when it came to having some of their problems solved (Malcolm X, 2000). But the wheel of history had turned full circle. Although the white racists tirelessly furnished efforts to maintain Blacks in the status quo of second-class citizens, between the Plessy vs Ferguson court decision of 1896 and the early 1950s many things had changed.

The white racists' hate that had produced black people's hate was two-edged. It was purely race-based with economic needs. But it also intentionally sought to make black people

hate themselves. Both were linked because it proved to be efficient, for example, to make the slaves abandon their cultures, religions and traditions before making them adopt cultural, religious and traditional identities of their masters. Even though it took long to make the slaves abhor or ignore their civilizations, forced acculturation ended in paying off. Malcolm X expands on the hate of one's self the white racists had installed into the blacks in these four quotations:

20,000,000 Negroes have ceased to be human in the sight of white society simply because the white system has destroyed all evidences of culture that these people ever had. And when these cultural characteristics have been destroyed, then it is possible for the same system to convict us of having once been savages and cannibals, and then this means that the slave system which we underwent here was a favor to us rather than a crime. And most Negroes actually have fallen for this.

(Malcolm X, 2000, p. 129)

These Europeans joined with America and created a very negative image of Africa and projected this negative image abroad. They projected Africa as a jungle, a place filled with animals, savages, and cannibals. The image of Africa and the Africans was made so hateful that 22 million of us in America of African ancestry actually shunned Africa because its image was a hateful, negative image. We didn't realize that as soon as we were made to hate Africa and Africans, we also hated ourselves.

(Malcolm X, 2000, p. 271)

What is the most inhuman or immoral: a man that teaches you to hate your enemies or a man that skillfully maneuvers you into hating yourself? Well, I think teaching a man to hate himself is much more criminal than teaching him to hate someone else. Look at you who taught you to hate yourself? If you say we're hate teachers, you tell me who taught you to hate so skillfully, so completely, until we have been maneuvered today so that we don't even want to be what we actually are. We want to be somebody else, we want to be someone else, we want to be something else. Many of us want to be somewhere else.

(Malcolm X, 2000, p. 272)

Negroes certainly cannot at the same time hate Africa and love themselves. We Negroes hated the American features: the African nose, the shape of our lips, the color of our skin, the texture of our hair. We could only end up hating ourselves. Our skin became a trap, a prison; we felt inferior, inadequate, helpless. It was not an image created by Africans or by Afro-Americans, but by an enemy.

(Malcolm X, 2000, p. 283)

In the 1950s and 1960s, everywhere in the world, a new African and African American type was born. He rid himself of his inferiority complexes, proudly claimed his beautiful blackness and eager to pull out his freedom instead of waiting. In those years, the number of educated African Americans

increased threefold and a new mindset emerged triggering the Civil Rights Movement. On one part, this movement had moderate activists advocating integration in the South among the black middle class. On another, it had radical activists for whom race separation was the answer. These radical activists mostly recruited African Americans rotting in prisons and living in the promiscuity of slums and ghettos in the North. But both types of activists had in common the same goal consisting in freeing black people from the bonds of economic exploitation and racial injustice. The particularity of the radical activists is that they not only rejected Christianity and its values, but they also assumed their hateful feelings for white America.

A journalistic look at black Muslim leaders' statements of the 1950s and 1960s shows what inspires this hate label. Elijah Muhammad said in one speech, "We must take things into our own hands. We must return to the Mosaic law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. What does it matter if ten million of us die?" Malcolm X was even more provocative on the subject saying, "If anyone attacks you, lay down your life! If anyone so much as touches your finger, his place is in the graveyard!" Malcolm X shocked even sympathetic African Americans of other religions with a cynical statement after receiving a message that 121 white civic and cultural leaders from Atlanta had been killed in the crash of a chartered airliner outside Paris (Haley and Balk, 1963). He declared before the press:

I would like to announce a very beautiful thing that has just happened. I got a wire from God today. [...] Somebody came and told me that He really had answered our prayers in France. He dropped an air plane out of the sky with over 120 white people on it. [...] we will continue to pray and we hope that every day another plane falls out of the sky.

