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Black Separatism as an Alternative to the Goal of Racial Integration: A Comparison of the Nation of Islam and the Black Power Movement of the 1960s

The following paper offers a brief survey of the history of black nationalism, especially the Nation of Islam (NOI) before focusing on some of the main differences in political ideology between integrationist organizations like the NAACP and separatist organizations like the NOI as well as between the NOI and the Black Power Movement of the 1960s.

During the 1960s, the NAACP, for a number of reasons, tried to continue its traditionally integrationist policies and became more and more committed to denouncing at least the more extremist - Black Power - forms of the new black nationalism. Its relationship to some of the other important civil rights organizations during that decade became tenuous. Executive director Roy Wilkins played a leading role in these efforts; he vigorously fought separatist groups outside and inside the organization itself. Considering the NAACP's motives, it may seem appropriate to point to the special relationship between the NAACP leadership and the Johnson administration, as well as to the importance of the NAACP's broad membership structure - with its primary base in the black, church-going, middle class. This organizational strength - which includes access to significant financial resources from membership dues and sponsors - enabled the NAACP to prevail over groups such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) or the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).

However, the NAACP's victory over separatism was ambivalent, to say the least, especially with regard to the goal of providing a more inclusive approach appealing to all members of the black community - not just the relatively well-to-do Christian middle class. Nevertheless, the organization's integrationist approach, in the long run, probably proved to be the more successful strategy for black progress in America - especially regarding African Americans' access to the political decision-making process.[1]

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[1] This is, in summary, the thrust of Manfred Berg's preceeding article. The author's paper was originally prepared as a supplementary comment to Manfred Berg's presentation.- For a more detailed analysis of the tension between the NAACP and the more radical civil rights

However valid this analysis may be regarding the NAACP's fight against and prevalence over the black separatism of the 1960s, it is important to note that during the past two and a half decades, the idea of black separatism has been far from being dead. Even though its political dimension appeared to have been defeated by the mid 1970s, its cultural dimension has become a strong force within the black community today. Moreover, ethnocentrism has risen to be a "politically correct" approach not just for African Americans, but for many other minority groups as well.[2] Finally, there is a remarkable difference between the NAACP's response to black separatist groups in the past and in the present. This becomes clear when we compare the organization's total rejection of black nationalism during the 1960s with its rather ambiguous relationship to Black Muslims, e.g. in the Nation of Islam, today.

In order to better understand this relationship between NAACP and these different black separatist organizations, it is necessary to consider the historic roots of black nationalism in general, as well as organizations such as SNCC and the Nation of Islam in particular. The following will therefore analyze the NOI's concept of black separatism - as it has developed from previous black separatist organizations - and compare it to the new Black Power Movement of the 1960s, especially with regard to the factors gender and class.

African American history and social philosophy in the United States has always been shaped by the old dichotomy between separatism and integrationism. This tension, which the larger white American public probably never really noticed much until the 1960s, started long before the rise of Malcom X and Martin Luther King, Jr. Already in 1897 W.E.B. DuBois, one of the most important black scholars of his time, an essentially

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organizations, there are, of course, some further aspects which should be discussed. For instance, in order to understand the internal developments within SNCC and its relationship to the NAACP, one should also consider the question as to what extent some of the NAACP leadership's policies during the 1960s may actually have contributed to the radicalization of young black civil rights activists in the South. Just to name one example, the condescending - not to say outright rude - behavior of Roy Wilkins towards the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party delegation at the 1964 Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City may be pointed out; particularly Wilkins' insulting of MFDP leader and SNCC field secretary Fannie Lou Hamer. Wilkins' offensive language and the NAACP's siding with President Johnson in opposition to the MFDP's goals, not only led Hamer to resign her NAACP membership, but also deeply alienated many of the younger southern civil rights activists. For more details about the MFDP and its clash with the NAACP in Atlantic City cf. e.g. Mills (1993), 105-133; Carson (1981), 125-126 and Romaine (1981), 47-48.

[2]Another significant aspect regarding this development is the question: To what extent has this cultural fractualization between different ethnic as well as social minority groups, who traditionally used to share the same liberal political agenda, severely weakened the political left in America throughout the past two decades. For a discussion of this theory cf. e.g. Gitlin (1995).

integrationist thinker and co-founder of the NAACP, described this dichotomy as something inextricably linked to the psyche and the emotions of every African American:

> One ever feels his two-ness - an American, A Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.[3]

Being aware of this tension, DuBois nevertheless believed that the best way to ensure black progress and happiness within American society was to pursue complete and immediate integration with whites, to fight segregation and to strive for black equality on the political and economic, but also on the social level. In contrast, his contemporary Booker T. Washington, the esteemed black founder of Tusgegee Institute and the National Negro Business League, was willing to accept racial segregation; he thought blacks should focus on economic success and find happiness in their own separate communities.[4]

But the history of black separatism did not start with Booker T. Washington either, its roots go back to the time of slavery. While the most famous of all black abolitionists, Frederick Douglass, was a firm advocate of integrationism and believed that African Americans would be able to find happiness and justice in the United States, there were a number of other black political leaders in the 19th century, who questioned whether integration into the white American mainstream should be the ultimate goal for blacks. Abolitionist Martin Delany for example, who was later often called the "Father of Black Nationalism," said that black Americans should regard themselves as a nation within a nation." He did not think that a positive coexistence of black and white in America would be possible, and therefore recommended the emigration of all blacks to Africa or to Latin America. Other abolitionists, for example David Walker and Henry Highland Garnet, advocated slave rebellions and spoke out for the use of violence against whites, whom they viewed as the "natural enemies of all blacks".[5]

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[3] Cf. DuBois (1897), 194.

