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Author(s): Erdmann Doane Beynon

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# THE VOODOO CULT AMONG NEGRO MIGRANTS IN DETROIT

ERDMANN DOANE BEYNON

## ABSTRACT

The "Nation of Islam," usually known as the "Voodoo Cult," belongs to a chain of movements arising out of the growing disillusionment and race consciousness of recent Negro migrants to northern industrial cities. The attention of the general public has been directed to sensational episodes in the history of this cult, such as the occurrence of human sacrifice, but the reorientation of the personality of its members has been ignored. The members of the cult have been isolated from the social organization of the community in which they lived, but they have maintained their functional relationship in the metropolitan economy from which they derive their means of livelihood and in which they have been able to make more satisfactory adjustments. As a result of the teaching of this cult, they have gained a new conception of themselves and regard themselves as superior, rather than inferior, to other people.

The Negro sect known to its members as the "Nation of Islam" or the "Muslims,"<sup>1</sup> but to the police as the Voodoo Cult,<sup>2</sup> has significance for social science research partly because of its synthesis of heterogeneous cultural elements and partly because of its unique expression of race consciousness. If the movement be viewed as the life-cycle of a cult, however, its various phases tend to show an orderly progression through which the attitudes of its devotees were molded to a common pattern. There developed among them a way of living which isolated them to a certain extent from all persons not members of their cult, even though they themselves remained scattered among an urban population of their own race and color. In their trade relations the members of this cult have continued to live, like other Negroes, within the ecological organization of the Negro community of Detroit. Their principal occupational adjustment has been factory labor, and thus the cult members have maintained a functional relationship with the metropolitan economy outside of the Negro community. At the same time, however, they

<sup>1</sup> Spelling: "Moslem"; pronounced: "Muslim." This is one of the changed pronunciations by which initiates recognize each other. The Moorish-Americans also are "Moslems," but pronounce the word as spelled.

<sup>2</sup> No effort is made in this paper to trace relationship between this cult and Voodooism in Haiti and other West Indian islands. The cult received the name "Voodoo" solely because of cases of human sacrifice.

have severed contacts with the social organization of the community in which they live, so that they have gained isolation almost as effectively as did the members of agricultural religious communities who migrated to new homes.

#### THE BEGINNING OF THE MOVEMENT

The prophet and founder of the cult made his first appearance among the Negroes of Detroit as a peddler. Like other Arab and Syrian peddlers, he went from house to house carrying his wares.

He came first to our houses selling raincoats, and then afterwards silks. In this way he could get into the people's houses, for every woman was eager to see the nice things the peddlars had for sale. He told us that the silks he carried were the same kind that our people used in their home country and that he had come from there. So we all asked him to tell us about our own country. If we asked him to eat with us, he would eat whatever we had on the table, but after the meal he began to talk: "Now don't eat this food. It is poison for you. The people in your own country do not eat it. Since they eat the right kind of food they have the best health all the time. If you would live just like the people in your home country, you would never be sick any more." So we all wanted him to tell us more about ourselves and about our home country and about how we could be free from rheumatism, aches and pains.<sup>3</sup>

At the stranger's suggestion a group of people was invited to one of the houses visited by him, so that on a particular evening they all might hear the story in which all alike were so much interested. Accustomed as these people were to the cottage prayer meetings of the Negro Methodist and Baptist churches they found no difficulty in holding informal meetings in their homes.

The former peddler now assumed the role of prophet. During the early period of his ministry he used the Bible as his textbook, since it was the only religious book with which the majority of his hearers were familiar. With growing prestige over a constantly increasing group, the prophet became bolder in his denunciation of the Caucasians and began to attack the teachings of the Bible in such a way as to shock his hearers and bring them to an emotional crisis. Brother Challar Sharrieff told of the crisis through which he himself passed after hearing the prophet's message:

<sup>3</sup> Sister Denke Majied, formerly, Mrs. Lawrence Adams.

