MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN NORTH AMERICA

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CHAPTER 3

Urban Muslims: The Formation of the Dar ul-Islam Movement

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THE EARLY ATTRACTION TO ORTHODOX ISLAM

About forty years ago Rajab Mahmud, Ishaq Abdush-Shaheed, Yahya Abdul-Kareem, Hasan Abdul-Hameed, Sulayman Abdul-Hadi, Luqman Abdul-Aleem, and others made up an amorphous group of New York African American converts to Islam.[1] Like many other African American converts in the New York area, they came into Islam by way of an immigrant connection or a "jazz route": many Muslims living in Harlem during the late 1940s and early 1950s were musicians.[2] The converts frequently socialized at restaurants run by Muslims from the Caribbean and at clubs that featured Muslim entertainers or those attracted to Islam at one time or another such as Dakota Staton, Charlie Parker, and John Coltrane.

When the converts socialized they often discussed the necessity for a Dar al-Islam, an area where Muslims could practice and live an Islamic life as the norm without fear or apprehension.[3] This was their answer to the racism, segregation, and caste system of America that came to the forefront of the national consciousness with such events as the lynching of 14-year-old Emmett Till and the rise to prominence of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X.[4] Underlying the bombings of Negro churches and homes, the lynchings of African Americans, and other forms of resistance by white America to integration was the attitude that black Americans were "beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the

white race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior, . . . they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect."[5]

Many urban African American youths reacted by assuming an identity or ideology that had un-American or anti-traditional-American aspects; one of these was a turning away from Christianity.[6] They perceived that "whites believed that Christianity was their exclusive faith, . . . [that] there was segregation throughout Christendom, . . . [and that] Negro religion [was] merely a Jim Crow wing of Christianity."[7] In a speech at the National Press Club in Washington, Martin Luther King, Jr. noted with shame that "the church is the most segregated major institute [sic] in America."[8] As a consequence many African Americans turned to one form or another of black nationalism whose primary proponents at the time were Malcolm X and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam (NOI).

Although Dr. King had been quite successful in spearheading the civil rights movement as a vigorous one of political activism, his theme of nonviolence was rejected by black nationalists and many others after his assassination. Nonviolence as a response to brutality and aggression in the real world of most blacks is an admission of subordination and weakness as it is in the real world of many whites and as is manifested in American foreign and domestic policy.[9] Within the African American community the sentiments of Malcolm X about nonviolence were the popular alternative to King's stance:

> Never turn the other cheek until you see the white man turn his cheek. The day that the white man turns the cheek, then you turn the cheek. If Martin Luther King was teaching white people to turn the other cheek, then I would say he was justified in teaching Black people to turn the other cheek. That's all I'm against. Make it a two-way street. Make it even steven. If I'm going to be nonviolent, then let them be nonviolent. But as long as they're not nonviolent, don't you let anybody tell you anything about nonviolence. No. Be intelligent.[10] . . . Tactics based solely on morality can only succeed when you are dealing with people who are moral or a system that is moral.[11]

The New York converts to Sunni Islam and those who joined them had black nationalist philosophies similar to those of Malcolm X. Many of them were former gang members. Some had

spent time in prison, a few matriculated in college, and all distrusted both the government and Christianity, as did Malcolm and many others within the African American community. The converts believed, as did Malcolm, that Islam unambiguously affirmed qualities and behaviors that they considered essential for a strong and viable African American community. One of these was responsible manhood. Within Islam manhood emerged distinct from femininity and included a theological right of self-defense, self-respect, and family leadership. Passages from the Qur'an and hadith concerning self-defense and self-respect were well known and explicit: "And those [believers] who, when an oppressive wrong is inflicted on them, (are not cowed but) help and defend themselves . . ."[12] "God has made your blood, properties, and honor inviolable . . ."[13]

In addition, the Nation of Islam, with direction from Malcolm, developed the prototypical black defense corps, the Fruit of Islam (FOI), for protection against police brutality and aggression from both racists and elements within the black community. Wherever the FOI had a chapter, it was usually respected if not feared by the African Americans in the vicinity. Members of the community knew not to insult or make passes at women who were affiliated with the "Black Muslims," for they had a policy of physical retribution. This was their reaction to the immoral treatment and low status that black women in general had suffered in America. One of their texts states, "Until we learn to love and protect our women, we will never be a fit and recognized people on the earth. The white people here among you will never recognize you until you protect your women."[14] Subsequently, converts to orthodox Islam recognized both the necessity for an organ similar to the FOI to protect their families and the fact that Islam sanctioned such a body as long as it was governed by orthodox Sharia precepts.

Although Sunni Muslim converts rejected the theology formulated by Elijah Muhammad, they—like all other African Americans—appreciated his and Malcolm's idea that African Americans had to control their own community affairs.[15] Similarly, the concept that African physical features are beautiful and that blacks should take pride in Africa as the motherland received almost universal acceptance throughout the black community. Such ideas had been totally absent from Christian rhetoric until the rise of black nationalism.

In the 1950s black nationalists decried the Christian portrayal of Jesus as a white man with European features. This exclusivist conception, supposedly divinely affirmed, with which white people could identify and feel superior to nonwhites, was another reason for black American disaffection with Christianity.[16] The concept of a white man as the son of God who is a manifestation of Him contrasts with Islamic monotheism and its precept of anti-anthropomorphism.[17] This difference between the two religions was not lost upon African American converts. Indeed, a key attraction for African Americans was Islam's disavowal of racism: "We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you."[18]

THE FIRST "DAR UL-ISLAM"

The main, if not the only, regularly functioning Sunni Muslim mosque in New York in the late 1940s and early 1950s was the Islamic Mission of America, Inc., located at 143 State Street in Brooklyn.[19] It was started by Daoud Faisal, a West Indian, along with a few Yemeni seamen. Shaykh Daoud was the director, and Maqbul Ilahi, a Pakistani, was the religious scholar. The Islamic Mission featured classes on Islam and Jum'ah, the weekly Friday congregational prayer.

The immediate stimulus to form Dar ul-Islam was dissatisfaction with Shaykh Daoud. Some of the converts believed he was overly concerned with "being accepted by America" and perceived him as an agent of status quo politics. They thought that he despised them and considered them minimally Muslim. These African Americans accused him and the mosque leadership of being "either unaware of or unresponsive to the needs of the indigenous people in whose midst they had settled."[20] He was preoccupied, they believed, with visiting Muslims in prison, conducting marriage ceremonies, and performing duties not devoted to aiding African Americans. They wanted energies focused on Islam as the "uplifting force for the poor and downtrodden within the New York slums and ghettoes."[21] Shaykh Daoud apparently had no intention of mounting an Islamic dynamic that would challenge or attempt to become independent of Western society. These, however, were goals of the African American Muslims.

Articles entitled "Dar-ul-Islam Movement" published in the 1970s in *Al-Jihadul Akbar*, the journal of the movement, state that Rajab Mahmud, Ishaq Abdush Shaheed, and Yahya Abdul-Kareem founded the Dar-ul-Islam concept in 1962.[22] The converts still attended the State Street Mosque, but for prayers other than Jum'ah, and as a place to congregate on Fridays after Jum'ah, they designated other locations as their Dar ul-Islam mosque. The first of these was established at 1964 Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn in 1962. The first Imam of the brotherhood was Rajab Mahmud; Yahya Abdul-Kareem was in charge of missionary activities or "amir of tabligh (propagation)".[23] A pledge or *bay'ah* was constructed and taken by most of the brothers.[24] The "Dar-ul Islam Pledge" read:

> In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful; Allah is the Greatest; Bearing witness that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad (peace be on him) is His Messenger, and being a follower of the last Prophet and Messenger of Allah, I hereby pledge myself to the Shariah and to those who are joined by this pledge. I pledge myself, by pledging my love, energy, wealth, life and abilities. I also pledge myself to the Majlis (Imamate), whose duty is to establish, develop, defend and govern according to the precepts of the Shariah. (Amin).[25]

At a dinner held in the summer of 1963, practically all of the forty to fifty brothers present took or retook the pledge, and as a symbolic show of solidarity all placed their signatures on the table spread.

Due both to a fast growing congregation—"150 brothers" in a matter of months—and the loss of the lease to the Atlantic Avenue site, a new place of prayer was located on Downing Street. Here, said *Al-Jihadul Akbar*, the brotherhood faltered due to "internal disorders" arising from "personality conflicts, misunderstandings of the religion, worldly desires, and the misuse of knowledge."[26] This meant that there were sharp disagreements, that some continued to have sexual relations outside of marriage, and that some believed that certain behaviors deemed illegal according to Islamic law were considered permissible. For example, until 1968 more than a few members of the group did not believe that they had to give up smoking marijuana because English translations of the Quran do not specifically mention this drug, and the earlier revealed verses concerning intoxicants do not ban them outright: "They ask you about intoxicants and gambling. Say there is great

sin, but some benefit in both of them; the sin, however, is greater than the benefit" and "do not approach prayer while intoxicated, [wait] until you know what you are saying."[27] Some of the Dar Muslims interpreted this to mean that marijuana was allowed or that Muslims had the right to withdraw gradually from drinking alcoholic beverages as the early Muslims did. The lack of discipline of these converts concerning sobriety—a trait opposite to that of the true believer—and unstable financial resources hindered progress toward a cohesive organization. Hence, a number of brothers did not stick to either the brotherhood or basic Islamic principles.

After the loss of the lease to the Downing Street location in 1965, the group used 777 Saratoga Avenue near Livonia in Brownsville, East New York, as their gathering place. At this location, however, the group broke apart and the "first Dar" ended. The brothers went their separate ways and stopped meeting. Yahya referred to the group's demise as an "upheaval."[28] Apparently a continuation of the problems encountered at the Downing Street mosque, the lack of specific goals and an effective organization to meet them, and failure to comply with basic Islamic precepts doomed the group to break apart. Yahya emerged from this situation as a leader with a group of loyal companions. Muslims of the area continued to use the apartment at Saratoga Avenue to socialize until August 1972.

TRANSITION TO THE SECOND DAR UL-ISLAM: THE CONTEXT

In the United States, laymen unfamiliar with the history and theology of Islam have usually identified all African American Muslims as "Black Muslims," a term popularized by C. Eric Lincoln for the members of the Nation of Islam formed by Elijah Muhammad and now headed by Louis Farrakhan.[29] Sunni Muslims abhorred the group and hated to be mistaken for its followers. To prevent this misidentification, Shaykh Da'ud in 1967 announced that all of the African American Muslims who attended the Islamic Mission had to carry Sunni Muslim identification cards. Those who chose not to comply "did not have to come back" to the State Street mosque ever again. His good intentions notwithstanding, many of the men whom he addressed regarded this decision as patronizing and arrogant. They felt that he was paternalistic enough to order African

Americans to carry identification to distinguish themselves from other blacks, but he obviously felt no authority over Arabs and Pakistanis to ask—much less command—them to be distinguished from their non-Muslim compatriots or from white Americans.