[4] Cf. DuBois (1903); Washington (1901). For a more detailed discussion of the different psychological dynamics of integrationism and separatism cf. e.g. Chapter 2, "The Dynamics of Black Nationalism," in Lincoln (1994), 32-46 and Meier (1976).

[5] Cf. David Walker, "To Unite the Colored People," Address to the General Colored Association at Boston, 1828; "Henry Highland Garnet Calls for Slave Rebellions," Address from 1843 and "Henry Highland Garnet Desribes the Greatness of Africa," Address from 1848, in Bracey, Meier, and Rudwick (1970), 29-34, 67-77 and 115-120. For more comprehensive summaries of the history of Black Nationalism from its beginnings until the early 20th century

There were also forms of Christian black separatism, starting already in the late 18th century. The black Methodist bishop Richard Allen founded the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) as early as 1794. One century later, in 1898, AME bishop Henry McNeal Turner proclaimed for the first time one of the main religious doctrines of all black nationalist movements: "God is black!"[6]

With regard to the further development of black nationalism in the 20th century there was one other person, however, who contributed significantly to the formation of a new concept of "black nationhood": Markus Garvey and his "Back to Africa Movement." The official name of Garvey's organization was the "United Negro Improvement Association" (UNIA), which he had founded in New York City in 1916, and its message of black pride and success mobilized African Americans to a degree previously unknown.[7] The ultimate goal of the "Back to Africa Movement" was the liberation of Africa from white colonialism and the creation of new, independent black nations there. Garvey was convinced that without the establishment of black rule on the African continent, there could be no true freedom for black people anywhere in the world. Thus the declared objective of his nationalism was the "redemption of Africa for Africans abroad and at home." While preaching racial purity, racial integrity and racial hegemony, Garvey aimed at organizing blacks in the United States to gather strength for this liberation struggle and hoped to eventually lead them back to Africa. The first goal of the UNIA, however, was to gain economic power and access to financial resources by establishing a black business empire in the U.S. Successfully practicing a new concept of "black capitalism," the UNIA's business empire soon included many shops,

cf. e.g. Chapter 2, "The Nationalist Tradition," in Essien-Udom (1963); Draper (1971), 3-47 and Bracey, Meier, and Rudwick (1970), XXV-XLIII.

[6]Cf. "Richard Allen's Description of the Founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1787-1816," and "Bishop Henry M. Turner: 'God is a Negro'," 1898, in Bracey, Meier, and Rudwick (1970), 4-10 and 154-155. For a survey of the role of black separatist churches cf. also the chapter "Foundation of the Black Community: The Church," in Bracey, Meier, and Rudwick (1970), 3-17 and Draper (1971), 18-47.

[7]Garvey himself came from Jamaica, where he had first tried to establish the UNIA in 1914, but without success. He then went to New York, where he revived the UNIA. Within a few years, his organization grew into a mass movement, and, according to witnesses, Markus Garvey became one of the most well-known black leaders in the USA, who "stirred the imagination of the Negro masses as no Negro ever had." Cf. Draper (1971), 50-51. For more detailed accounts of Garvey's "Back to Africa Movement" cf. e.g. Cronon (1948); Maglangbayan (1979), 20-40; Moses (1978); Chapter 31, "The Garvey Movement Described: 'Up, You Mighty Race!'," in Bracey, Meier, and Rudwick (1970), 187-210; Essien-Udom (1963), 36-43 and Lincoln (1994), 52-62.

restaurants, hotels, factories and even its own steamboat line to Africa, the "Black Star Line."[8]

In 1921 the UNIA had almost five million members, which makes it the largest black separatist organization until today. Garvey and his followers held big parades in New York City, with thousands of participants. The movement's flag had the colors black, red and green, which was supposed to stand for "the race" (black), "the blood of the race" (red), and "the hope of the race" (green), and became universally known as a symbol of Black Power and black pride.[9] White Americans started to feel increasingly uneasy about these UNIA demonstrations of "Black Power" but, conveniently for them, Garvey was convicted of mail fraud in 1925, jailed and deported to his native Jamaica in 1927 - and without its charismatic leader, the UNIA withered away soon.[10]

Despite this inglorious demise, Garvey's version of black nationalism was to have a lasting influence on all subsequent African American separatist movements, and it has to be regarded as one of the two main roots from which a new black separatist movement developed soon afterwards: the Nation of Islam (NOI). The second "root" was the so-called Moorish Science Temple. this organization was a small black Islamic group founded by Timothy Drew, who also called himself Noble Drew Ali, in Newark, New Jersey, in 1913. It is assumed that it was one of Drew's followers, who appeared under the name of Wallace D. Fard in the black ghetto of Detroit in the summer of 1930. Fard himself apparently claimed at one point to be the reincarnation of Drew Ali and a holy prophet from the City of Mecca. However, the personal background or the racial and national identity of Fard