The very first time I went to a meeting I heard him say: "The Bible tells you that the sun rises and sets. That is not so. The sun stands still. All your lives you have been thinking that the earth never moved. Stand and look toward the sun and know that it is the earth you are standing on which is moving." Up to that day I always went to the Baptist church. After I heard that sermon from the prophet, I was turned around completely. When I went home and heard that dinner was ready, I said: "I don't want to eat dinner. I just want to go back to the meetings." I wouldn't eat my meals but I goes back that night and I goes to every meeting after that. Just to think that the sun above me never moved at all and that the earth we are on was doing all the moving. That changed everything for me.<sup>4</sup>

The report of the prophet's message spread through the Negro community. Many of those who heard him invited their friends and relatives to come to the meetings, appealing either to their curiosity or to deeper interests. The attendance at the house meetings increased so much that the prophet was compelled to divide his hearers into several groups, the members of each of which were permitted to hear his message only at the time assigned to their group. The inconvenience was so obvious that the prophet's followers readily contributed money sufficient to hire a hall which was fitted up as the Temple.

#### THE PROPHET

Although the prophet lived in Detroit from July 4, 1930, until June 30, 1934, virtually nothing is known about him, save that he "came from the East" and that he "called" the Negroes of North America to enter the Nation of Islam. His very name is uncertain. He was known usually as Mr. Wali Farrad or Mr. W. D. Fard, though he used also the following names: Professor Ford, Mr. Farrad Mohammed, Mr. F. Mohammed Ali. One of the few survivors who heard his first addresses states that he himself said: "My name is W. D. Fard and I came from the Holy City of Mecca. More about myself I will not tell you yet, for the time has not yet come. I am your brother. You have not yet seen me in my royal robes."<sup>5</sup> Legends soon sprang up about this mysterious personality. Many members of the cult hold that the prophet was born in Mecca, the son of wealthy parents of the tribe of the Koreish, the tribe from which

<sup>4</sup> Brother Challar Sharrieff, formerly, Mr. Charles Peoples.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Mrs. Carrie Peoples (Sister Carrie Mohammed).

Mohammed the Prophet sprang, and that he was closely related by blood to the dynasty of the Hashimide sheriffs of Mecca who became kings of the Hejaz. He is said to have been educated at a college in England,<sup>6</sup> in preparation for a diplomatic career in the service of the kingdom of the Hejaz, but to have abandoned every thing to bring "freedom, justice and equality,"<sup>7</sup> to "his uncle"<sup>8</sup> living "in the wilderness of North America, surrounded and robbed completely by the Cave Man."<sup>9</sup>

There has grown, however, among the members of the cult a belief that the prophet was more than man, as Brother Yussuf Mohammed claimed: "When the police asked him who he was, he said: 'I am the Supreme Ruler of the Universe.' He told those police more about himself than he would ever tell us."

#### THE NEGROES WHO HEARD THE "CALL"

Not all who attended the meetings and heard the stranger's message accepted him as a prophet. Many ridiculed his attacks against the Caucasians and were angered by his criticisms of the churches and the preachers. During the four years of his ministry, however, approximately eight thousand Negroes<sup>10</sup> in Detroit "heard the call" and became members of the Nation of Islam. Interviews with more than two hundred Moslem families showed that with less than half-a-dozen exceptions all were recent migrants from the rural South, the majority having come to Detroit from small communities in Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. Investigations of cult members by the Wayne County Prosecutor's office also indicated the same origin. The interviews disclosed that

<sup>6</sup> Sister Carrie Mohammed and certain others claim that the prophet graduated from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

<sup>7</sup> Symbolized by the letters F J E on the Muslim flag hanging in the home of every cult member.

<sup>8</sup> The American Negroes—"the black men in the wilderness of North America"—are referred to symbolically in the cult ritual as "the uncle of Mr. W. D. Fard." Moslems of the East—Syrians, Turks and others—are referred to as "the second uncle of Mr. W. D. Fard."

<sup>9</sup> Prophet W. D. Fard, *Teaching for the Lost Found Nation of Islam in a Mathematical Way*, Problem No. 30.

<sup>10</sup> Estimated by officials of the cult. Detectives of the Special Investigation Squad of the Detroit Police Department estimate 5,000.

the Moslems not only had migrated recently from the South, but also had visited their old homes in the South one or more times after their migration and before they had come into contact with the Nation of Islam. Through these visits they had become more conscious of race discrimination on the part of the Caucasians. After their brief sojourn in the North they tended to reinterpret with sinister implications incidents of race contact in the South. They began to realize that lynchings and the indignities of the Jim Crow system were perpetrated by Caucasians who worshiped the same God as they did and worshiped Him in the same way. In many of its parts the Secret Ritual of the cult reflects the aroused feelings with which these Negroes returned from their visits to the South. "Me and my people who have been lost from home for 379 years have tried this so-called mystery God for bread, clothing and a home. And we receive nothing but hard times, hunger, naked and out of doors. Also was beat and killed by the ones that advocated that kind of God."<sup>11</sup>