(Haley and Balk, 1963)

As the NOI rose to prominence with a growing number of adepts, the press developed hostile interest in its activities. The NOI's undiplomatic language and relentless endeavors to deconstruct the foundations of white American Christian and ecumenical values brought it harsh criticism. They would always hit the headlines with labels such as "fanatic," "Negro extremist sect," "militant," "semisecret, anti-white, anti-Christian sect," and "hate-inciting rallies" (Haley and Balk, 1963).

Malcolm X did not stop his derogatory comments on white misfortunes there. In November 1963, when TV reporters asked him to comment on the assassination of 35th President John F. Kennedy, Malcolm X calmly informed the TV reporters that he was not at all surprised that "the chickens were coming home to roost". This caused his mentor Elijah Muhammad to publicly disavow him and ban him from public speaking (Ali, 2019). Nonetheless, Elijah Muhammad was no model in terms of transactional, diplomatic and moderate language as a mass leader. In a reporting visit to his Chicago home, a member of the team of the correspondents noted that Elijah Muhammad's fanaticism extended even to the symbolic use of brown bread instead of white and of African coffee packaged by a Muslim in New Jersey (Haley and Balk, 1963). These forms of rhetoric and lifestyles accompanied the

message of economic independence with the creation of a separate sovereign State. Such an ambition was undergirded by two myths founded on considering Whites as devils and Blacks as belonging to a supreme race.

3. The “White Devils” and Black Supremacy Myths

Through their efforts to convert African Americans into Islam, the NOI used the indoctrination method creating false truths inspired by the Bible and the Quran. This involved blasphemy about God the Almighty, the creation of the universe, the prophet Adam, peace be upon him (PBUH), the prophet Jacob (PBUH), the different human races and the Quran. This also involved fanaticism about the “supremacy” of the black race. Haley and Balk (1963) report that Elijah Muhammad declared in an indoctrination rally that:

The Black race was “Original Man,” created 66,000,000,000,000 years ago. Adam was grafted from a black man 6,000 years ago by a black scientist. Thus whites were weaker. They were, in fact, devils. They had kidnapped Negroes from a high civilization in Mecca, enslaved them, brainwashed them into a false sense of inferiority, and made them worship a white Jesus. But the Nation of Islam, he said, would rise again. Whites were corrupt; their civilization was doomed.

(Haley and Balk, 1963)

Islam tells a different story. The creation of Adam, the first human being that ever existed, as taught by the prophet of Islam, Muhammad (PBUH), is different from the fallacious and illusory story told during the indoctrination campaigns initiated by Elijah Muhammad and his disciples, including Malcolm X. Islam teaches that:

Adam was created in paradise. Allah ordered an angel to take from earth different types of soil. This angel took several types of soil. He took white and black soil, and soil in between. He took soft and hard soil, and soil in between. He took good and bad soil, and soil in between. Then he went up to paradise with all these kinds of soil. In paradise, God mixed these types of soil with water. This took the form of Adam. This is the reason why Muhammad (PBUH) said, “God created Adam from several types of soil and from water. This explains why human beings are different. There are lighter and darker human beings, and human beings who are in between. There are flexible and inflexible human beings, and human beings who are in between. There are good and bad human beings, and human beings who are in between. This stems from the creation of Adam from several types of soil”.

(L’islam simplement, 2021)

In lieu of the prophetic teachings of the creation of the first human being ever, the NOI chose a different course. The same fallacious story of Elijah Muhammad appears in Malcolm X’s speeches several times. But the responsibility was always liable to Elijah Muhammad because Malcolm X cleared his name out of discipline and intellectual honesty insisting on

“The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us” (Malcolm X, 2000). These indoctrination efforts to convert African Americans to Islam and persuade them to shirk thinking of the integration King preached verged on heresy.