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[8]Cf. note 7. One of the major differences between Garvey and Booker T. Washington, whose autobiography *Up from Slavery* he had read with great interest, was that Garvey did not seek cooperation with whites within a segregated society. He wanted to be completely separate from all white influence. The main difference to W.E.B. DuBois was that Garvey thought the goal of integration with whites was wrong to begin with and a harmful influence on the black road to freedom and independence. While Washington, with whom he had wanted to meet and confer, died shortly before Garvey's arrival in New York in 1916, DuBois was to become one of his most bitter rivals. In Garvey's view DuBois belonged to "the greatest enemies the black people have in the world," and DuBois's opinion was, "Marcus Garvey is, without doubt, the most dangerous enemy of the Negro race in America and the world. He is either a lunatic or a traitor," cited in Draper (1971), 51; also cf. Essien-Udom (1963), 36-37.

[9]Cf. notes 7 and 8. This flag was used again by young black radicals in the 1960s, and many African Americans still regard it as a kind of unoffical flag of Black America today.

[10]Cf. notes 7 and 8. The last subdivisions of the UNIA in Africa closed down in 1935. Garvey himself never returned to the United States and eventually died in London in 1940. While most scholars tend to agree that Garvey's trial was conducted fairly and that he did use the mails to defraud in the sale of stock for his steamship line, some black radical writers assert the conviction was a conspiracy against Garvey, led by the white government and black integrationists to dispose of Garvey. For a fierce attack on what she calls "the brutal oppression" and "campaign of terror", which the "Aryan powers" and the "assimilationist black traitors" launched against an innocent Garvey, cf. e.g. Maglangbayan (1979), 23-35.

who later also called himself Wali Farrad and Farrad Mohammad Ali, have never been clearly documented.[11] Starting as a silk peddler, he went from house to house in the black neighborhoods of Detroit and shared his ideas of "the true black religion" with his customers. Soon he was looked upon by many as a "prophet," and his preaching became so popular among poor blacks that they hired a hall for their meetings, which was to become the first "Temple of Islam." One of Fard's new followers was Elijah Poole, the son of a poor sharecropping family from Georgia, who had come to Detroit in the 1920s. Poole, who had been given the name Elijah Muhammad by "The Prophet" (i.e.Fard), devoted himself most eagerly to the new movement, and became Fard's most trusted lieutenant. When Fard suddenly disappeared in 1934, Elijah Muhammad became the new "Minister of Islam." Soon afterwards, Muhammad claimed that Fard had in fact been Allah incarnate, that Allah himself had come down to America temporarily in the person of Wali Farrad to teach his black children the true religion. This claim of the divinity of Wali Farrad, which became one of the main religious tenets of the Nation of Islam, was not only a perfect explanation for the sudden disappearance of Fard, but also left the new leader Muhammad with divine authority, since he could claim to be following the orders that Allah had given him personally.[12]

After a brief period of decline, Elijah Muhammad founded "Temple No. 2" in Chicago, where he set up his new headquarters and started to reshape the movement. It was now called the "Nation of Islam" and with a new, highly militant leadership-style, Muhammad was able to shape it exclusively according to his views. Thus, throughout the following years, he was the one who more or less single-handedly developed and shaped the "Nation's" theological doctrines and its strict code of conduct. His word

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[11] Assumptions about the origins of Fard vary greatly: some people believed him to be a black Jamaican, others described him as a Palestinian Arab or as the son of wealthy parents of the tribe of Koreish (i.e. the tribe of Mohammed, founder of the classical Islam). Critics, on the other hand, said he was nothing but a fraud, and a Chicago newspaper even referred to Fard as "A Turkish-born Nazi agent [who] worked for Hitler in World War II." Cf. Lincoln (1994), 11-13. For more information about Noble Drew Ali's "Moorish Science Temple," about W.D. Fard and the founding of the NOI cf. e.g. C. Lincoln (1994), 11-20; Draper (1971), 69-85; Essien-Udom (1963), 43-82 and Lomax, (1963), 35-58.

[12] See note 11. Apparently, the true reasons for Fard's sudden disappearance in June of 1934 have never been found out. According to C. Eric Lincoln, neither his followers, nor the Chicago police ever found out what really happened; even so, there are some reports which claim that Fard had been seen last on a ship bound to Europe. Some critics hint at the possibility that inner rivalry within the movement may have resulted in the secret assassination of Fard. However, there seems to be no proof for this or any of the other theories. Cf. Lincoln (1994), 15-16.

became the law of the NOI and nobody was allowed to criticize it, since his authority - as he claimed - came directly from Allah.[13]

It would go beyond the scope of this paper to give a detailed account of these theological doctrines and the many rules of conduct that the Nation of Islam adheres to. However, for a comparison between the NOI's version of black nationalism and the Black Power movement of the 1960s, some key issues regarding the Nation's tenets of faith and its organizational structure should be emphasized here.[14]