His dictum stimulated the latent sense of frustration that had prevailed among the African American Muslims since the first Dar ul-Islam brotherhood had disbanded. They felt they had put themselves in a subordinate position by having to attend the Islamic Mission without having any authority within it. Indeed, one of their failed goals was to tend to the needs of African Americans independent of outside control and to produce an alternative to the Nation of Islam. They had not produced a counterculture to American society including its morality—or lack thereof—and de facto caste or segregation systems. They wanted to establish an Islamic community for themselves whose activities would revolve around a mosque that would be open for prayer twenty-four hours a day.

The context of the frustrations of the African American Muslims and their resulting goals must be taken into account. For example, by 1967 the "black power" slogan was popular within the African American community. It meant different things to different people, but in general it connoted a more militant, if not aggressive and belligerent, stance for its supporters.[30] It meant that black people should control their own affairs and destiny and should protect themselves and fight their enemies. While he was the head of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Stokely Carmicheal helped to spread the black power concept. He remarked to a group of his supporters that:

> When you talk of "black power," you talk of bringing this country to its knees. When you talk of "black power," you talk of building a movement that will smash everything Western civilization has created. When you talk of "black power," you talk of picking up where Malcolm X left off. When you talk of "black power," you talk of the black man doing whatever is necessary to get what he needs . . . we are fighting for our lives.[31]

Also, in the summer of 1967 the United States suffered the worst racially motivated civil disturbances in its history. There were more than 40 riots and more than 100 smaller incidents. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders headed by Otto Kerner studied them and produced its report for President Lyndon Johnson in March 1968. Among its conclusions were that the

United States was moving toward two societies, one white, one black, separate and unequal; that white racism was the most fundamental cause of the riots; and that around half of the disturbances were precipitated by police violence against blacks.[32]

By 1967 a number of black self-defense groups had formed both to monitor and fight the police if necessary and to protect their communities overall. The three most prominent ones were the Black Panthers, the Deacons of Lowndes County in Alabama, and Simba Wachuka (Swahili for "young lions") popularly known as the army of the US organization headed by Ron Karenga.[33] These groups were modeled after the Fruit of Islam, the paramilitary of the Nation of Islam. The African Americans' decision to attempt again to build an independent Dar ul-Islam community thus drew its impetus not only from their commitment to Islam, but also from an African American nationalistic consciousness that was popular during the time. Shaykh Da'ud's paternalistic dictum to them to carry Sunni Muslim identification cards was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back.

THE DAR UL-ISLAM MOSQUE

In its failed attempt to build a new Islamic community, the brotherhood had continued attending the Islamic Mission for Jum'ah. Following Shaykh Da'ud's announcement in 1967, and for the first time ever, the converts held a separate Friday prayer. This was a significant statement of independence. The converts chose not to defer to the larger mosque. "Their action implied that they no longer recognized the legitimacy of the Islamic Mission to hold the Jum'ah prayer for the benefit of all of the local community; they believed that the mosque failed to meet everyone's religious needs. Hence, five to seven brothers, Yahya Abdul-Kareem included, prayed within a one-bedroom flat on Lewis Avenue in Brooklyn. It was a modest place; the tenants shared a bathroom and kitchen. This time the men were more determined to build an Islamic community: the vibe [i.e., ethos] was to adhere to Qur'an and sunnah; no compromise. Remember! All of us had come from gangs and jail [and we knew the meaning of no compromise]."[34]

When the people became too numerous to meet for the Friday prayer within the Lewis Avenue location, Bilal Abd al-Rahman offered his four-room apartment in the 100 block of Saratoga Street in the Ocean Hill district of Brooklyn. Two months later the

Muslims outgrew his place, forcing them to move the Friday prayer to another Brooklyn location, 240 Sumpter Street. Two rooms of Jamil Abdur-Rahman's five-room apartment were used for the mosque. In 1968 Yahya was elected Imam. By all accounts this was where the Dar really "took off." The apartment was open for prayers twenty-four hours a day. Classes in Islam and elementary Arabic were taught. The brothers considered it their Islamic duty to pray the predawn and one of the after sunset prayers, *maghreb* or *'isha'*, within the mosque. Those who wanted to live at the mosque to affirm their commitment to the Islamic way of life, or who necessarily had to live there, were allowed—even encouraged —to do so.

BIRTH OF DAR UL-ISLAM, THE MOVEMENT

A clash with the United States government later that year compelled the New York brotherhood to seek unity with other African American Muslim communities and to organize their own police force. The conflict began when four white FBI agents arrived in the predominantly black Brownsville section of Brooklyn in an unmarked vehicle. Three of them entered an apartment house. They caught the attention of five or six Sunni Muslims. When they saw the men coming out of the building accompanying a fellow Muslim in handcuffs and shackled at the feet, the Muslims confronted the arresting officers. The captive managed to escape.

Shortly thereafter, the neighborhood was flooded with federal agents, police, and plainclothes detectives. Some agents came to the mosque. The guard asked them to follow the Muslim custom of removing their shoes. The agent closest to the guard bent down as if to comply, but brandished a .38 caliber pistol instead and arrested the doorman. The Feds then proceeded to trash the mosque claiming that they were looking for the fugitive. The Muslim community was outraged. Imam Yahya commented on the incident in *Al-Jihadul Akbar* and explained why he thought the FBI did not give the mosque the same respect as he thought they would have given a church frequented by white people:

> There was an incident in 1968 with the F.B.I. when the mosque had been violated by the American police—by the Federal authorities, and the outcry from that was due to the provocation—to their provocation. . . .
>
> . . . the reason we were attacked was basically out of igno-

> rance of the federal government about Muslims, about sanctity of the Mosque, and ignorance in their relationship of how to deal with Muslims. That's part of it. They attacked the mosque on the precept that they were supposed to be looking for a draft dodger who was related [i.e., alleged] to have been Muslim. They alleged that we hid him in the mosque [and they wanted] to see if they could find this "alleged Muslim"—Allah protect us.
>
> To be honest, I think it has a racial basis because most of these people [i.e., whites in positions of authority] have a tendency to . . . regard Blacks in particular as being . . . [no]thing other than [whites' racist perceptions of] Blacks. When they look upon American Blacks they don't look at his [sic] religion or his character. All they can see is that he is Black and they look back to the past history and they see him always as being the [servile] subject of the society instead of looking upon him as a man or the person that he might be. That's why (I feel personally) they disregarded the sanctity of the Mosque.[35]

Imam Yahya's perception of the attitude of whites and the government agents is reminiscent of Justice Taney's words mentioned earlier; namely, that since black Americans are regarded as beings of an "inferior order, . . . they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect."

Although a delegation of Muslims met with the regional head of the FBI to resolve the incident, it roused the brotherhood to redouble efforts to realize a national Dar ul-Islam federation. Delegations went to various cities to encourage Muslim communities to join the movement. Ratification of affiliation was by word and sometimes by a handshake.[37] Cleveland was the first to join under the leadership of Imam Mutawwaf Abdush-Shaheed. Philadelphia was the second under Imam Ali Ahmad. With New York these communities were the largest of the movement.

In August 1972 the New York brotherhood made 52 Herkimer Place in Brooklyn its mosque. The location was acquired from a childhood friend of Imam Yahya named Ben Banu. The name chosen for the mosque was Ya-Sin, a term consisting of the names of two Arabic letters corresponding to the English *Y* and *S*. It is also both the first verse and the name of the thirty-sixth chapter of the Qur'an. Because this chapter is considered to be the heart of the Qur'an, one of its verses seemed especially apt to the converts, for they considered the text directly related to them, their families, and their African American brethren. It reads: "[This Qur'an was re-

vealed] in order that thou [Muhammad] may warn a people whose fathers were not warned, and who, therefore, remain heedless."[37] Thus, the mosque was named Ya-Sin because it was to be the heart of the Dar ul-Islam Movement as the chapter Ya-Sin was to the Qur'an and because the movement was to spread the Islamic message among blacks in particular, for they were those whose fathers had not been warned.

When it moved to Herkimer Place the brotherhood became more organized. Responsibilities were delegated to newly created ministry positions: Propagation (Da'wa), Defense, Information, Culture, Education, Health and Welfare, and Protocol.

The ministry of defense and its paramilitary Ra'd (Arabic for thunder) were very important. Ra'd was similar to the defense corps of other militant organizations that were involved in violent confrontations such as the Fruit of Islam, the Black Panthers, and the army of the US organization. All young males were required to take self-defense training and the best of them were chosen for Ra'd. Members drew various assignments ranging from providing personal bodyguards and building security, to protecting the females or dealing with those who insulted them, to administering punishments to those who broke the laws of the community. Ra'd members were supposed to be the exemplars of the community. More than anyone else, they were truly to fear none but Allah and His displeasure; they were to "hear and obey" without question.[38] The Ya-Sin mosque administration believed that Ra'd was a force superior to other similar groups not only because of the members' skills, but also because of their superior discipline and higher standard of morality. The founders had achieved one of their goals.

By the mid-1970s at least thirty-one mosque-based Sunni Muslim family communities were affiliated with the Dar ul-Islam Movement. They were located principally in cities along the eastern seaboard and in all of its larger metropolitan areas.[39] Dar ul-Islam was the largest indigenous Sunni Muslim group in the United States until 1975, when Warith Deen Muhammad proclaimed Sunni Islam as the religion of the Nation of Islam bringing 100,000 members into the fold.[40] Each community had its own Imam and Yahya Abdul-Kareem was the Imam of the Dar ul-Islam Movement. After the affiliation of a new Dar community, it organized itself into ministries like those at Ya-Sin mosque. To formalize the federation, a contract of allegiance modeled after the Medi-

nah treaty of the Prophet of Islam was used.[41] This treaty and the pledge mentioned earlier were regarded as lifelong commitments similar to the pledges Muslims gave to the Prophet and the early caliphs. Enforcement of these declarations was through moral suasion, but they were regarded very seriously; breaking one's word is an indication of hypocrisy.[42] (The treaty is reproduced in this chapter's appendix.)

ISLAMIC EDUCATION

Imam Yahya studied under Hafiz Maqbul Ilahi of the Islamic Mission and from 1963 to 1969 with Dr. Fazlur Rahman Ansari, said to be a Sufi Shaykh from Pakistan of the Qadiriyah *tariqah*.[43] Once the Dar-ul-Islam movement was underway in the late 1960s, the Imam offered a class appropriately labeled *the Shaykh's class* in which he taught material learned from Ansari and from texts on Sufism such a *Kashf al-Mahjub* [Illumination of the Veiled], 'Awarif al-Ma'arif [Masters of Mystical Insights], *Futuh al-Ghaib* [Revelations of the Unseen] and *Memoirs of the Saints*.[44]

The Shaykh's class was the highest a student could attain; only those who were recommended by their Imam or someone already in attendance and whom Yahya approved could attend. The class was taught on Thursdays and Sundays. Each student wore a blue thobe or jallabiyah, a loose, shirtlike garment extending to the lower part of the leg. After five years of acceptable matriculation, a student's name was supposed to be recommended to the Sufi order. If accepted the student had to serve two years somewhere else under observation in a kind of practicum. It is unknown if anyone did this.