In his speech “Black Man’s History” of December 12, 1962, Malcolm X called God a “Mystery God” and pretended that even the moon was the creation of a powerful black scientist. That black scientist supposedly filled the earth with high explosives and set it off, and when it exploded, the moon was tossed out into space and it rotated around the earth (Malcolm X, 2000). Here, too, Islam tells a different story. In the Quran, it is clearly stated that God created the universe as in these passages:

He is Allah: the Creator, the Inventor, the Shaper. He alone has the Most Beautiful Names. Whatever is in the heavens and the earth constantly glorifies Him. And He is the Almighty, All-Wise.

(Quran 59:24)

Indeed your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days, He then established Himself on the Throne. He makes the day and night overlap in rapid succession. He created the sun, the moon, and the stars, all subjected by His command. The creation and the command belong to Him alone. Blessed is Allah, Lord of all worlds!

(Quran 7:54)

In Islam, God has ninety-nine (99) beautiful names, and each one praises His Greatness. But Malcolm X went on to say that the inhabitants of the earth were composed of thirteen tribes right from the beginning of times. After the explosion of the earth, the thirteenth tribe died and a new tribe from white race replaced it. In his other public addresses, Malcolm X thundered, “white people are born devils by nature” and the “Christ was a black man” (Malcolm X, 2000). This draws inspiration from the Quran that tells a different story in this passage:

And remember when Moses prayed for water for his people, We said, “Strike the rock with your staff.” Then twelve springs gushed out, and each tribe knew its drinking place. We then said, “Eat and drink of Allah’s provisions, and do not go about spreading corruption in the land.”

(Quran 2:60)

Malcolm X also depicts the black man like a 50-year-old father, a scientist and “Supreme Being” created by a great scientist named Shabazz in the jungles Africa. The black man had been living on earth since its creation, according to him. The white man only came on earth thousands of years later. The white man was living in the caves of Europe. He was as narrow-minded as the narrowness of his cave. But due to the softness, delicateness and fineness of the black man, the latter fell into the white man’s trap and was made deaf, dumb and blind by him. For Malcolm X, another great black scientist in the name of Yacub or Jacob (PBUH) created the white race. At their creation, Whites were weak, wicked, devilish and diabolical (Malcolm X, 2000).

It would take a voluminous document to report all the incredible stories told by Malcolm X about the devilish nature of Whites and the supremacy of Blacks. His speech “Black Man’s History” delves into these ridiculous and untrue narratives in detail. Malcolm X’s unfair indictment of white America and his chimerical stories about race, religion and history betray his fanaticism and narrowmindedness. His superficial knowledge of orthodox Islam is obvious. But this is only linked to the indoctrinated Malcolm X who had not yet embraced Islam as taught by the prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Islam is not a tyrannical faith. It encourages people from all walks of life, confessions, races and cultures, and advocates religious independence. The following two verses expand on this:

O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may “get to” know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware.

(Quran 49:13)

Indeed, the believers, Jews, Christians, and Sabians, whoever truly believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good will have their reward with their Lord. And there will be no fear for them, nor will they grieve.

(Quran 2:62)

Elijah Muhammad’s, Malcolm X’s and the other NOI’s leaders’ practice of Islam was similar to the attitude of a dishonest vegetarian. A dishonest vegetarian can eat a fresh orange, enjoy its juicy and sweet pulp, but at the same time laud its supposed high protein content on the sole reason that he hates meat. While he could reasonably convince meat eaters to stop jeopardizing their health, he resorts to a rather blatantly unconventional method that consists in talking people out of consuming meat by all means necessary. This results in a ludicrous act with no lasting positive response.

If Elijah Muhammad kept spreading the myths of “white devils” and black supremacy out of vengeance on white America, Malcolm X departed from it later in life. In an interview with *Al-Muslimoon* magazine of February 20, 1965, a journalist asked him if he planned to just stop at voicing his opposition against Elijah Muhammad and his group or if he had any course of action in mind towards establishing some new organization in the field, Malcolm X replied:

With what little finance we could raise, we have founded the Muslim Mosque, Incorporated, with headquarters here in Harlem. Our sole interest is to help undo the distorted image we have helped spread about Islam. Our mosque also is for those who want to learn how to live the life of a true Muslim.