First of all, it has to be pointed out that NOI doctrine has always declared the white race to be fundamentally evil. For example, one of the most frequent expressions used by Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X and other ministers of the Nation to describe whites has been the term "blue-eyed devils", and according to NOI doctrine, the entire white race has to be regarded as the "natural enemy of the black race." Moreover, the Nation proclaims the clear superiority of the black race over the white race and advocates the total separation of the two races, i.e. it supports racial segregation, while at the same time promoting black business power and black pride.[15] At this point, it may also be mentioned that the surname "X" was used by the NOI as a means to separate its members even by their names from white people. According to the Nation, the surname of any African American, before he entered the organization, had been forced upon his or her family by their former slave owners, when they had been brought to America. Their "true" African name had been lost and thus - in rejection of

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[13]Most black muslims firmly believed in their leader's divine authority and accepted it willingly, cf. the following statement: "Muhammad's voice is a voice totally blending with and echoing accurately the will of the Divine Supreme Being; the voice of a man who loves us more than we love ourselves." Cited in Lincoln (1994), 17, 13-20; Draper (1971), 76-85; Essien-Udom (1963), 63-80 and Lomax (1963), 51-56 and Bracey, Meier, and Rudwick (1970), 403-411.

[14]For a brief survey of these doctrines, as well as additional information about the history and organizational structure of the NOI cf. the appended survey: *Nation of Islam: Some Background Information*.

[15]Cf. Elijah Muhammad, "What the Muslims Want" (*The Muslim Program*, 1962) and "Separation of the so-called Negroes from their Slavemasters' Children is a Must" (from *Messages to the Blackman*, 1965) and "Minister Malcolm X Enunciates the Muslim Program" (from *Muhammad Speaks*, 1960), cited in Bracey, Meier, and Rudwick (1970), 404-407, 408-411, 413-420. Muhammad's "What the Muslims Want" as well as the declaration of faith "What the Muslims Believe" with a picture of "The Honorable Elijah Muhammad" is also frequently reprinted on the last page of the NOI's weekly publication *The Final Call* e.g. vol. 14.5, December 28 (1994): 39. The first weekly paper of the NOI, initiated by Muhammad in 1960 was called *Muhammad Speaks*. It ceased to exist when Muhammad died in 1975, but was revived under the name *The Final Call* by Minister Louis Farrakhan in 1978. For a critical evaluation of the NOI's tenets of faith, particularly regarding their view of whites, cf. e.g. Lokos (1971), 25-40; Essien-Udom (1963), 122-142 and Lincoln (1994), 63-93.

their former "slave name" - the "X" was to serve as a substitute until they could gain a new "true" name by divine inspiration.[16]

Second, with regard to the organization itself, it is noteworthy that it is based on a very strict hierarchical structure with a chain of command from top to bottom. All members adhere to an almost military-style discipline which is enforced by the NOI'S "internal police", the so-called "Fruit of Islam". Harsh punishment meets all who disobey the rules and commands of the Nation. If that doesn't bring the offender back into line, he or she is expelled from the organization and "banned" which means that no other NOI member (including his or her own family) is allowed to speak or meet with him or her again.[17]

Third, its moral doctrines promote a very conservative agenda, adhering to traditional patriarchal social norms, such as the complete subordination of women. While men are supposed to respect their "sisters" in the NOI and to defend their "honor" at any time, women are completely excluded from positions of authority within the nation and are supposed to obey the better judgment of their "brothers" at all times. Only men can become ministers. The duty of a woman in the Nation is to marry, bear children and be a good housewife and mother. Careers outside the home are generally discouraged for Muslim women. The husband plays the traditional role of being the "breadwinner" and the head of the household. Thus the role of women within the Nation is clearly opposed to the notion of equality of sexes in the private as well as in the public sphere.[18]

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[16]Cf. note 15. According to NOI eschatology all black men belonged to the "original men," the first people to inhabit the Earth, and they were all members of the holy Tribe of Shabazz. In many "new" names of NOI members, this belonging to the Tribe of Shabazz is expressed. For example, Malcolm X's name before he joined the NOI in 1949 was Malcolm Little, and after his second journey to Mecca in 1964 he called himself El Hajji Malik El-Shabazz.

[17]Cf. e.g. Essien-Udom (1963), 149-157, 205-223, Lincoln (1994), 199-204 and Amber (1994). Offense that can lead to instant expulsion are also any form of adultery or "fornication," including pregnancy of an unmarried woman. The "Fruit of Islam" (FOI) is composed of the physically fittest and psychologically best conditioned males in the NOI. They go through an intensive training and their two main duties are to enforce discipline within the Nation and to secure it against all potential enemies from without. Cf. e.g. Lincoln (1994), 201-204. Some people assume that it was FOI members, authorized by Elijah Muhammad himself, who assassinated Malcolm X in 1964, after he had left the Nation. Others, however, charge agents of the FBI or the CIA with the murder. Malcolm's own family seems to be convinced that Louis Farrakhan himself played a major role in Malcolm's death. In 1995 his daughter, Quibilah Shabazz, was accused of plotting to have Farrakhan assassinated in revenge. Cf. e.g. Lincoln (1994), 262-263; Lokos (1971), 62-72 and Fineman (1995). With regard to the FOI, it is also worth mentioning that the NOI has founded its own "Security Agency" in the early 1990s, staffed with members of the FOI, who have been hired as security guards or body guards by companies and wealthy individuals. In 1994 they even obtained a $ 2.8 million contract from the government to secure the Baltimore Public Housing Project. Cf. e.g. Holmes (1994).