Requisites for this class were the first two courses of the Minhaj (educational) "program" series: Ma'rifat Allah (knowledge of Allah) and Islam. The others in their required order were entitled Angels, Books, Prophets, Punishments of the Grave, and Taqdir and Qadar (preordainment). Except for the fourth, these titles correspond to the terms denoting the basic beliefs in Islam.[45] Students could attend these classes and the Shaykh's class concurrently.

The Philadelphia community became influential in the area of education. The text that they used for an introductory course, *Mubadi al-Islam: Fundamentals of Islam*, was adopted by many

other mosques throughout the movement.[46] The two classes following this, Fundamentals I and II, were adopted by other communities also. Teachers used passages from *The Religion of Islam* and *The Tenets of Islam* for the first and *Origins and Development of Islamic Institutions* and *Islamic Law and Constitution* for the second class.[47] Teaching methodologies were unconventional. Except for the introductory course popularly known as Mubadi', teachers usually did not tell the students the names of the texts being used. Classes resembled traditional Islamic learning circles wherein students and teacher sat in a circle on the floor of the mosque. The core of the session was the teacher dictating from his notes the partial text from one of the readings. Students were required to write and eventually memorize this. Teachers were those who had taken the class previously.

ETHOS: PURITY, INDEPENDENCE, AND ELITISM

Because the era of Malcolm X and the rhetoric that characterized him and the black nationalist movement spawned Dar ul-Islam, published articles by the group often carried a theme of liberation from racism; for example,

> The Dar-ul Islam movement and community have found that Blacks, Indians and Spanish speaking people are the best adherents to [the] laws of God Almighty in America. . . .[48]

> Mahmud, Abdush Shaheed and Abdul-Kareem were motivated by a sincere love for Islam and by a sincere love for the people from which they . . . had sprung. They knew that there was a natural affinity between Islam and the poor . . . and realized the ability of Islam to be an uplifting force for people, such as the poor and downtrodden of New York's slums and ghettoes.[49]

Actually, there was no particular plan to address "the needs of the indigenous people" except for an opportunity to practice Islam within the Dar ul-Islam Movement and to gain the deific benevolence that believers thought might accrue as stated in the article "Dar-ul-Islam Movement": "[the founders] endeavored to mobilize the people, to change what was in their hearts so that Almighty God Allah might change the condition of the people."[50]

Westerners would characterize the Dar ul-Islam movement as fundamentalist, because the faithful put a premium upon praying

at the mosque, covering women according to Qur'anic precepts, and the avoidance of the major sins, the *kaba'ir*. These include violations of Islamic monotheism, the most serious of which are praying or making supplication to any entity except to God-Allah,[51] illegal sexual relations, and lying.[52] A trait the Dar shared with traditional Muslim groups was the eschewal of political participation.[53] This characteristic was part of a broader goal, however, which was to avoid friendship with and dependence upon non-Muslims and to maintain a distance from Muslims who appear to have such relationships. This theme of disassociation was explained in a homily by Imam Yahya, "Take Not the Unbelievers for Friends" (Qur'an, 5:90).[54]

Furthermore, Muslims should feel disaffection toward coreligionists—male and female—who associate with or dress like non-Muslims. Thus, physical appearance to Dar members was an important barometer of a Muslim's adherence to the precepts of the religion and concomitantly to one's devotion to the Sunnah or normative practice of the Prophet of Islam.[55] Members frequently cited the hadith, "Whoever imitates a people is among them."[56] Less frequently they referred to the narration that labels shaving as anathema.[57] Therefore, Muslim men—foreign and indigenous—who succumbed to occupational and cultural demands to be beardless and women who did not wear a covering headpiece were considered to be brazenly disobedient to God and in love more with the norms and mores of non-Muslims than with Him and His commandments.[58]

A few influential members of the Dar harbored antipathy toward the brothers who attended college. They were regarded as being too close to the enemy and not to be trusted because of their perceived white mannerisms, diction, nonprison or stable family background, and ease of persona with whites who were educated or "successful." In private, older influential members referred to their college educated brethren as *young boys*.[59] "In retrospect," said one former Dar member, "there was jealousy toward them." Dar members did not perceive their attitude as blameworthy, for they believed that Allah would establish a new Islamic state with Muslims like them—if not with them and trusted Dar ul-Islam members only—at its core and helm.[60]

Members of the movement often viewed Muslims with Western

degrees and professional Muslims, particularly those who were immigrants, as Muslim "Uncle Toms" who were imitating and ingratiating themselves to the West. They were seen as running toward disbelief or Jahiliyah, pre-Islamic ignorance, for they often violated certain Islamic precepts. Their offenses were said to include the men being beardless, women dressing not according to Islamic principles, and parents forcing their daughters to dress without the *khimar* (Islamic headcovering). Other violations were the obtaining of interest bearing loans, selling or drinking alcohol, and socializing with non-Muslim men and women. Dar members also believed that most nonindigenous Muslims were too fearful and respectful of U.S. government authority.

On the other hand, many Muslim immigrants and their American-born offspring viewed blacks as stupid if not uneducable, deserving of being despised, and only minimally Muslim. Thus, there was friction between these two groups and interaction between them was kept to a minimum.

THE SUFI ENDING

In 1980 Ya-Sin moved from Herkimer Place to Van Siclan. Two years later the group suffered a tumultuous change in direction; Imam Yahya declared that the Dar had ceased and was part of an "international Jama'at al-Fuqrah" under the leadership of a Shaykh Mubarik Ali Jilani Hashmi.[61] Yahya abdicated his authority and leadership. His former followers now consider themselves Sufis with an ethos and precepts unparalleled in the former Dar. Many members of the movement did not accept Jilani, including the community in Atlanta led by Imam Jamil Abdullah al-Amin, formerly H. Rap Brown, chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee after Stokely Carmichael. Others from around the nation who chose not to follow had to start their communities anew. They formed another federation that may be more than half the size of the former Dar. There is no title or official name for the new group. They refer to themselves simply as the *jama'ah* or the "national *jama'ah*." Jamil is its leading Amir or Imam and members of this group share little common ground with their former coreligionists. The Ya-Sin mosque on Van Siclan ceased operations, and its building was sold in the mid-1980s.

CONCLUSION

Islam offered to Dar members a lucid, divinely ordained value system with a promise of rewards and punishments in this life and the hereafter. It included a set of daily behaviors that distinguished a practicing Muslim from others. The believer required no skills in deconstructionism to understand Islamic monotheism nor was one's worry that the divine text, the Qur'an, was subject to alteration, an ipso facto litmus test for revelation. The second Islamic criterion, the Prophet's behavior, also not subject to revision, was made available in hadith translations.

The simplicity of the basic tenets of Islam and its consonance with certain aspirations of blacks, particularly those who desired a culture and polity separate from and not dominated by white America, made Islam and the Dar attractive. The converts personified many of the individual attributes associated with Malcolm X, such as a readiness for self-defense, a disciplined traditional morality, and an exemplary strong African American manhood. These were manifest in the brothers' attempt to have their own mosque separate from the Islamic Mission, the decision not to return there, the statements by Yahya concerning the FBI's disrespect for the mosque, and the building of the movement consequent to the FBI incident. Traditional moral values and Islamic attire within the context of an unsympathetic environment suggests the strength of the female Muslims.

On a societal scale the hope was that the Muslim communities would become independent and self-contained with their own political, judicial, economic, and defense systems. The ultimate earthly hope was that the Dar faithful would form a sovereign state. Their professed methodology was to live by Qur'an and Sunnah, and to disengage from American institutional life as much as possible while gradually providing the community with replacement institutions and services. Their hedge against such high hopes was to understand that sovereign statehood was not a necessity as much as an Islamic perspective, a principle taught by Fazlur Rahman Ansari, the Sufi who taught Imam Yahya, and by the latter in his classes on Thursday and Sunday.

The venture into aspects of Sufism was related to changing "what was in their hearts" to gain certain benefits; but the preoccupation of this process is introspective. It becomes antithetical to

social change because the Sufi in an antagonistic society can find fulfillment with a change in perspective or with the discovery of inner or transcendent truths while issues of governmental and financial import become less important; the perspective of many Sufis is to learn to live despite oppressions instead of gaining control over them.

Identifying the impediments that both hampered Dar-ul-Islam and led to its dissolution requires more research, but provincialism probably was a factor. Distrust of both those who were not Muslim and Muslims who were too close to the "enemy" in appearance or manner limited the resources available to the group. This was not unintentional; part of their philosophy was to be self-reliant. Factors accounting for distrustfulness were as much a function of a street-black cultural index as they were of Islamic values. Islam became a counterculture as a complement to the African American culture as understood and represented by the leadership and opinion makers within the Dar.

Although there was a necessity for a *bay'ah* to ensure dependability, further research will also have to establish whether it became a negative factor, as that possibility is discussed by Bilal Philips:

> establishing the *bay'*ah prematurely will likely reinforce any narrow-mindedness and extremism present among the leadership or membership and eventually create a closed elitist group. Such a group, once created, becomes unable to benefit from knowledgeable non-members because non-members are branded as outsiders and thus untrustworthy. Eventually . . . [malevolent forces] may introduce a deviant idea, which will spread quickly and unopposed through the ranks due to their close[d]-mindedness and eventually they may end up committing atrocities against Muslims in the name of Islam.[62]

The personal Dar-ul-Islam pledge was comprehensive and, if taken literally, a lifelong contract of indenture. It is conceivable that complexities arose both in members' personal lives and for the group as a whole in applying the phrase "according to the precepts of the Shariah," for no intelligentsia has developed that has both the credentials of traditional Islamic scholarship and the ability to apply it aptly within African American or Western cultures.

Nonetheless, the existence of the Dar and the families who helped begin it might represent a first in United States history. The

movement was a true Sunni Muslim group predominantly composed of African Americans who successfully imposed upon themselves a number of Islamic precepts, including moral principles like chastity and family integrity, within a society that does not encourage these values.

NOTES

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1. Arabic terms and names like Yahyah will be spelled according to either the way the person named or the publication of his or her group spells it, e.g., Yahya; otherwise, transliterations will be similar to the style used by Arabic linguists but without distinctions between emphatic consonants and their nonpharyngealized equivalents.

2. Roi Ottley, *New World A-Coming* (1943; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1968), p. 56.

3. *Dar al-Islam* refers to the "land or realm wherein Muslims live by the law of Islam" as opposed to Dar al-Harb or "land of war," wherein non-Muslim government and moral values dominate. The publications of the group usually spell the name as *Dar-ul Islam* and sometimes *Dar-ul-Islam*.

4. See George A. Davis and O. Fred Donaldson, *Blacks in the United States: A Geographic Perspective* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), p. 112: "Patterns of residential and educational land use are the most common examples of the spatial *caste system* [against blacks] in the country" (my italics.); Bertram Karon, *The Negro Personality* (New York: Springer, 1958), pp. 1–7 and Chap. 2, "The American Caste System"; Bertram Doyle, *The Etiquette of Race Relations in the South: A Study in Social Control* (Chicago: University Press, 1937).

5. Words of Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney of the Supreme Court of the United States quoted by Frank B. Latham, *The Dred Scott Decision, March 6, 1857: Slavery and the Supreme Court's "Self-Inflicted Wound"* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1968), p. 30.