(Malcolm X, 2000, p. 432)

Had he lived a little longer, Malcolm X would have surely joined Martin Luther King, Jr, and the other civil rights activists he had vehemently accused of being traitors for their moderate activism. What their relationship and collaboration would have looked like was pictured in a photograph when

both charismatic leaders encountered for a brief moment in Washington, DC, on March 26, 1964. The following pays tribute to both leaders:

The two seem inextricably linked in the popular consciousness. Malcolm was from the North, King was from the South. Malcolm represented the city, while King fought for the rights of the rural poor. Both men were dynamic speakers and intellectuals. And both, sadly, were assassinated at the age of 39.

(Mitchell, 2024)

Had he lived a little longer, Malcolm X would have kept speaking out against the unorthodox practices of the NOI and of Elijah Muhammad, his mentor, in a more virulent way than he had done by spreading the “white devils” and black supremacy myths. Fortunately, men pass away but their legacy remain. In light of growing terrorist attacks across the world claimed by so-called Muslims, what to remember about Islam as a religion is that Islam is a religion of tolerance. Islam is the only religion that overtly recognizes the divine missions of the twenty-five prophets listed in the table below.

Table 1: The 25 prophets mentioned in the Quran (peace be upon them)

Arabic transliterated names	Equivalent names in English
Adam	Adam
Idris	Enoch
Nuh	Noah
Hud	Heber
Saleh	Mathusaleh
Lut	Lot
Ibrahim	Abraham
Ismail	Ishmael
Ishaq	Isaac
Yaqub	Jacob
Yusuf	Joseph
Shu’aib	Jethro
Ayyub	Job
Dhulkifl	Ezekiel
Musa	Moses
Harun	Aaron
Dawud	David
Sulayman	Solomon
Ilyas	Elias
Alyasa	Elisha
Yunus	Jonah
Zakariya	Zachariah
Yahya	John the Baptist
Isa	Jesus
Muhammad	Muhammad

Source: Quran (2024)

In the NOI leaders’ religious rhetoric the names of prophets such as Jacob, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them) often appear regularly. Jacob’s image is distorted in the most blasphemous sense of the word as he is given the supreme creation powers of God. Moses’s and Jesus’s images are construed differently from the way Christian ministers did. For example, King correlated Moses’s exodus with the long walk to freedom of African Americans, whereas Malcolm X saw Moses’s exodus as separation from Pharaoh’s tyrannical grip. They were both right. Each leader just stuck to the basic points. The NOI leaders quoted the prophet

Muhammad (PBUH), even though rarely, as the personification of righteousness and human perfection.

The NOI could have registered more adepts and sympathizers from different religions if it had stuck to orthodox Islam, and if it had not unfairly used Islam as a weapon. In the 1950s and 1960s, Americans in general did not understand the teachings of Islam and a great number of them considered this religion

as a sect, a schismatic religious body that united African Americans who felt abandoned by Christianity. This American image of Islam was totally false but understandable. As the respected principal spiritual leader of the movement, it would have been to Elijah Muhammad's advantage if he had taught Islam as a monotheistic revealed religion that almost shares the same moral and spiritual values of Judaism and Christianity as shown in the table below.

Table 2: The Judeo-Christian-Muslim Values and Traditions

	Follower	Leader	Temple	Symbol	Prophet	Scripture	Holy City	Divinity
Judaism	Jew	Rabbi	Synagogue	Star of David	Moses	Torah	Jerusalem	Jehovah
Christianity	Christian	Pastor	Church	Cross	Jesus Christ	Bible	Rome	God
Islam	Muslim	Imam	Mosque	Crescent	Muhammad	Quran	Mecca	Allah

Malcolm X was right on the color-blindness of Islam. According to a 2017 study done by the Institute for Social Policy, "American Muslims are the only faith community surveyed with no majority race, with 26 percent white, 18 percent Asian, 18 percent Arab, 9 percent black, 7 percent mixed race, and 5 percent Hispanic" (Wikipedia, 2024). More and more people from all walks of life are embracing Islam because they have understood it better. Islam is a divine society project that encourages peace and brotherhood.