[18]Cf. e.g. Essien-Udom (1963), 157-159 and 206-210; Lincoln (1994), 76-79 and Amber (1994). It is noteworthy that most studies on the NOI do not focus much on the role of women within the movement. Regarding the treatment of women in the Nation it should be pointed out

Fourth, the Nation of Islam does not criticize the concept of traditional American capitalism and the market economy. It does not appeal to international solidarity of the economically exploited classes, on the contrary, it is extremely critical of any form of international socialism. Instead - following the lines of Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association, the Nation of Islam aims at controlling a separate black economic empire and advocates the concept of "Black Capitalism."[19]

Fifth, the organization has always essentially been a religious, not a political movement. Even though it legitimizes the use of violence in self-defense against white aggressors, its main message is black moral reform and economic empowerment. Looking at its religious doctrines, one can even classify the NOI as a millenarian movement, since the fulfillment of its ultimate spiritual goal, which is the total rule of blacks as "Allah's chosen people," is not feasible within the American system. According to NOI doctrine, this goal cannot be reached by the efforts of the faithful black people alone, but it will be accomplished with Allah's direct help through the final "Battle of Armageddon". Therefore, involvement in the political process of the United States is neither necessary nor advisable for any member of the NOI, since this system is ruled by and belongs to the "blue-eyed devil" and will eventually be destroyed with him.[20] - Remarkably, this last aspect was increasingly challenged by Malcolm X in the early 1960s. Malcolm wanted the NOI to become more involved in politics in general and, especially, to become an active force within the Black Civil Rights Movement. As a result Malcolm was blamed for abandoning religion for

that Elijah Muhammad certainly practiced a certain double standard in his relationship to women. For example while declaring adultery one of the worst offenses against the will of Allah, he apparently fathered at least three illegitimate children with his secretaries, who were then banned by him from the Nation for immoral behavior. When Malcolm X found out about this in 1963, it was one of the reasons that led to his separation from Muhammad. Cf. e.g. Malcolm X (1964/1989), 294-317. Beside his famous *Autobiography* there is an abundance of other literature about Malcolm X, his role within the NOI, his relationship to Muhammad or to Martin Luther King, Jr., about the development of his own religious and political thinking, his reasons for leaving the NOI in 1964, the founding of his new "Organization of African American Unity" (OAAU), his death and his legacy - just to name a few of the major works: Lomax (1963); Boesak (1976); Goldman (1979); Perry (1991) and Cone (1993). Also cf. Johnson (1986).

[19]Cf. e.g. Essien-Udom (1963), 163-171; Lincoln (1994), 85-93, and Maglanbayan (1979), 7-10, who claims that international socialism has always been one of the worst enemies of black nationalism. She even blames black members of the U.S. Communist Party for successfully infiltrating Garvey's U.N.I.A. and for "tearing down the organization from within," ibid., 30.

[20]In the "Battle of Armageddon", Allah will come down on earth and destroy the "blue-eyed devil" completely. This will not only be the victory of black over white but also of Islam over Christianity. There is no revelation, however, when this battle is expected to take place. After first interpretations of WW I as the "beginning of the end of the blue-eyed devil" by Elijah Muhammad, and predictions that this battle would probably happen in the later 1960s, the date is now left open again by NOI leaders. Cf. e.g. Lincoln (1994), 79-83 and Essien-Udom(1963), 217. Also cf. Lee (1988).

politics by his fellow ministers and finally silenced, that is probibited from public speaking, by Elijah Muhammad in 1963.[21]

It is important to keep these five points in mind when comparing the Nation of Islam's version of black nationalism with the one of the radical young black civil rights activists during the 1960s. Without doubt there are certain similarities between the two. However, as one takes a closer look, there are also important differences. Without doubt, SNCC, CORE, the Black Panthers and other black radical groups of the 1960s embraced the cultural aspect of Black Power and Black Pride. Some of their rhetoric sounded even very much like the one used by members of the UNIA or the NOI. However, it is also true that many members of the SCLC and even some of the NAACP embraced "Black Power" on a cultural level, since the new "Black is Beautiful Movement" was an almost omnipresent force at the time.[22]

It is also true that after continued violence from white southern racists, a number of the young civil rights activists started to abandon the principle of unconditional nonviolence in the late 1960s, and some gave up their hope that blacks in the South could ever accomplish justice and equality through the channels of the political system.[23]

However, in all of the other aspects mentioned above, these groups, especially SNCC, did not agree with the Nation of Islam's doctrines and codes of behavior at all. They also differed with regard to the organizational

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[21] This silencing was another step towards Malcolm's break with the NOI. Another irreconcilable difference arose, when Malcolm started to openly renounce the racist doctrines of the NOI in 1964 . After travelling to Mecca himself in 1957 and 1964, where he also came to know many devoted white muslims, he stated publicly "I don't believe in black and white any more, I believe in human being." On his second journey to Mecca Malcolm took on the name El Hajji Malik El-Shabazz; he left the NOI in March of 1964 and founded the new, political "Organization of Afro-American Unity" with a religious side organization, the "Muslim Mosque Incorporated" in New York. On February 21, 1965, he was assassinated while giving a speech at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem by three black men, whom many believe to have been members of the FOI. Cf. e.g. *Malcolm X* (1964:1989), 318-382, 431-451; Lokos (1971), 62-72; 181-212 and Cone (1993), 181-212.