6. Cf. Na'im Akbar, *Visions for Black Men* (Nashville: Winston-Derek, 1991), pp. 69–73; George Breitman, *The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), pp. 56 and 147.

7. Simeon Booker, *Black Man's America* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), pp. 108–109.

8. Ibid., pp. 116–117.

9. This is not to mention that within the African American community nonviolence as a response is often interpreted and despised as a homosexual trait. See Charles E. Silberman, *Criminal Violence, Criminal Justice* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), pp. 523–530.

10. Bruce Perry, ed., *Malcolm X: The Last Speeches* (New York: Pathfinder, 1989), p. 149.

11. George Breitman, ed., *By Any Means Necessary: Speeches, Interviews, and a Letter by Malcolm X* (New York: Pathfinder, 1970), p. 43.

12. Qur'an, 42:39. English renditions of Quranic passages are from *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* by Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall (New York: Penguin Group, n.d); *The Quran*, trans. T. B. Irving (Brattleboro, Vt.: Amana Books, 1991); *The Holy Qur'an*, ed. The Presidency of Islamic Researches, Ifta, Call and Guidance (Medinah, Saudi Arabia: Ministry of Hajj and Endowments, 1410 A.H.); and *The Holy Qur'an*, trans. A. Yusuf Ali ([n.p.]: The Muslim Student Association, 1975).

13. *Sahih* [Muhammad ibn Isma'il] *al-Bukhari*, (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1958), 8:18.

14. Elijah Muhammad, *Message to the Blackman* (Chicago: Muhammad's Temple No. 2, 1965), pp. 58–61.

15. On the theology of the Nation of Islam see Zafar Ishaq Ansari, "Aspects of Black Muslim Theology," *Studia Islamica* 53 (Spring 1981): 137–176.

16. A common view in the 1960s and early 1970s; see Harding, "Black Power and the American Christ."

17. See Qur'an, 2:255; 42:11; 112.

18. Qur'an, 49:13.

19. See Akbar Muhammad, "Muslims in the United States" in *The Islamic Impact*, ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad et al. (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1984), pp. 208–210.

20. "Dar-ul-Islam Movement," Articles 1 and 2. There are three editions of this article; all are entitled "Dar ul-Islam Movement." Articles 1 and 2 are identical, have the subheading "The Real Muslims Stand Up!", are a brief indulgent early history of the group, and are followed by a page captioned "Medina Treaty," the Dar agreement federating a mosque.

Article 1 is from the July 1974 edition of *Al-Jihadul Akbar*. Article 2 is part of an unnumbered and undated eight-page insert apparently from a special printing. The third article is an edited version of articles 1 and 2

leading into an interview with Yahya Abdul-Kareem. Citations to these will refer to Article 1, 2 or 3. The last publication of *Al-Jihadul Akbar* was in spring 1980.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Article 3, p. 9.

24. The models for this are the two pledges of Aqabah and that of al-Ridwan during the lifetime of the Prophet and the pledges given to the four caliphs after him. See Abd al-Malik Ibn Hisham, *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ibn Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah*, trans. Alfred Guillaume (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 198–205 for the first two pledges (see Qur'an 60:12) and pp. 503–504 and 686–687, respectively, concerning al-Ridwan and Abu Bakr.

25. "Dar-ul-Islam Movement," all articles.

26. "Dar-ul-Islam Movement," Articles 1 and 2.

27. Qur'an, 2:219 and 4:43. The verses of prohibition are 5:90–91.

28. Article 3, p. 9.

29. Eric C. Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961). Americans commonly believe a Muslim to be a foreigner and an Arab in particular. Hence, the improper uses of *Moslem* for them and *Muslim* for followers of Elijah Muhammad and Sunni African Americans.

30. Alton Hornsby, Jr., *Chronology of African-American History: Significant Events and People from 1619 to the Present* (Detroit: Gale Research, 1991), p. 127.

31. G. Roberts, "From 'Freedom High' to 'Black Power,'" *The New York Times Magazine* (Sept. 25, 1966), p. 6, quoted in James Haskins, *Profiles in Black Power* (New York: Doubleday, 1972), p. 193.

32. Bradford Chambers, ed., *Chronicles of Negro Protest* (New York: Parents' Magazine Press, 1968), pp. 300–301.

33. The Black Panthers were a militant African American organization organized by Huey P. Newton and Elridge Cleaver in 1966. Members believed in defending themselves and the black community by open conflict with the police if necessary. On their demise, see Chap. 9, "The Only Good Panther," *Racial Matters: The F.B.I.'s Secret Files on Black America. 1960–1972* (New York: The Free Press, 1989) by Kenneth O'Reilly.

Ron Ndabezitha Everett-Karenga founded the U.S. organization in the mid-1960s emphasizing African American culture and black nationalism. He was also the originator of the African American holiday, Kwanzaa.

34. Interview with Bilal Abdur-Rahman.

35. Article 3, page 9.

36. Ibid.

37. Qur'an, 36:6; the hadith mentioning Ya-Sin as the heart of the Quran do not meet the standards of sahih "sound (free from deficiency)" hadith. See Isma'il Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Quran al-'Azim* (Beirut: Dar al-Andalus, 1983), 5:598.

38. See Qur'an, 2:150, 2:285, 5:27 ff, 5:44, 76:7–10.

39. Dar ul-Islam mosques were located in New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Washington, D.C., North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, Michigan, Illinois, Colorado, Ontario, Trinidad, the West Indies, and Alaska.

40. Hornsby, *Chronology of African-American History*, p. 111. Imam Warith Deen of the American Muslim Mission was named at birth after Wallace Delaney Fard who propagated the foundations of Islam to the then Elijah Poole. After Fard's disappearance in 1934, the Nation of Islam said he was God in person and Allah, even though his physical features were not black or Negroid. Whites were said to be "devils."

Wallace, like Malcolm X, was a seventh child. This was significant to each of their families. Since his childhood Wallace was expected to inherit his father's position. Upon assumption of leadership, "his ultimate goal," says C. Eric Lincoln, has been "complete orthodoxy" and "to eradicate completely the Black Nationalist image." Concerning Warith Deen, Z. Ansari said that "[his] influence and followers have been reduced by Louis Farrakhan's extraordinary demagogic skill" ("W. D. Muhammad: The Making of a 'Black Muslim' Leader," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 2 [December 1985]: 245–262).

41. W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina* (New York: Oxford Univiversity Press, 1956), pp. 221–225; Ibn Hisham, *The Life of Muhammad*, pp. 231–234.

42. Hypocrisy (*nifaq*) in Islam is different from the popular concept of the term in English, where it means to say one thing and do another. The hypocrite is one who consciously and falsely claims belief in Islamic monotheism or the Prophet of Islam.

43. *Tariqah* (lit. "way" or "manner"): a religious order whose members stress following God in a mystical or inner sense.

44. Interviews with Imam al-Amin Abdul-Latif and Shaykh Sayed Abdul-Hadi (1991). Ali ibn Uthman al-Juliabi al-Hujwiri, *Kashf al-Mahjub*, trans. Reynold Nicholson (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1911; reprint ed., London Luzac, 1936, 1959, 1967; Lahore: Islamic Book Foundation, 1976). Umar ibn Muhammad al Suhrawardi, 'Awarif al-Ma'arif, trans. H. Wilberforce (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1973). Abd Al-Qadir al Jilani, *Futuh al-Ghaib*, trans. Aftab al-Deen Ahmad (Lahore: Sh. Mu-

hammad Ashraf, [1972, 1967]). Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Farid al-Deen, *Tadhkirat al-Awliya 'Memoirs of the Saints' of Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Farid al-Deen*, trans. Reynold Nicholson (London: Luzac, 1905–1907).

45. Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj ibn Muslim al-Qushayri al-Nisaburi, *Sahih Muslim*, trans. Abdul Hamid Siddiqi ([n.p.]: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, n.d.), 1:1–2; *Sahih Muslim*, ed. Muhammad Fu'ad Abd al-Baqi (Dar al-Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyah, Isa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1955), 1:28–29.

46. Muhammad ibn [Abd al-Wahhab] Sulayman al-Tamimi, trans. Ahmad Jalal and Muhammad Ghaly (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Ri'asat Idarat al-Buhuth al-'Ilmiyah wa-al-Ifta' wa-al-Da'wa wa-al-Irshad, n.d.).

47. Ahmad Ghalwash, *The Religion of Islam*, (Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, 1966). Ali Musa Raza Muhajir, *The Tenets of Islam* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, [1969]). Amir Hasan Siddiqi, *Origins and Development of Islamic Institutions* (Karachi: Jamiyat al-Fallah, [1962]). Abul Ala Maudoodi, *The Islamic Law and Constitution* (Karachi: Jamaat-e-Islami Publications, [1955].

48. "Dar-ul Islam is a Community," *Islamic News: Special Anniversary Edition*, n.d. This publication was published by the Philadelphia mosque, it reprinted this article and others from *Al-Jihadul Akbar*.

49. "Dar-ul-Islam Movement," all articles.

50. Ibid. The article cites the translation of the verse as "Allah will never change the grace which He hath bestowed on a people until they change what is in their very soul." The exegesis of this, however, refers first to conditions that proceed from good to bad.

51. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 9:4. Prayer and supplication to icons, amulets, saints, their pictures, and even to the Prophet of Islam himself is considered polytheistic. Other major sins are disobedience to parents and murder. Outside of self-defense against non-Muslims and declared warfare, the taking of human life is permitted as atonement for murder, apostasy, male homosexuality, and extramarital sexual relations.

52. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 3:224–225; Qur'an: 25:68.

53. Rafiq Zakaria upbraids this self-imposed position, "Where Muslims are in a minority . . . the attitude of the fundamentalists is quite clear; they should learn to live as second class citizens and avoid participation in politics or administration." *The Struggle Within Islam* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), p. 27.

54. Yahya A. Kareem, "Take Not the Unbelievers for Friends," *Al-Jihadul Akbar* (Spring 1400 A.H., 1980): 13–14 and 23–26.

55. In *Kitab Iqtida' al-Sirat al-Mustaqim Mukhalafat Ashab al-Jahim*, Ibn Taymiya argued vigorously that Muslim imitation of others is proscribed. Ibn Taymiyah provided one exception; see Ahmad Zaki Hammad, *Islamic Law* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1992),

p. 24. Muslim faith is disaffirmed upon disbelief in the compulsory nature of the behavior and commands of the Prophet of Islam for Muslims; see, for example, Qur'an, 4:80, 48:17.

56. *Man tashabbaha bi-qawmin fa-huwa min-hum*: cited from the hadith collections of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, and Abu Da'ud Sulayman al-Sijistani, *al-Sunan*, by Fazlul Karim in *al-Hadis [A Translation and Revision of al-Mishkat al-Masabih by Muhammad ibn Abd Allah al-Khatib al-Tibrizi*] (Lahore: Muhammad Ashraf, n.d.).

57. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 9:198.

58. On injunctions mandating having a beard, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 7:206; Qur'anic injunctions on women's attire: 24:31, 33:59.

59. *Young boy* is a slang term whose core meaning pertains to "inexperience" whether it is in a particular area or to the age of someone relative to the age of someone older. Here the term refers to life or street experience less than to actual age.