The illiteracy of the southern Negroes now seemed due to Caucasian "tricknollogy."<sup>12</sup> "Why does the devil keep our people illiterate? So that he can use them for a tool and also a slave. He keeps them blind to themselves so that he can master them."<sup>13</sup>

Awakened already to a consciousness of race discrimination, these migrants from the South came into contact with militant movements among northern Negroes. Practically none of them had been in the North prior to the collapse of the Marcus Garvey movement. A few of them had come under the influence of the Moorish-American cult which succeeded it. The effect of both these movements upon the future members of the Nation of Islam was largely indirect. Garvey taught the Negroes that their homeland was Ethiopia. The Noble Drew Ali, the prophet of the Moorish-Americans, proclaimed that these people were "descendants of Morrocans."<sup>14</sup> The newer migrants entered a social milieu in which the atmosphere was filled

<sup>11</sup> W. P. Fard, *Secret Ritual of the Nation of Islam*, Part II, sec. 11. This has been preserved as an oral tradition, memorized verbatim by the pupils at the University of Islam. Only a few manuscript copies are extant.

<sup>12</sup> A cult term pronounced "trickenollogy."

<sup>13</sup> Fard, *Secret Ritual*, Part I, sec. 6.

<sup>14</sup> *Koran Questions for Moorish Americans* (Chicago, 1928), p. 1, quest. 14.

with questions about the origin of their people. Long before their new prophet appeared among them they were wondering who they were and whence they had come.

The migrants did not find life in the North as pleasant as they had expected it to be, when first they came to the "land of hope," as the North was known in Negro poetry and song. The depression deprived them of their means of livelihood, and they suffered their first experience of urban destitution. Though public relief came to their rescue, the attitudes shown by the welfare agents increased their hatred of the Caucasian civilization. Forced to stand waiting for hours to receive their dole, these people began to believe that race discrimination was evident in the North as well as in the South. The welfare workers—including those even of their own race—became symbolic of all that these people hated.

An Asiatic trend among Negro dole recipients of the Elmwood district, noted at the time as a passing whim, to-day came back with horror to two women welfare workers on learning that the fanatical Robert Harris had intended them for human sacrifices as infidels . . . Harris stated to the police that each of these was a "no good Christian," and that they would have been sacrificed if he knew where he could have found them.<sup>15</sup>

A further disillusionment came from their own physical discomfort resulting from life in crowded quarters in a northern city. Unaccustomed to the climate of the North, and especially to its winters, these people soon developed many bodily ailments. Their condition is described by the Prophet Fard in his teaching:

He had fever, headaches, chills, grippe, hay fever, regular fever, rheumatism, also pains in all joints. He was disturbed with foot ailment and toothaches. His pulse beat more than eighty-eight times per minute: therefore he goes to the doctor every day and gets medicine for every day in the year: one after each meal and three times a day, also one at bedtime.<sup>16</sup>

The migrants realized that they suffered much more physical pain than they had in their old homes. They connected this suffering with the civilization of the white man to whose cities they had come. Even before they met the prophet, they had begun to blame the Caucasian for their aches and pains.

<sup>15</sup> *Detroit Times*, November 22, 1932.

<sup>16</sup> *Teaching for the Lost Found Nation of Islam in a Mathematical Way*, Problem No. 6.

## THE ORGANIZED CULT

Maladjusted migrant Negroes came into contact with the prophet at the informal meetings in their own homes. With the change to temple services the movement took on a more formal character. The teaching became systematized. Membership was recognized and "registered." The movement itself became organized in a hierarchical manner.

The prophet's message was characterized by his ability to utilize to the fullest measure the environment of his followers. Their physical and economic difficulties alike were used to illustrate the new teaching. Similarly, biblical prophecies and the teaching of Marcus Garvey and Noble Drew Ali were cited as foretelling the coming of the new prophet. As additional proofs of his message, the prophet referred his followers to the writings of Judge Rutherford, of Jehovah's Witnesses, to a miscellaneous collection of books on Freemasonry and its symbolism, and to some well-known works, such as Breasted's *Conquest of Civilization* and Hendrik van Loon's *Story of Mankind*. Since many of these people were illiterate, it became necessary to organize classes in English so that they might be able to read "the proofs about themselves." They were also instructed to purchase radios in order that they might listen to the addresses of Judge Rutherford, Frank Norris, the Baptist fundamentalist, and others. The prophet explained to the people that the recommended books and addresses were symbolic and could be understood only through the interpretation which he himself would give at the temple services. The Koran itself was soon introduced as the most authoritative of all texts for the study of the new faith. The prophet, however, used only the Arabic text which he translated and explained to the believers. Here too they were completely dependent upon his interpretation.