[22] Since Berg already commented on the development and the philosophical meaning of "Black Power" as well as on its influence on SNCC and CORE in the preceeding chapter and also cited much of the relevant literature regarding this area of research (cf. e.g. ibid., notes 6-7, 11 and 20), there is no need to go into any further detail. However, with regard to the history of SNCC and CORE - especially regarding their work in Mississippi - some additional valuable sources may be mentioned here, e.g. McCord, (1965); Zinn (1965); Moody (1968); Cluster (1979); Stoper (1989); Farmer (1985); Williams (1987); Holt (1992); Payne (1995).

[23] Cf. note 22. Especially the white violence occurring during the Mississippi Freedom Summer project of 1964 and the rejection of the MFDP delegation at the National Democratic Convention at Atlantic City disappointed many former SNCC members profoundly. SNCC leader Bob Moses, e.g., commented on the events in Atlantic City, "You cannot trust the political system ... I will have nothing to do with the political system any longer," cited in Williams (1987), 243. While Moses then left the US and went to Africa for several years, many other frustrated former SNCC members turned to radicalism.

structure. SNCC, for example, had been founded on the principle of group-centered leadership and of equality of the sexes as opposed to a leader-centered group. This had been done intentionally, to provide a progressive alternative to the male-dominated, hierarchical structures of the more traditional civil rights organizations such as the NAACP and the SCLC.[24]

Also, SNCC never embraced the concept of black superiority or the idea of the evilness of all whites. When the radical faction that gained control of SNCC in 1967 decided to expel its white staff members, many of the original black SNCC activists left the organization in protest as well. It is also important to note that, as an organization, SNCC never rejected the integrationist model for society at large. Even the radical members, for example Stokely Carmichael, who wanted SNCC to be an all-black protest organization, stressed repeatedly that they did not have anything personal against the white members. According to their statements, they just wanted to have formal black control of SNCC and thought the white activists should use their energy and organizational skills to work against racism within the white community.[25]

Finally, SNCC and the other Black Power advocates of the 1960s - contrary to NOI ideology - were very much involved with the political system and called for "black political power." Voter registration and political representation, especially of the poor blacks in the South, had always been and - despite severe disappointments with the white power structure - continued to be the main priority of SNCC. Political empowerment of African Americans was, for example, the whole purpose of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP). This new integrated party in Mississippi, which had been founded and was mainly supported by SNCC staff workers, aimed at breaking the power of the state's traditional, all-white Democratic Party (the "regular" democrats). Even though - as

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[24]The role of former NAACP and SCLC organizer Ella Baker is very important in this context. Baker who was one of the main founders and often called "The Godmother" of SNCC, was the one who helped SNCC in the early 1960s to develop these new leadership concepts. For an analysis of Baker's work as well as for a discussion of the role of the women in SNCC cf. e.g. Cantarow and O'Malley (1980); Payne (1989); Dallars (1990); Mueller (1990); Gleming (1995), and "'Strong people don't need strong leaders': Bakers anti-hierarchisches Organisationskonzept," in Waldschmidt-Nelson (1996).

[25]Cf. e.g. Stoper (1989), 269 ff; Sellers (1973), 130-203; Forman (1972), 476 ff; Carson (1981), 146-149, 194-243; also Mills (1993), 177-179, and Waldschmidt-Nelson, "Ella Baker und SNCCs innerer Zerfall: Das Ende einer Ära," loc cit. While this argument made sense to some, most white and many black SNCC members were deeply disappointed by the organizations's turning towards "Black Power," especially since some of the white staff members, e.g. Howard Zinn, had been working for SNCC longer than those members of the radical faction that now forced them to leave. Cf. also the author's interviews with former SNCC and MFDP activist Unita Blackwell (on June 30, 1993) and former SNCC executive secretary James Forman (on June 9, 1993) in Washington, D.C.

already mentioned - the MFDP's first attempt to unseat the "regular" democratic delegation at the National Democratic Party Convention in Atlantic City in 1964 had failed, a majority of the MFDP and SNCC activists who had supported this challenge, continued to work for it. They finally succeeded during the National Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968, and the fact that now, for the first time since Reconstruction, black Americans were included again in the political power structure of Mississippi was celebrated as an important victory by the MFDP as well as by all SNCC members, radicals and moderates alike.[26]