60. Qur'an, 24:55 presents the promise of political sovereignty to the believers.

61. *Fuqra* is a corruption of the Arabic plural *al-fuqara*; the singular is *faqir*. The literal meaning is one who is poor, impoverished. A popular usage of it refers to the Sufi who is poor in comparison to his Lord, a meaning derived from Quranic passages like: "O mankind! It is 'you that have need' [*al-fuqara*] of Allah; but Allah is the One who is free of all wants, worthy of all praise (al-Fatir, 35:15)."

62. *Tafseer of Soorah al-Hujaraat* (Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 1988), p. 88.

CHAPTER 9

To "Achieve the Pleasure of Allah": Immigrant Muslims in New York City, 1893–1991

Marc Ferris

The World Trade Center bombing catapulted a tiny cell of New York City's Muslim community into the national spotlight. This attention distorts the fact that representatives of almost every Muslim country in the world have created a distinctive Islamic tradition in New York City since the early twentieth century. The city's Islamic activities have largely taken place in Queens and Brooklyn, far from Manhattan's glitter, which camouflaged the religion's presence from most New Yorkers. Since the mid-1960s, the Muslim population in New York City has increased dramatically due to immigration, conversions, and high birthrates while Islam has spilled across the city's borders to the rest of metropolitan New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

Although the region's Muslims provide the vital services that keep the city's economy humming, Islamic organizations are difficult to track. After suffering decades of negative media stereotyping and hostility, dedicated networks within New York's immigrant Muslim community began making a discernible effort to revel in their heritage and spread Islam to a wider audience in the mid-1970s. Since 1980, when the city contained eight or nine mosques, immigrant Islamic associations have multiplied across the five boroughs of greater New York so quickly that by 1991 there were at least twelve immigrant mosques in Queens, fifteen in Brooklyn, two in the Bronx, six in Manhattan, and two on Staten

Island. Deriving an accurate census of Muslims living in New York City's five boroughs is more difficult than counting mosques; realistic estimates range from 300,000 to 600,000.[1]

Africans brought to the Americas during the colonial era probably introduced observance of Islamic law to the city, and Muslim seamen and other temporary migrants may have left their mark as they passed through the New York port in the late 1800s. However, white journalist Alexander Russell Webb organized the city's first documented Islamic institution. Born in Hudson, New York, in 1847 and named United States counsel to the Philippines forty years later, Webb converted from Christianity in Manila after corresponding with Bombay Municipal Council Member Budruddin Abdullah Kur in 1891.[2]

The next year Saudi Arabian businessman Hajee Abdullah Arab visited Manila and pledged to support Webb's missionary activities for Islam in the United States. Webb took the indirect route home to make fundraising trips in India, where he received money from "some of the wealthiest and most influential merchants in Bombay," and in Turkey, where he also made connections in high places. After Webb returned to New York City in 1893, he established the American Moslem Brotherhood at 30 East 23rd Street and soon attracted attention as the "Torch Bearer of Islam."[3]

Assisted by John H. Lant, Erwin Nabakoff, and Leon Landsburg, along with business manager Harry Jerome Lewis and librarian R. Othman White, the "Yankee Mahometan" also founded the Moslem World Publishing Company, which issued at least twenty-six volumes of the *Voice of Islam* and the *Moslem World: Dedicated to the American Islamic Propaganda* between 1893 and 1895. Nefeesa M. T. Keep edited the periodicals and served as the company's secretary.[4]

Dissension within the organization ultimately undermined Webb's efforts. On July 12, 1894, Nefeesa Keep locked herself in the *Moslem World*'s editorial offices and accused Webb of financial chicanery. Keep alleged that Webb failed to pay her and other staff members, that he used misleading tactics when soliciting funds from abroad, and that he bought a lavish farm and land in upstate Ulster County with money earmarked for spreading Islam throughout the country. His credibility damaged by Keep's accusations, Webb again found it necessary to confront charges of irresponsible

money handling when the Nawab of Basoda, the "ruling Prince of India" who claimed to represent Webb's financial backers, arrived in New York City to check on his investment's spiritual returns. The Nawab accused Webb of squandering $140,000 to $150,000, although the two never met.[5]

Traveling to Webb's farm in Ulster Park after the Indian prince sailed off, a New York Times reporter found the "Torch Bearer of Islam" inhabiting a "miserable house." Webb admitted to the journalist that his impact upon American religious culture had been slight, pleaded hardship, and claimed that he had only received $20,000 from abroad. Recounting his first few months in New York City, Webb characterized most of his early associates as "sharks," solely interested in bleeding the American Moslem Brotherhood's treasury. Webb further asserted that his former assistant, John H. Lant, attempted to seize control of the American Moslem Brotherhood's finances by circulating a newsletter throughout India that highlighted Webb's supposed financial ineptitude. The *Times* reporter claimed that Lant shadowed the Nawab of Basoda around New York City, begging the prince to pay past wages supposedly owed to him by Webb.[6]

The *New York Times* pounced on this sordid story with a full-page, illustrated feature and ridiculed the whole cast of characters, heralding the "Fall of Islam in America" and gleefully relating the "Story of a Mussulman Propaganda That Came to Grief." Webb passed the rest of his days in relative obscurity, excepting his 1901 appointment by the Sultan of Turkey as Honorary Consul General of the Turkish government in New York. Even without the Moslem Brotherhood's internal strife, few Americans were receptive to Webb's message.[7]

Although most turn of the century New Yorkers ignored Islam, historic circumstances soon brought permanent Muslim settlers to the city. In 1907 Polish, Russian, and Lithuanian immigrants to Williamsburg, Brooklyn, founded the American Mohammedan Society, New York City's first institution organized around a mosque. Members probably worshipped in rented space until 1931, when they bought three buildings, 104, 106, and 108 Powers Street, making the Mohammedan Society the first corporate body to purchase property in New York City with the express purpose of practicing Islam.[8]

An Islamic outpost in New York for one generation, the society

claimed an average of 400 members through the 1950s. Over the years, descendants from this insular Eastern European Islamic community dispersed across the tri-state region, and their Williamsburg neighborhood changed, attracting Hasidic Jews after World War II and Puerto Ricans and African Americans during the late 1950s. Now, in the 1990s, the association's elderly leaders face a challenge keeping the group together. Subsequent generations born to parents active in the Mohammedan Society, which changed its name to the Moslem Mosque during the 1960s, have mostly intermarried or found other interests.[9]

Americanization has even affected the mosque's elders, whose European heritage gave them the opportunity to assimilate quickly. Few other immigrant or African American Muslims know about or visit Powers Street, and the mosque is isolated from other Islamic activities throughout the city. In 1991, the group counted about 200 "book members," but the core of active constituents is shrinking. On a given Friday or Sunday, as many as forty elderly members may show up for prayers during pleasant weather, but a turnout of twenty is considered normal. Some leaders believe that their only hope is to keep the mosque going long enough to be able to hand the organization over to their children, should they eventually accept religion.[10]

In 1938 the Works Progress Administration's *New York Panorama* declared that the Powers Street Muslims administered the city's "only real mosque." Ten years before, however, Moroccan-born Sheik Daoud Ahmed Faisal came to the United States via Grenada and began organizing the city's second bona fide mosque, the Islamic Mission of America for the Propagation of Islam and Defense of the Faith and the Faithful. Faisal's plans languished until the Islamic Mission of America in 1939 rented a brownstone at 143 State Street, Brooklyn Heights, incorporated with New York state five years later, and bought the building in 1947. Located one block from Atlantic Avenue, the heart of Arab New York since the mid-1940s, the Islamic Mission has remained one of the city's preeminent Islamic institutions for almost half a decade.[11]

Somewhat ambitiously, Faisal deliberately referred to his mosque as a *mission*. Turning the tables on Christian foreign missionaries, who have tried to alter behavior patterns in Muslim lands, Faisal attempted to change the way Americans viewed God. Imam Faisal criticized aspects of American society that countered Islamic val-

ues, exhorting his followers not to "allow the glitters of this material world to lead you away from Islam." Conversion, the improvement of his religion's image, and the dissemination of the message of a just, compassionate God remained central to Faisal's goals for the Islamic Mission.[12]

Critical to Faisal's program was the Institute of Islam. Although a fading, painted wooden sign stands outside the mosque advertising the institute's presence, the school's main period of activity was between 1950 and 1965, when it offered daily, two-hour-long, year-round Islamic and Arabic classes for children and adults. Somewhat boldly for the politically volatile 1960s and early 1970s, the Imam explicitly designed his organization "for the enlightenment and liberation of the African and Asiatic people residing and born in the United States and in the Americas." Setting out to "educate, enlighten, and inform" Americans about Islam, Shiek Faisal presided over an unusually active mosque and school.[13]

From the late 1950s through the mid-1960s, when the Islamic Mission was one of the city's only immigrant mosques, Faisal ministered to a 300-member congregation, which included a significant share of diplomats, businessmen, and university students. During the 1970s, however, the mosque began to attract blue-collar Muslims. Statesmen and students ceased making the trip to Brooklyn and devout worshippers at the Islamic Mission sometimes derided members of the well-educated professional community as "Muslims of Holiday" or "Muslims of Friday."[14]

Faisal's labors on behalf of Islam were even more remarkable because, after he left State Street at 5 P.M., the Imam worked full-time for the federal government as an Amtrak official. Faisal's wife, Sayedah Khadijah, assisted at the mosque by chairing the Muslim Ladies' Cultural Society and providing other support. Since 1950 Mohamed Kabbaj, who came to New York City from Morocco in 1949 and worked for the Voice of America, assisted Faisal with the Islamic Mission's day-to-day administration. Kabbaj oversaw the Institute of Islam, served as president of the mosque's "Muslim Fraternity," and became the Mission's Imam after Faisal's death in 1980.[15]

One of the Islamic Mission's legacies was to bring African American and immigrant Muslims together. Faisal's mosque served as a forum where African Americans received exposure to the

Sunni tradition and were offered an alternative to Elijah Muhammad's Chicago-based Nation of Islam. Stressing that "all Muslims are brothers," Faisal attempted to promote harmony and interaction within the city's Islamic community. But space limitations at the Mission's austere three-story building virtually dictated that Faisal's institution would spawn several splinter groups and offshoot mosques. Most of these were Brooklyn based, including the Dar-ul-Islam movement during the mid-1960s, an African American Sunni organization that challenged the Nation of Islam's primacy in New York City, and Masjid Al-Farouq, bought by the mostly Yemeni Islamic Brotherhood, at 552–54 Atlantic Avenue in 1977.[16]

The relocation of the United Nations to Manhattan in 1952 magnified Islam's presence in the city. Publicity lavished upon ambassadors and dignitaries from Islamic countries by the local and national media during the 1950s enhanced the religion's image and some New Yorkers realized for the first time that they had Muslim neighbors. Although the *New York Times* rarely portrayed Islam in a flattering light, captioned pictures and short blurbs about Ramadan rituals and burgeoning local Islamic organizations in the newspapers demystified Islam and made Muslims more human to average New Yorkers.[17]

This move was important because the average New Yorker's perception of Islam has been more influenced by diplomats and doctors than by taxi drivers in Queens, no matter how many immigrant Muslims distribute Islamic tracts or convert brownstones, stores, and basements into mosques. Under the auspices of the Pakistani League of America, Pakistani diplomats sponsored well-attended Ramadan ceremonies at their local headquarters and at several Manhattan hotels throughout the 1950s. Aided by their home governments and private donations, professional Muslims from such diverse nations as Egypt, Pakistan, and Indonesia established the association that eventually built the city's most visible mosque—albeit after almost forty years of fund raising and planning.