To give more systematic character to his teaching, the prophet himself prepared certain texts which served as authoritative manuals of the religion and were memorized verbatim by all who became members of the Nation of Islam.

The prophet's teaching was in substance as follows:

The black men in North America are not Negroes, but members of the lost tribe of Shebazz, stolen by traders from the Holy City of Mecca 379 years ago.



The prophet came to America to find and to bring back to life his long lost brethren, from whom the Caucasians had taken away their language, their nation and their religion. Here in America they were living other than themselves. They must learn that they are the original people, noblest of the nations of the earth. The Caucasians are the colored people, since they have lost their original color. The original people must regain their religion, which is Islam, their language, which is Arabic, and their culture, which is astronomy and higher mathematics, especially calculus. They must live according to the law of Allah, avoiding all meat of "poison animals," hogs, ducks, geese, 'possums and catfish. They must give up completely the use of stimulants, especially liquor. They must clean themselves up—both their bodies and their houses. If in this way they obeyed Allah, he would take them back to the Paradise from which they had been stolen—the Holy City of Mecca.<sup>17</sup>

Those who accepted this teaching became new men and women, or, as the prophet expressed it, were restored to their original and true selves. As a mark of this restoration the prophet gave them back their original names which the Caucasians had taken from them. Since a sum of money—usually ten dollars—was required to secure the original name, this work must have been extremely profitable to the prophet. Each new believer wrote a separate letter asking for his original name, which the prophet was supposed to know through the Spirit of Allah within him. Examples of the changed names are:

Joseph Shepard became Jam Sharrieff  
 Lindsey Garrett became Hazziez Allah  
 Henry Wells became Anwar Pasha  
 William Blunt became Sharrieff Allah.

Apparent mistakes sometimes occurred when three or more brothers applied for new names, neglecting to mention in their letters that they were blood brothers. Thus, despite his omniscience, the prophet once gave the surnames of Sharrieff, Karriem, and Mohammed to the three Poole brothers. The prophet explained this seeming mistake as due to his divine knowledge of the different paternity of the three brothers.

<sup>17</sup> Compiled from the three texts issued by the prophet: *Teaching for the Lost Found Nation of Islam in a Mathematical Way*, consisting of 34 problems. This text was printed, but given only to registered Moslems. *Secret Ritual of the Nation of Islam*, Part I, in 14 secs.; *ibid.*, Part II, in 40 secs.

The *Secret Ritual* was, and still is, transmitted orally. The entire teaching is symbolic and can be understood only by the initiates.

The people who secured the new names value them as their greatest treasure. "I wouldn't give up my righteous name. That name is my life."<sup>18</sup> They became so ashamed of their old slave names that they considered that they could suffer no greater insult than to be addressed by the old name. They sought to live in conformity with the Law of Islam as revealed to them by the prophet, so that they might be worthy of their original names. Gluttony, drunkenness, idleness, and extra-marital sex relations, except with ministers of Islam, were prohibited completely. They bathed at least once a day and kept their houses scrupulously clean, so that they might put away all marks of the slavery from which the restoration of the original name had set them free.

The rapid increase in membership made necessary the development of a formal organization. Subsidiary organizations had been established as the need for them arose. Chief of these was the University of Islam to which the children of Moslem families were sent rather than to the public schools. Here they were taught the "knowledge of our own," rather than the "civilization of the Caucasian devils." Courses were given in "higher mathematics," astronomy, and the "general knowledge and ending of the spook civilization." That women might keep their houses clean and cook food properly, there was established the Moslem Girls' Training and General Civilization Class. Fear of trouble with the unbelievers, especially with the police, led to the founding of the Fruit of Islam—a military organization for the men who were drilled by captains and taught tactics and the use of firearms. Each of these organizations was under the control of a group of officers trained specially by the prophet for their task. Finally the entire movement was placed under a Minister of Islam and a corps of assistant ministers, all of whom had been selected and trained by the prophet. Within three years the prophet not only began the movement but organized it so well that he himself was able to recede into the background, appearing almost never to his followers during the final months of his residence in Detroit. This was undoubtedly an important factor in the cult's survival after the prophet's departure.