Economic empowerment was a second important issue for SNCC, especially in view of the terrible poverty of rural southern blacks. In order to make meet at least the most urgent everyday needs of some of most impoverished families, Fannie Lou Hamer and other SNCC activists started numerous self-help programs in the South, for example a "Pig Bank," the Freedom Farm Cooperative, several housing projects and child care centers in Mississippi. But contrary to the Nation of Islam initiatives, these programs, while being primarily aimed at helping poor blacks, also included poor white families, and federal aid was always accepted when given.[27]

Most of the so-called black radicals of the 1960s saw white racism in connection with traditional American capitalism as the main source for black suffering. Therefore they did not just want an additional system of black capitalism, but a new, more inclusive economic order altogether. Some, for example former SNCC executive secretary Jim Forman, embraced the ideals of socialism as a solution - and many, especially during the Vietnam War, saw a connection between racism, militarism and poverty in the U.S.[28] It is important to note that this kind of criticism of the American system was not only voiced by the young so-called Black Power radicals, but also by the

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[26]For more details on the MFDP and its fight for the political inclusion of blacks in Mississippi, including Fannie Lou Hamer's work as a SNCC activist and vice-chair of the MFDP cf. e.g. Mills (1993), 105-191, 216-235; Dittmer (1986); Rubel (1990); Payne (1995), and Waldschmidt-Nelson, "Hamer und die Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party: Der Kampf schwarzer Südstaatler für das Recht auf politische Partizipation," (1996). Cf. the author's interviews with former MFDP Chair Lawrence Guyot (on May 1 and 9, 1993) and former SNCC member Eleanor Holmes Norton, who is now the congressional representative of the District of Columbia (on May 31, 1994) in Washington, D.C.

[27]In fact, federal aid was essential to the success of several housing projects and the establishment of Head Start programs for underprivileged children in Mississippi. Hamer also received financial support for her projects from national black organizations such as the National Council of Negro Women. For more information on the projects mentioned here and others, cf. ibid; Mills (1993), 254-290 and Waldschmidt-Nelson, "'Give a man some ground and he'll never be hungry no more!': Hamer als Organisatorin von Selbsthilfeprogrammen in Sunflower County," (1996).

[28]Cf. e.g. Carmichael and Hamilton (1967); Cleaver (1968); Forman (1972); Sellers (1973), as well as the author's interview with James Forman (on June 9, 1993) in Washington, D.C.

esteemed civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. King started to openly denounce the Vietnam War in April 1967, and his speeches during the last twelve months of his life clearly indicate his growing militancy in this regard. After his frustrating experiences with institutionalized racism in the northern urban areas, King not only defended young black rioters now by blaming whites for the terrible conditions of the black inner cities but he also accused the white majority of racial bigotry. Moreover, he directly attacked the Johnson Administration for supporting racist and oppressive regimes abroad instead of fighting social injustice at home.[29]

In this last - lesser known - phase of his life, King publicly said that he had seen his dream turn into a nightmare. He compared the condition of American society in 1967 with the "eve of the American Revolution - with the white government playing the role of King George," and he stressed that no reform, as he had hoped in earlier years, but only a "revolution of values" and "a reconstruction of the entire society" would ever achieve social and economic justice in America. As a result, the NAACP and particularly Roy Wilkins, condemned King for his "disloyal" behavior, the FBI considered him a communist and he lost much of his support from the black middle class.[30]

Several scholars - from Allan Boesak to James Cone - have pointed out that one can see how Martin Luther King and Malcolm X - the traditional arch-opponents - actually moved towards each other during the last years of their lives, that while still having differences with regard to their preferred methods of protest, their diagnoses of the evils of American society were on a merging track.[31] However, regarding the NAACP's view of black nationalism and the Nation of Islam, it is interesting to note that after the assassination of Malcolm X, Roy Wilkins warned the young Black Power radicals to see Malcolm's death as a sign that black separatism would be the road to their own destruction.[32]

Looking critically at this NAACP analysis of Malcolm's death, one has to point to the fact that Malcolm was assassinated after he had left the NOI.

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[29]That is why many of these speeches were broadcast from Canada, not from the U.S. Some of them were published after King's death as *The Trumpet of Conscience* (New York, 1968). For the radicalization of King also cf. e.g. Garrow (1986), 475-624; Boesak (1976); Cone (1993), 213-243 and Halberstam (1967).

[30]Cf. note 29, especially King, *Trumpet of Conscience*, 6-14, 21-25, 58-62, 71-77 and Garrow (1986), 542-552 and 574. For details about the government's suspicion of King's communist affiliation also cf. e.g. Garrow (1981).

[31]Cf. especially Boesak (1976) and Cone (1993).

[32]This point was stressed by Manfred Berg in this volume, see statement by Roy Wilkins on February 26, 1965, commenting on the assassination of Malcolm X, cited in Berg, note 40.

He was not killed when he was still preaching religious doctrines about the inferiority of the "blue-eyed devil" and racial separation, but when he was trying to become involved as a political voice raising fundamental questions about the economic and political structures of American society.