In 1952 Manhattan's Muslim community organized the New York Mosque Foundation to raise money. Optimism surrounding this mosque project ran so high that the foundation established the Islamic Center of New York in 1955, which was temporarily quartered at Pakistan House, 12 East 65th Street, home of the Pakistani delegation to the United Nations. The foundation charged its Is-

lamic Center with developing the religious, social, and educational programs that the group planned to transplant into the proposed building.[18]

Headed by University of Cairo professor Mahmoud Yousef Shawarbi, a Fulbright scholar at Fordham University, the Islamic Center's Executive Council first attempted to fill the demand for an Imam's services themselves. In November 1955 Dr. Shawarbi's successor, N. Saifpor Fatemi, who chaired Princeton University's Department of Oriental Languages and Literature, announced that the city's first mosque would be located somewhere on the west side of United Nations plaza and that work would commence within one year, "Allah willing." Although it took the Mosque Foundation until 1991 to complete their building at 96th Street and Third Avenue, the fact that representatives from a cross section of the world's Islamic nations united for a common purpose in New York City during the 1950s was significant.[19]

As progress toward completing the new mosque dragged and the need for a full-time organization became more acute, the foundation purchased a four-story building at 1 Riverside Drive in 1957, where the group has operated—almost without incident—for over thirty years. Soon after, the Executive Council imported Dr. Muhammad Shuraiba to New York, the first of an unbroken line of Imams from Cairo's prestigious Al-Azhar University recruited by the Islamic Center.[20]

In addition to these developments, other changes strengthened the practice of Islam throughout New York in the 1950s. African American Islamic influence in the city probably can be dated to the interaction between members of Marcus Garvey's camp and Noble Drew Ali's Moorish Science Temple in the 1920s. But interest in Islam among African Americans grew substantially after the Nation of Islam opened their Mosque #7 in 1946 at the Harlem YMCA. Certainly, the Nation of Islam repelled most immigrant Muslims, who questioned Elijah Muhammad's allegiance to the Qu'ran and Islamic orthodoxy. But the conversion to Islam by significant numbers of mostly Christian, native-born African Americans coincided with the immigrant Muslim movement to strengthen the city's Islamic network, exemplified in part by the Mosque Foundation, the Islamic Center, and the establishment of the city's first Muslim Student Association at Columbia University in 1956. [21]

Pakistani immigrant Abdul Basit Naeem, who lived in the Park

Slope section of Brooklyn, chronicled Islam's growth in New York City during the 1950s and the interaction between African American and immigrant Muslims in his journal *The Moslem World and the U.S.A.* Although solely responsible for producing the *Moslem World*, Naeem was more than a publisher; along with selling tapestries, prayer rugs, Islamic texts, religious articles, and handbags, he also performed marriages and taught Arabic and religious classes.[22]

Sowing the seeds for future interactions between African Americans and immigrants, as well as revealing the interest shown by the African American community in Islam, Naeem moved the site of his lessons from Brooklyn to Harlem in 1957. Not surprisingly, Naeem prayed at the Islamic Mission of America, where African Americans and immigrants regularly mixed. He published writings by Nation of Islam leader Elijah Mohammed and publicized the mosque's various activities in *The Moslem World.* Although Naeem's journal focused primarily on the immigrant community, he clearly included African Americans within the city's Islamic fabric, indicating the degree to which the religion has united people of widely differing backgrounds in New York City since at least the 1950s.[23]

Malcolm X, who arrived in New York City to serve as Imam at the Nation of Islam's Mosque #7 in 1954, brought Islam more attention during the early 1960s than the religion had ever received. But the most significant event to affect the city's immigrant Islamic community during the twentieth century occurred in Washington, D.C., where President Lyndon Johnson ratified the 1965 Immigration Act increasing quotas from non-European countries that were virtually excluded by law since 1924. Once the law took effect New York City attracted floods of Muslim immigrants from Guyana, Africa, the Middle East, and the Indian subcontinent. Later supplements to this human tide included Muslims from almost every country with a significant Islamic presence. Dedicated Muslims who came to the city in the wake of the Immigration Act rented buildings formerly used as stores, apartments, schools, and factories for Islamic gatherings, or simply prayed in each other's homes. After adjusting to American life and carving their niche in the city's economy, they began to build lasting Islamic institutions between 1969 and 1975.[24]

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, mosques and other organi-

zations rapidly multiplied across the city. Between 1983 and 1991 the city's immigrant Muslims constructed two new mosques, broke ground for another, and organized approximately thirty more. Established largely by Pakistanis in 1976, the Islamic Center of Corona (Masjid Al-Falah) built New York City's first structure planned and conceived as a mosque at 42-12 National Street, Queens. The group first met at 101-03 43rd Avenue until they finished the new facility in 1983. Attached to a Jehovah's Witness Hall and down the street from a spiritualist Christian center, Masjid Al-Falah's modest dome and minaret hover above a largely Puerto Rican and Colombian neighborhood. The Islamic architectural features are grafted onto a square two-story building, which houses two levels of prayer rooms and a funeral parlor in the back lot.[25]

Masjid Al-Falah's carpeted main prayer space can accommodate 200 tightly packed bodies, if necessary, although a typical Friday service attracts 40 to 50 men, who generally represent a wide range of ethnic identities. A women's prayer room, completely hidden behind smoked-glass, sits invisibly behind the austere main prayer hall. A majority of Pakistanis make up the Board of Directors and its Managing Committee, which oversees day-to-day operations. The Masjid's Imam is also Pakistani, although Bangladeshis exert a secondary influence within its leadership.[26]

It is not surprising that working-class Pakistanis played a leading role in erecting the city's first mosque. Often more devout and usually possessing a better command of English than most other Muslim immigrants, Pakistanis have promoted Islamic observance in New York City since the 1950s. In addition to building the city's first mosque, Pakistani newsstand owners and restaurant workers helped institute at least six other houses of Islamic worship throughout the city during the 1970s and 1980s, mostly in Queens, and organized such proselytizing groups as the Islamic Circle of North America, formally established in 1971 to propagate Islamic teaching.

A Pakistani-dominated organization was also involved in the construction of Queens' new mosque at 137–64 Geranium Avenue in 1991. Founded in 1975, the Muslim Center of New York first rented an apartment at 41st Avenue in Flushing, then purchased a $75,000 house in 1979, and finally bought an adjacent single-family home in 1987 for $350,000 "in cash." After demolishing

the houses, the group started building their Mosque and Community Center on May 21, 1989.[27]

Muslim Center officials designed the new 18,600 square foot concrete complex to provide adequate prayer space for over 500 worshippers, a community hall for Islamic functions, and educational facilities to host daily and weekly classes. They also planned the building with separate stairways and prayer spaces for men and women, a caretaker's apartment, a "full fledged administrative office," and two rental units. For the center's ground-breaking ceremony, mosque leaders solicited responses from the Queens borough president and the neighborhood's congressional representative, who wrote letters of congratulations, and the mayor, who showed up at the event in the midst of a heated reelection campaign. The local mass media ignored the event, probably because the mosque's Queens location is not glamorous.[28]

In contrast, Manhattan's first mosque, the Islamic Cultural Center of New York, at Third Avenue and 96th Street, with its impressive minaret and dome, received great fanfare after it hosted Eid-al-Fitr services for the first time in its new building on April 15, 1991. The direct descendent of the New York Mosque Foundation's efforts during the early 1950s, the "Mosque of New York" symbolizes Islam's ascendancy in New York City. Although likened to a Mariott hotel and flanked by a housing project to the north and a generic apartment tower across Third Avenue, the Islamic Cultural Center's mosque stands near the crest of a gently tapered hill and commands a distinguished presence on its nondescript block. The mosque's dedication served as a source of pride and interest for most of the city's Muslims and was particularly associated with the Persian Gulf oil states, especially Kuwait. Even though representatives from forty-six Muslim nations served on the organization's Board of Trustees, Mohammad A. Abulhasan, named permanent representative of the state of Kuwait to the United Nations in 1981, chaired this body and raised a large portion of the money that finally completed the building.[29]

Completing the city's most visible mosque took almost forty years. Even after the New York Mosque Foundation purchased the 96th Street plot in 1966, the group advertised the mosque's imminent completion four times between 1967 and 1989. Several disputes mired construction in delay, including charges that the mosque's leaders fired an Iranian contractor for hiring a Jewish

firm as technical consultants. Modernists and traditionalists on the board also clashed over the edifice's architecture, which resulted in a compromise plan drafted by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill.[30]

Even with the embarrassing construction snags, the Islamic Center's new mosque signalled the rising Muslim population in New York City. The organization's transition to the new building from 1 Riverside Drive presented some logistical problems, although the center was still keeping the Upper West Side mosque open for Jum'a prayers in January of 1992, and will probably continue to maintain the building. Hoping to make a measurable impact upon the city's religious culture, the Islamic Center has planned to sponsor educational cultural outreach programs designed to introduce New Yorkers to Islam. Future goals include building a school and Imam's quarters next to the mosque.[31]

Sandwiched between the affluent Upper East Side and Harlem's southeast border, the Islamic Center occupies a unique position to further bind the African American and immigrant Muslim communities. This is not an easy task because each group is so culturally distinct. However, relations between the two communities remain cordial, with several examples of intergroup cooperation. The Nation of Islam rarely appealed to New York City's immigrant Muslims and even today most mosques in primarily African American neighborhoods seldom attract outsiders. Moreover, as John Jay College African American Studies professor Yusuf Nuruddin has noted, some foreign-born Muslims display "a racist attitude that is no different from the attitude of Europeans toward African Americans." But since Elijah Mohammad's son and successor, Warith Deen Mohammad, dissolved his organization and encouraged followers to adopt the Sunni tradition in 1985, relations between the two communities have improved.[32]

On the whole, Islam has done more to unite than divide its practitioners in New York City. The most significant bond that all of the city's Muslims share is their minority status. Being more recently established in New York than most other mainline religions has goaded many Muslims to work hard building institutions and spreading their faith. For the city's religiously active African Americans and immigrants alike, mosques assume the central role in Islamic life and serve symbolic functions. Even though mosques have sprouted seemingly overnight across Queens and

Brooklyn—where most of the city's non-professional immigrant Muslims live—it is impossible to determine the extent to which members of the city's Muslim population avail themselves of their services and activities or attend to religious duties such as Islam's five demanding "pillars."

The city's immigrant-founded mosques are as impossible to generalize about as the people who pray in them. Each institution displays varying degrees of organizational cohesion, ranging from hierarchical, tax-exempt corporations that can navigate the city's labyrinthine bureaucratic maze so as to successfully build a mosque to groupings that gather irregularly in someone's basement. Most of the city's mosques attract an amalgam of regular congregants, shopkeepers from the local neighborhood, or perhaps a few cab drivers in the vicinity during Jum'a.