<sup>18</sup> Mrs. William McCoy, renamed Sister Rosa Karriem.

## SCHISMS AND PERSECUTIONS

Inherent apparently in the prophet's message were certain teachings which, from the very beginning of the movement, led to schisms within the membership of the cult and to persecution from without.

The prophet proclaimed that his followers did not belong to America. They were citizens of the Holy City of Mecca and their only allegiance was to the Moslem flag. Their children must be removed from the public schools and sent to the University of Islam. In revolt against this position, Abdul Mohammed, one of the first officers in the temple, seceded and organized a small Moslem group of his own in which the cardinal principle was loyalty to the Constitution of the United States and to its flag. The attendance officers of the Board of Education and the police attempted to break up the University of Islam and to compel the children to return to the public schools. This led to a severe riot in which the members of the cult tried to storm the police headquarters. Fearful of race riots, the judges of the recorder's court released with suspended sentence almost all of the rioters. Since that time the University of Islam has continued its classes.

More serious difficulties arose over the question of human sacrifice. The prophet's position on this question was never made clear. He taught explicitly that it was the duty of every Moslem to offer as sacrifice four Caucasian devils in order that he might return to his home in Mecca.<sup>19</sup> The prophet also taught that Allah demands obedience unto death from his followers. No Moslem dare refuse the sacrifice of himself or of his loved ones if Allah requires it. On November 21, 1932, the people of Detroit became conscious of the presence of the cult through its first widely publicized human sacrifice. A prominent member, Robert Harris, renamed Robert Kariem, erected an altar in his home at 1249 Dubois Street and invited his roomer, John J. Smith, to present himself as a human sacrifice, so that he might become, as Harris said, "the Saviour of the world." Smith agreed, and at the hour appointed for the sacrifice—9:00 A.M.—Harris plunged a knife into Smith's heart. After constant recurrences of rumors of human sacrifice or attempted sacrifice, on January 20, 1937, Verlene McQueen, renamed Verlene Ali, brother

<sup>19</sup> Fard, *Secret Ritual*, Part I, sec. 10.

of one of the assistant ministers, was arrested as he prepared for the ceremonial slaying and cooking of his wife and daughter. This sacrifice was, as he said, to have "cleansed him from all sin."

These cases of human sacrifice have directed to the cult much attention from the Police Department so that the cult has been forced to pursue many of its activities in secret. The question of sacrifice has led also to serious internal clashes. "Rebels against the Will of Allah," as they are called, have left the Temple and organized another Temple of Islam, desiring to remain within the framework of the cult but to avoid human sacrifice, the necessity of which as an expiation of sin forms one of the most hotly debated subjects among the cult members.

Persecutions and schisms alike have tended to increase the cultural isolation of the members of this group. The effect of the schisms was selective, leaving within the parent organization those who were bound together by common attitudes and common loyalties. Attacks made on the cult by the Police Department have been instigated usually by the leaders of Negro organizations. These persecutions have led naturally to a greater solidarity among the cult members and to a constantly increasing isolation of the Moslems from the other residents of the Detroit Negro community.

#### EFFORTS TO EXPLOIT THE MOVEMENT

The solidarity and cultural isolation of the Moslems have rendered ineffectual the various attempts made by interested parties to redirect the activities of the cult in order to further their own particular purposes. The first of these efforts was made by the Communists in 1932, but the cult members rebuffed their appeal. Then came Major Takahashi, a reserve Japanese officer, who sought to lead the Moslems to swear allegiance to the Mikado. Only a small minority of the members followed him into the new movement he organized—The Development of Our Own. With his deportation, this schismatic movement came to nought. An Ethiopian, Wyxzewixard S. J. Challouehliczilczese, sought in June, 1934, to reorganize the movement as a means of sending financial support to Ethiopia. This too, was unsuccessful. At present the members of the cult have come under the influence of certain anti-Union inter-

ests and talk violently of the war of the C.I.O. against Allah, and the need of removing from the Planet Earth all Union organizers. While this trend seems very pronounced at present, it is unlikely to leave any permanent impression upon the movement, and still less likely to detach from the Nation of Islam any of its members.