4. Conclusion

This paper has covered the topic of the myths of "white devils" and black supremacy in the teaching and spreading of Islam in the USA under the auspices of the NOI and under the charismatic leadership of Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X. This religious indoctrination of the 1950s and 1960s was both legitimate and immoral. Its legitimacy rests on the fair reciprocity that African Americans from the NOI used to return hate to hate. They used the Bible, and not the Quran, as a pseudoreligious weapon to assault the institutionalized white racism that legally took shape in the form of unjust laws and mass incarceration.

On another thing, they advocated black supremacy over the white race, not over the yellow, red and brown races. The white race was their sole target. This shows the limit of the efficiency of the NOI during the Civil Rights Movement in terms of civil rights gains. However, in terms of moral and spiritual gains, the NOI reached high records converting numerous social black deviants, who turned to drugs, prostitution, procuring, crime and liquor abuse, into practicing Muslims who turned away from alcohol, adultery, fornication, prostitution, drugs and crime.

Two readings emerge out of this analysis. First, the NOI's indictment of Whites as devils either betrayed their misunderstanding of orthodox Islam or unveiled the hypocrisy of their apostle and chief leader Elijah Muhammad. Second, Elijah Muhammad might have overlooked his religious sincerity and opted for blindness to his chimerical ambition of creating a separate black State in the USA or a sovereign nation in Africa with the full support of the US government until his community could walk on their own feet. This debunks the myths that had surrounded the nascent religion of the black Muslims in the USA in the 1950s and 1960s.

References

- [1] Ali, T. (2019). *Malcolm X at Oxford: "They're Going to Kill Me Soon."* Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/feb/19/malcolm-x-oxford-kill-me-soon-assassination-tariq-ali>
- [2] Broonzy, B. B. (1951). "Black, Brown and White." Blues Song. Album: Trouble in mind. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYSERmlOxGA>
- [3] Gates, H. L., Jr. (2012). "Who Led the 1st Back-to-Africa Effort?" *The Root*. Retrieved from <https://www.theroot.com/who-led-the-1st-back-to-africa-effort-1790894531>
- [4] Haley, A. & Balk, A. (1963). "Black Merchants of Hate." *The Saturday Evening Post*. Retrieved from <https://alexhaley.com/2018/08/06/black-merchants-of-hate/>
- [5] L'islam simplement. (2021). *Histoire des prophètes: Adam, le premier prophète*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISYkBOAlx0&t=656s>
- [6] Malcolm X. (2000). *Collected speeches, debates and interviews (1960-1965)*. Atwal, S. A. (Ed.). USA: Organization of Afro-American Unity. Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/malcolm-x-collected-speeches-debates-and-interviews-1960-1965/page/n451/mode/2up?q=zionist>
- [7] Marley, B. (1978). "Running away." Reggae Song. Album: Kaya (Bob Marley and the Wailers). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ek4q6vZfmyw>
- [8] Melton, G. J. (2024). *Nation of Islam*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Wallace-D-Fard>
- [9] Merriam-Webster. (2024). *Dictionary*. Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>
- [10] Michell, J. (2024). "On This Day in 1964." Retrieved from <https://mississippitoday.org/2024/03/26/on-this-day-in-1964-mlk-and-malcolm-x-met-for-only-time/>
- [11] Sambe, B. (2023). *Islam au Sénégal : d'où viennent les confréries ?* Tunis : Nirvana.
- [12] Quran. (2024). Retrieved from <https://quran.com/en>
- [13] Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia. (2024). *Islam in the United States*. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_the_United_States
- [14] Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia. (2023). *The Hate that Hate Produced*. Retrieved from

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hate_That_Hate_Produced

Author Profile



Mouhamed DIOP has a PhD in American and Caribbean Studies at Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar, Senegal. He is also holder of a Master's Degree in Translation. He works as a part-time teacher of translation studies at the said university and as a full-time teacher of English at a public high school.