One of the city's only mosques to attract a trickle of outsiders was the American Association of Crimean Turks, which has been located at 45-09 Utrecht Avenue, Borough Park, Brooklyn, since 1970. Founded as a private social club in 1961, it provided a means for the Crimean Turks to maintain their heritage. After they bought their building in 1970, the foundation of that heritage has increasingly focused on Islam. Like the Crimean Association, some of the city's other mosques serve as fraternal, immigrant-aid, and social organizations as well as places to observe Islamic laws in a group setting. For instance, the Islamic Brotherhood, which governs Brooklyn's Masjid Al-Farouq, serves multiple roles within a community constantly welcoming new members unfamiliar with New York City life.[33]

But no matter how blurred the national makeup of worshippers at the vast majority of New York City's immigrant mosques may be, most of the city's Muslims vigorously profess kinship by dint of religion regardless of historic enmities or present-day class and political alignments. In 1987 a *New York Times* reporter cited Muslim World League associate director Dawud Assad as saying that "Muslims from disparate countries . . . are finding that in America they can establish ties around their religion rather than their nationality." Certainly, New York City's unique polyglot has provided Muslims from around the globe the opportunity to pray together at local mosques. Nowhere on earth are Muslims from so many different backgrounds living in such close proximity, a situation that accentuates commonalities rather than differences.[34]

Good relations between Sunnis and Shi'is exemplify intra-Muslim unity within the city. Shi'i organizations date from at least the late 1970s, when researcher Lois Gottesman documented the existence of a Shi'a Mosque and the Shi'ite Association of North America, both in Queens. Also during the late 1970s, Maxine Fisher located the Bohra Jamaat of the Eastern United States, a group of about seventy Indian Shi'i families that met monthly at a rented hall, as well as an East African group of Ismaili Shi'is. In the 1980s, Earle Waugh identified a Shi'a Muslim Association of North America at 108 53-63 62 Drive, Forest Hills, Queens.[35]

Today, Shi'is represent a tiny minority within the city's Muslim community, numbering perhaps 8,000 in the metropolitan area and 2,500 in the five boroughs. Shi'is worship regularly at Sunni Mosques, including Masjid Al-Falah, and the reverse is also true. In addition to the Iraqi-based Al-Khoei Foundation in Jamaica, Queens, which refashioned a pre-existing building with a minaret and other Islamic features, another group of Shi'is, known as the Islamic Guidance, prays in a building in front of Brooklyn's Masjid Al-Farouq. This organization includes Iraqis, Pakistanis, Indians, and East Africans.[36]

Most of the city's immigrant mosques now attract eclectic congregations. For example, the Elmhurst Muslim Society, organized in 1969 by Pakistanis in the basement of an abandoned school building at 85–37 Britton Avenue, regularly welcomes Muslims from Syria, Afghanistan, Egypt, and Bangladesh to Friday prayers. At the same time it is also true that the city's Islamic institutions are usually organized by people who share more in common than religion, because nation of origin and primary language also define the identities of most Muslim New Yorkers.

One of the city's oldest immigrant mosques, the Albanian-American Islamic Center of New York–New Jersey, also presented an example of tolerance to the Muslim community. About 50,000 Muslims in the New York metropolitan region left Albania to escape persecution from Inver Hoxha's Communist government, which declared Albania an atheist state in 1967. Led by Imam Isa Hoxha, New York City's Albanian Muslims converted a former mansion at 1325 Albemarle Road, Flatbush, Brooklyn, into a mosque in 1972. Although Albanians owned and administered the building and oversaw the center's programming, they overlooked ancient animosities and welcomed Turks to religious observances.

Pakistani and Arab neighbors regularly attend Jum'a prayers as well.[37]

Also typical of the newly established immigrant mosques now flourishing in New York City is Masjid Fatima, founded primarily by Pakistani taxi-drivers and mechanics in 1987 at 58th Street and 37th Avenue, Woodside, Queens. Occupying the basement of a car services garage and located in a desolate factory district, Masjid Fatima attracted about 250 worshippers each Friday during 1991. Arabs make up almost half of Masjid Fatima's congregation while the rest came from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh; several African Americans and some Anglo Americans pray there as well. Collections pay the rent, support the congregation's Imam, and give the mosque's leaders hope that they will one day buy or construct their own building.[38]

Most newly established, and rapidly overflowing, immigrant mosques in New York City share this yearning. On November 2, 1991, for example, the mostly Pakistani Islamic Center of Brighton Beach (Masjid Omar), at 230 Neptune Avenue, Brooklyn, held a fund-raising dinner at a local high school to finance their $120,000 building expansion plans. Even mosques organized by professionals shop for mosque sites. The Islamic Society of mid-Manhattan's Uthman bin Affan Mosque, an Egyptian group that meets at area hotels for Friday prayers, has solicited donations from the Muslim World League, foreign governments, and private individuals to buy their own structure.[39]

Islamic organizations unaffiliated with a particular mosque, such as the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), the Muslim Foundation of America, Inc., and the Islamic Foundation, Inc., Center of the Islamic Movement of Queens, a *dawa* group organized by Muslims from all over the world in 1990, have also increased their activities within the community. Of the three, the Islamic Circle has sponsored the most ambitious program, which includes the establishment of ten branches in the United States, two in Canada, and one each in the Caribbean and London.

Updating Sheik Faisal's goals for his Islamic Mission of America, the Islamic Circle aims to "achieve the pleasure of Allah through establishing the Islamic system in this land." To fulfill this goal, and to assist their coreligionists, ICNA provides Muslim banking and matrimonial services, publishes and distributes tracts about Islam, operates a mail-order video and book trade, and has published its periodical, *The Message*, quarterly since the mid-

1970s and monthly since 1989, among other local, national, and international projects. Illustrating ICNA's zeal, the group estimates that only one-tenth of the Muslims who live near a mosque regularly attend prayers, so the group plans to computerize a Muslim Data Base "to reach to these 90% Muslims who are not involved in any Islamic activity [sic]." [40]

Another group, the Muslim Foundation of America, focuses its efforts locally, sponsoring an annual banquet at the Roosevelt Hotel and the United Muslims' Day Parade, which has marched through midtown Manhattan one Sunday each September since 1984. Also contributing to the city's Islamic flavoring, in 1976 the Mecca-based Rabitat opened its New York City branch of the Muslim World League and Council of Masajid, which makes financial and other support available to eligible mosques, among other programs.

Islam's vigor in New York City is also demonstrated in other ways. *The Minaret*, a biweekly newspaper established by Indian immigrant Mohammad Abdul Munim in 1974, continues to attract local advertisers. Beginning in the 1980s Muslims took to the city's parks en masse to celebrate Eid-al-Fitr. Muslim Student Associations at local universities and colleges, which date to Columbia University in 1956, exhibit varying levels of enthusiasm and influence. While Columbia's organization remains the city's most influential MSA, Muslim student groups also exist at City College, Queens College, New York University, St. John's University, the College of Staten Island, York College, and Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute.[41]

One of the most significant recent examples of Islam's flowering in New York City during the early 1990s has been the effort to spread *dawa* among Latinos by PIEDAD (Propagacion Islamica para la Educacion y Devocion de Ala'el Divino). Founded in 1987 by Khadijah Abdelmoty, a Puerto Rican immigrant to New York City and convert to Islam in 1983, PIEDAD has reacted to the increased interest in Islam among Latino women married to Muslims and young Latino men in prison. Ms. Abdelmoty relies upon networks of localized support groups, acts as a mediator between Latino Muslims and the rest of the city's Islamic community and also serves as an information outlet. PIEDAD has worked with the Islamic Circle of North America on Spanish translations of the Qu'ran and other Islamic literature.[42]

Although the group has begun reaching out to the whole

Spanish-speaking Muslim community, which is centered in New York City, Ms. Abdelmoty designed the organization as a women's group. Women who convert to Islam and marry immigrant Muslims face unique adjustment problems, and PIEDAD has addressed such issues as employment outside the home, day care, child rearing, and marriage disputes. The group's activities stimulate dialogue about the role of women in society, a thorny and potentially volatile subject among many immigrant Muslims.[43]

The conversion to Islam by African Americans, Latino Americans, and even Anglo Americans presents a unique situation to foreign-born Muslims. With the infusion of new blood, Muslims may be welcoming people into the religion who may eventually weaken Islam's cohesion and orthodoxy. As American Muslims accept those from different backgrounds into the fold, these converts will either change Islam or be changed by it.

The American impact upon Islamic practice will remain an important issue for several generations, but the most pressing potential problem faced by New York City's foreign-born Muslim population is whether or not they will allow American society to dilute their Islamic culture and values. New York City's Muslims are still a minority that exerts a relatively small impact upon mainstream American culture. Like other immigrants to the United States, those Muslims who plan to stay in America for several years must grapple with assimilation and Americanization. Most Muslim New Yorkers strike a precarious balance between religious, national origin, and American identities; many proudly assert their status as Islamic Americans and face the prospect that time may erode their sense of self. Certainly, New York City exposes its residents to the most concentrated dose of American culture and vice available. At the same time the city's settlement pattern—and sheer size—has allowed immigrants to carve out neighborhoods that foster, rather than inhibit, recognizably distinct immigrant cultures. It will be interesting to see how—or if—Islam adapts to American society in New York City.

Homogenization threatens Islamic purity in the United States and the city's first-generation immigrants must sometimes battle hard to instill Islamic values in their children and grandchildren. Even though the city's Islamic groups have begun to complete their longed-for mosques, some parents still fear that American society will "devour" their children. And with good reason: New York

City's secular lures have always attracted second-generation immigrants from around the world to shed tradition and identify with the generic aspects of American culture. At the city's 1991 Muslims' Day Parade I noticed one child marcher dressed in a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles tee-shirt clutching his colorfully robed mother's hand.[44]

Beginning in 1977, several concerned Muslims with the means to effect change expressed their determination to establish full-time schools, where they planned to provide their children with a sense of Muslim history and identity. Schools have existed as adjuncts to mosques for years, but now separate institutions, analogous to Catholic schools, have also rooted themselves in Jersey City, in Queens, and in Westbury on Long Island. Struggling with limited resources, most of the city's Islamic schools still remain in fledgling status.[45]

The Al-Iman Elementary School at 137-11 89th Avenue in Jamaica, Queens, a branch of the Shi'i Imam Al-Khoei Foundation at 89-89 Van Wyck Expressway, Jamaica, Queens, enrolled its first eighty-five pupils in September 1991. Under the leadership of Iraqi principal Fadhel Al-Sahlani, the school's African American, Latino American, and immigrant prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first to sixth grade students attended a full-time program reflecting "a traditional SAT preparatory course of study." Al-Iman supplemented these classes with Islamic studies, including "Qu'ran, Hadith, History, Ethics, and Beliefs." The seminary currently charges a modest $950 tuition per year and plans for future expansion.[46]