ADJUSTMENTS OF CULT MEMBERS IN THE  
URBAN ECONOMY

At the time of their first contact with the prophet, practically all the members of the cult were recipients of public welfare, unemployed, and living in the most deteriorated areas of Negro settlement in Detroit. At the present time<sup>20</sup> there is no known case of unemployment among these people. Practically all of them are working in the automobile and other factories. They live no longer in the slum section around Hastings Street, but rent homes in some of the best economic areas in which Negroes have settled. They tend to purchase more expensive furniture, automobiles, and clothes than do their neighbors even in these areas of higher-class residence. This improved economic adjustment is due, doubtless, partly to post-depression conditions of employment and to the increased hiring of Negroes as a result of recent labor troubles. The members of the cult, however, claim that they have secured work much more easily than have other Negroes. They offer thanks to Allah for this evidence of his favor. To some extent their claim appears to be justified, though no statistical study has yet been made of comparative unemployment of cult members and other recent Negro migrants. Through the Nation of Islam they have gained a new status and a new confidence in themselves. When they meet Caucasians, they rejoice in the knowledge that they themselves are superiors meeting members of an inferior race. Employment managers tend to accept more readily persons whose appearance gives evidence of clean living and self-reliance, than those who show the marks of debauchery, defeat, and despair.

The ascetic manner of life of the Moslems also has contributed to their economic improvement. No money whatever is spent by them on liquor, tobacco, or pork. Their one meal of the day consists al-

<sup>20</sup> Written in August, 1937.

most entirely of vegetables and fruits. Consequently their expenditure on food is significantly smaller than is that of other Negroes in Detroit. This economy in consumption, however, is not extended to visible marks of status, such as houses, automobiles, and clothes. The prophet taught them that they are the descendants of nobles in the Holy City of Mecca. To show their escape from slavery and their restoration to their original high status, they feel obliged to live in good houses and to wear good clothes. Despite their expenditure on these items, members of the cult constantly declare that they are ashamed that they have not been able to purchase better commodities or to rent finer homes. "This furniture is the best we could afford to buy here in the wilderness of North America, where we have to live other than ourselves. When we go home to Mecca, we will be able to get really good furniture, just like all our people who live there use."

#### RELATION TO OTHER NEGRO CULTS

The story of the Nation of Islam cannot be considered as complete in itself. Militant and cultist movements among migrant Negroes in the cities of the North have formed a sort of tree. After one branch has grown, flourished, and begun to decay, another shoots up to begin over again the same cycle, though always with an increasing degree of race-consciousness and anti-Caucasian prejudice.

Out of the wreck of the Marcus Garvey movement, there sprang Phoenix-like the Moorish-American cult of which the prophet was Noble Drew Ali. After this prophet's disappearance and the stabilization of the movement as a formally organized denomination, there sprang up the Nation of Islam. Although the cultural isolation of the members of this cult has not declined during the three years of their prophet's absence, there are many evidences of the loss of militant aggressiveness which once characterized this group. The organization also is tending to become more amorphous. From among the larger group of Moslems there has sprung recently an even more militant branch than the Nation of Islam itself. This new movement, known as the Temple People, identifies the prophet, Mr. W. D. Fard, with the god Allah. To Mr. Fard alone do they offer prayer and sacrifice. Since Mr. Fard has been deified, the

Temple People raise to the rank of prophet the former Minister of Islam, Rlijah Mohammed,<sup>21</sup> now a resident of Chicago. He is always referred to reverently as the "Prophet Elijah in Chicago." A former assistant of his, the Haitian Theodore Rozier,<sup>22</sup> has become the minister and director of the new movement.

Thus continues the chain of these movements, each running through its cycle of growth and decay and all of them interwoven as strands of a web. Fundamental to them all is the effort of migrant Negroes to secure a status satisfactory to themselves after their escape from the old southern accommodation of white and Negro.

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<sup>21</sup> His slave name was Elijah Poole. The prophet conferred on him the name of "Elijah Karriem." The Temple People claim that Mr. W. D. Fard himself changed this name later to "Elijah Mohammed" to indicate the higher status to which the minister was called. Moslems opposed to the Temple People deny this and continue to speak of "Brother Elijah Karriem."

<sup>22</sup> One of the newer converts, Brother Theodore Rozier, admits that he never saw the "Savior," Mr. W. D. Fard, and that he learned of Islam solely through his contact with the "Prophet Elijah Mohammed." Opponents of the Temple People contend that Brother Theodore Rozier is not qualified to be minister of Islam since he received the revelation "second-hand."