Schools founded by African American Muslims, including the city's two Sister Clara Muhammad schools, which operate at Masjid Malcolm Shabazz (102 West 116th Street) and Masjid Nuruddin (105-01 Northern Boulevard, Jackson Heights, Queens), also promote intra-Muslim interaction and are much better established than schools created by immigrants. Al-Madresa Al-Islamia, another African American administered full-time school located since 1977 in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, presently enrolls some 135 students, including African American, Latino American, and American-born sons and daughters of immigrant parents.[47]

New Yorkers have generally afforded foreign-born Muslims freedom of worship and education, but certain events have triggered hostility toward immigrant Islamic institutions. In the wake

of the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis, assailants torched the Islamic Center of Corona's old building at 101–03 43rd Avenue in Queens, causing light damage, and the police reported several other bias crimes involving Muslims. Even in the new structure, Masjid Al-Falah suffered another vandal's attack on Halloween night 1985. Someone lit a fire in the mosque, attempting to burn down what was then the organization's one-story building, although the fire never caught.[48]

Hints that tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims did not occur solely in response to world events included a July 1988 assault outside the mostly Pakistani and Indian Islamic Center at 50-11 Queens Boulevard. Accused by mosque worshippers of being "rude and nasty," the police could not determine exactly what triggered the violence between one group of Muslims and another of Latino men. Police captain Maurice Collins claimed that the fight stemmed from a "clash of cultures" and a "general state of mistrust and animosity" and surmised that the brawl evolved from an earlier traffic accident. The center's Imam, Anwer Ali, believed that as the neighborhood's Jewish and Italian character gave way to a mixed immigrant flavor, many recent, mostly Puerto Rican, newcomers targeted the Indians and Pakistanis for taking away jobs, housing, and commerce. But Imam Ali also admitted that misperceptions about Muslims by average Americans probably contributed to the viciousness of the assault, and claimed that the attackers shouted vile slurs against Islam and Muslims. As disturbing as this incident was, the Police Department's bias unit, created in 1981, investigates relatively few bias crimes directed against Muslims or mosques.[49]

Partially mitigating hostility toward Islam in New York City was the arrival of 8,000–10,000 Afghan refugees after the 1978 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Led by Habibullah Mayar, the city's Afghans swelled the ranks of worshippers at Queens and Brooklyn mosques and organized the Afghan Community in America to rally public opinion and government support behind the Mujahadeen rebels who fought the Soviet Army. The presence in New York City of Muslims given immediate sympathy by the city's news media and lauded as allies in the fight against Communism by President Reagan elevated Islam's image in the minds of some New Yorkers.[50]

Internally driven by the desire to obey and observe Islamic law

and externally motivated by what many of them perceive to be a hostile environment, New York City's Muslims have labored to ensure that Islam will evolve into a significant social force within the five boroughs. Beginning in the 1980s, after the Iranian revolution, the fear of terrorism, the Salman Rushdie affair, and the World Trade Center incident have created a feeling of urgency among the immigrant Muslim New Yorkers. They had responded by attempting to fight negative stereotyping and to play a more pronounced role in local affairs. Negative experiences aside, New York City has provided fertile ground for the world's most cosmopolitan Muslim population to forge a flourishing, unique, and inclusive Islamic community.

NOTES

1. A City University of New York study counted 300,000 Muslims in the state, and the Islamic Mission of America's Imam Mohamed Kabbaj figured that 2,500,000 lived in the New York metropolitan region.

2. Shalom Staub, *Yemenis in New York City* (Philadelphia: Balch Institute Press, 1989); *New York Times* (October 3, 1916; December 1, 1895).

3. *New York Times* (July 14, 1894; December 1, 1895); *New York Tribune*, (February 24, 1893).

4. *New York Times* (October 8, 1893, July 14, 1894, December 1, 1895); *New York Tribune* (February 24, 28, 1893). *The Union List of Serials in Libraries of the United States and Canada*, 3rd edition, Edna B. Titus, ed. (New York: H. W. Wilson and Co., 1965) ed. Edna Brown Titus, 3d ed. (New York, 1965), lists that Webb published more than twenty-six volumes of *The Moslem World* and gives dates as 1893+. Webb wanted to publish weekly, but could barely issue a monthly, by himself, in December 1895.

5. *New York Times* (July 14, 1894; December 1, 1895).

6. *New York Times* (December 1, 1895).

7. *New York Times* (December 1, 1895; October 1, 1901).

8. *Book of Conveyances*, Brooklyn City Register, Block 2781, Lot 12; conversations with Mosque officials.

9. Conversations with Mosque officials.

10. Conversations with Mosque officials.

11. *New York Panorama: A Companion to the WPA Guide to New York City* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984; reprint of 1938 edition), p. 117. Shiek Daoud Ahmed Faisal, *Islam the True Faith: The Religion of Humanity* (New York: by the author, February 1965), pp. 97, 110. Faisal,

who was born on October 8, 1892, of a Moroccan father and a Jamaican mother, twice stated that the mission's founding date is 1928, which is probably the date he came to the United States. Conversations with Islamic Mission of America Imam Mohamed Kabbaj. *Book of Conveyances*, Brooklyn City Register, Block 270, Lot 19.

12. Faisal, *Islam The True Faith*; p. 17; conversations with Imam Kabbaj.

13. Faisal, *Islam The True Faith*, pp. 96 B, 110; conversations with Imam Kabbaj.

14. Faisal, *Islam The True Faith*, p. 78; *New York Times* (January 9, 1956); conversations with Imam Kabbaj.

15. Fasial, *Islam The True Faith*; *New York Times* (September 1, 1952); conversations with Imam Kabbaj. The federal government created Amtrak in 1973.

16. Faisal, *Islam The True Faith*, p. 15; *Book of Conveyances*, Brooklyn City Register, Block 186, Lot 25.

17. *New York Times*, (June 25, September 1, 1952; May 24, November 14, 1955; January 9, 1956; October 26, 1957).

18. New York Telephone Company, *Manhattan Telephone Directory, 1952–53*; *New York Times* (September 1, 1952), vaguely referred to a "drive to be started for funds to build [a mosque in New York]"; *New York Times* (May 24, 1955).

19. *New York Times* (November 14, 1955).

20. New York County, Hall of Records, Room 205, Block and Lot Book; the only incident at the center was an alleged takeover by five African American Muslims, *New York Times* (December 7, 8, 1966).

21. Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), vol. 5, p. 681, n. 4; information supplied by officials at Masjid Malcolm Shabazz, name given to Mosque #7 in 1976; *New York Times* (October 26, 1957).

22. *The Moslem World and the U.S.A.* 2, no. 5–6 (May–June 1957).

23. Ibid.; in 1957, for example, Naeem advertised the Mission's annual bus trip to its upstate retreat and model Islamic village at East Fishkill, which Imam Faisal bought for $100,000 in 1955 with help from the Saudi Arabian government; Faisal, *Islam The True Faith*.

24. These include the Elmhurst Muslim Society (1969), the Islamic Circle of North America (formally chartered in 1971, but active since 1968), the Albanian American Islamic Center of New York–New Jersey (1972), and the Muslim Center of New York (1975).

25. Discussions with Imam Paracha.

26. Conversations with Imam Paracha; among those present for afternoon prayers on Friday, November 29, were about forty men, includ-

ing several Pakistanis and African Americans, some Arabs, a Malaysian, an Indonesian, four Anglo Americans, two young African American boys, a 3-year-old girl who wandered about while her father worshipped, and several elderly men, who supplicated for about eight minutes before abruptly splitting up. A circle of ten men sat for another five minutes engaging in religious discourse.

27. "Muslim Center of New York, Souvenir, Ground Breaking Ceremony and Fund Raising Dinner, May 21, 1989," privately published.

28. Ibid.

29. *New York Times* (April 16, 1991); Jonathan Traub, "The Road to Mecca," *New York Magazine* (June 24, 1991), p. 40; *Resalah: The Bulletin of the Islamic Cultural Center of New York* 1, nos. 1–3.

30. *New York Times* (February 17, 1967; January 2, 1968; October 28, 1984; May 29, 1987; September 15, 1988; September 26, 1988; October 21, 1988); Traub, "The Road to Mecca," pp. 38–39.

31. Conversations with Mosque officials; *Resalah* 1, no. 1–3.

32. Traub, "The Road to Mecca," p. 41; Zaheer Uddin, "Did '80s Teach Us Anything? An Overview of Islam in North America," *The Message International* 13, no. 8 (January 1990).

33. Conversation with an Association official; the city's other Turkish Masjid, the Fatih Mosque at 59-11 8th Avenue, Brooklyn, attracts Muslims from around the globe to Jum'a prayer like most of the city's other Mosques.

34. *New York Times* (April 28, 1987); in fall 1991, I observed this phenomenon during Friday prayers at 1 Riverside Drive, at the Islamic Mission of America, at the Islamic Cultural Center's Mosque of New York, and at Masjid Al-Falah, as well as at the Muslim World Day parade.

35. Lois Gottesman, *Islam in America: A Background Report* (New York: American Jewish Committee, Institute of Human Relations, 1979); Earle Waugh et al., *The Muslim Community in North America* (Edmonton, Canada: University of Alberta Press, 1983), p. 288; Maxine Fisher, *The Indians of New York City: A Study of Immigrants From India* (New York: Heritage Publishers, 1980), pp. 148–149.

36. Estimates supplied by Al-Khoei Foundation.

37. *New York Times* (November 13, 1972); conversations with Imam Hoxha.

38. Conversation with a mosque official.

39. Flyers circulated by the Islamic Center of Brighton Beach, Inc., and the Islamic Society of Mid-Manhattan.

40. ICNA pamphlet, "An Introduction to I.C.N.A." November, 1991; Zaheer Uddin, "Did '80s Teach Us Anything?"

41. *New York Times* (May 19, 1985; July 14, 1989; October 26, 1957).

42. Conversations with Khadijah Abdelmoty; PIEDAD literature.

43. Ibid.

44. Uddin, "Did '80s Teach Us Anything?"

45. *New York Times* (November 25, 1977).

46. Al-Khoei Foundation brochure for the Al-Iman Elementary School; the group first opened a New York City branch in 1978.

47. Conversation with a Sister Clara Mohammad School official, who claimed three immigrant Muslim students attended the Harlem school, and the Queens school enrolled a significantly larger proportion; conversation with Principal Abdul Basir.

48. *New York Times* (November 22, 23, 1979); conversations with Imam Paracha; Police Department of New York City, Bias Incident Investigation Unit.

49. *New York Times* (July 7, 1991); conversations with Police Department's Bias Incident Investigation Unit officials.

50. Eleanor Lerman, "Home Free," *New York Daily News Magazine* (July 24, 1988); "Afghan Refugees Are Supported," *West Orange Chronicle* (New Jersey) (January 14, 1988); "Holy Name Treats Refugee," *Teaneck Suburbanite* (November 8, 1989); "Bronxville Hospital Treats Afghan Freedom Fighter," *Gannett Westchester Newspapers* (December 12, 1986); "Afghans in the City, Deeply Bitter over Summit, Try to Help Homeland," *New York City Tribune* (January 1, 1988); "U.S. Afghans Suspicious of Soviet Pullout," *New York Newsday* (May 16, 1988); Thomas Kean, governor of New Jersey, proclaimed March 22, 1988 as "Day of the Afghan Refugee."