Thus, winding up the argument, the following three conclusions can be drawn. Number one: There were fundamental differences between the NOI version of black nationalism and the concept of Black Power that some of the more radical young black civil rights activists embraced in the 1960s - especially with regard to male and racial chauvinism. Number two: Protest against what they perceived to be a destructive interrelatedness of racism, militarism and social injustice in the U.S. as well as on a global scale, was not only coming from young Black Power radicals, but also from people as different as Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X during the final stages of their lives. On the other hand, neither the NAACP nor the NOI challenged the concept of traditional American capitalism at the time. And number three: Despite significant progress in terms of political representation since the 1960s, the economic situation of the black community - with over one third of all African Americans still living below the poverty line today - is rather deplorable if not desolate. Many blacks have therefore lost faith in the American political system and look for alternatives. The "black pride - moral reform - we can do it without white help" approach of the Nation of Islam offers such an alternative and is especially attractive to some of the young black males, who feel left out of the American mainstream.[33]

The NAACP, while still being mainly a middle class organization, has realized that it cannot give up on these young black males if it wants to remain a relevant institution within the black community. Therefore, the new NAACP leadership has started to carefully reach out and achieve a state of communication and potential cooperation with Farrakhan, who on the other hand has been trying to tone down his racist and anti-Semitic rhetoric.[34]

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[33]The percentage of African Americans living under the poverty line was 33.1 % according to U.S. Census Data of 1994 and the national average black unemployment rate (12.9 %) was more than double the white unemployment rate (6 %). For more information on the socio-economic situation of black Americans cf. e.g. Wilson (1987); Jaynes and Williams (1989); National Urban League (1990); Hacker (1992); McFate (1994), 7, and Ferguson (1995).

[34]Farrakhan or Louis Eugene Walcott was a former night club singer, who joined the NOI in 1955, soon becoming Minister Louis X. After Elijah Muhammad's death in 1975, his son Wallace Muhammad took over the oranizations's leadership and slowly moved it into a more moderate direction towards mainstream Islam (this included giving up the claim of the "divinity" of Wali Fard Muhammad and some of the most racist doctrines of the NOI). Louis X resented this "betrayal" of the old ideas and re-founded the NOI in 1978. In the beginning his

Without doubt any attempt to communicate with other groups and to be as inclusive as possible is laudable. On the other hand, there has also been some sharp criticism of the NAACP's cooperation with the Nation of Islam, especially coming from groups who still - despite all set-backs - support the old goal of racial integration and cooperation and from black feminists, who fear that this new acceptance of some of the NOI's views are signs of a patriarchal reactionary backlash within the black community.[35] With regard to the socio-economic situation and the political agenda of most members of the black community today, one final observation may be appropriate. Taking into consideration everything that was said earlier about the doctrines of black Muslim nationalism, and then looking at the huge success of the NOI-sponsored "Million Man March" in Washington D.C. in October 1995, it does not seem unreasonable to think that the people who have most reason to be excited about any growth of the NOI's influence and power, must be white, conservative republicans: For what could please them more than a growing number of African Americans who want to live segregated from whites, who are not asking for financial support from the government, who firmly support the existing economic structures in the United States and who call out for moral reform, including family values, which aim at putting women back in their place.

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group only had about 1000 members, but since then the number has climbed significantly (estimates range from 20 000 to over 100 000) and there are active NOI Temples in every large city in the U.S. For more information about the NOI and Farrakhan's recent history, the anti-semitism of the organization, its relationship to the so-called "civil rights establishment" and the famous "Million Man March" in October of 1994, cf. e.g. Lincoln (1994), 254-272; Anti-Defamation League (1990); Molotsky (1993); *Congressional Record - Senate* (February 2, 1994), 634 ff, the Senate's debate over Amendment 1368, which condemned the anti-semitic and anti-christian statements delivered by Farrakhan aide Khalid Abdul Muhammad at Lean College on November 29, 1993; Piccoli (1994); Fineman (1995); N.N., "Farrakhan: The Man, the Movement," Newsweek, October 30 (1995), 42-45; Farrakhan (1995); and Ruffin (1995).

[35]Bell Hooks, for example, stated angrily that instead of supporting Farrakhan the NAACP should have given more support to the outspoken former surgeon general Joycelyn Elders. Cf. "The Vibe Q: bell hooks," *VIBE Magazine,* April 15 (1995). An online internet publication, address:http://pathfinder.com/@w2UJzmFds...be/archive/may95/docs/hoods4.
html.

Appendix

The Nation of Islam - Some Background Information

I. Roots:

- black slaves from Africa brought to America by white Christians;
    slaves often forced to accept Christianity
- black nationalism/separatism (Delany, Walker, Turner, Garvey) + Black
    Islam (Moorish Science Temple) -> Nation of Islam

II. Religious Doctrines of the NOI:

1. Image of God:
- God is Allah, personal and omnipotent God
- Allah is black and Islam is the only true religion of Allah (Christianity is
    the white man's religion and bad for all blacks)

2. Image of Man:
- the black man is essentially good and divine by nature
- the white man is essentially evil and non-divine by nature ("blue-eyed
    devil")

3. Genesis and doctrine of salvation:
- 66 Bill. years ago: moon separated from earth, beginning of life; first
    people were all black; the tribe of Shabazz settled in the most fertile
    places of the earth, e.g. in Mecca and the Nile Delta
- Dr. Yakub Myth: 6600 years ago, Dr. Yakub, an evil scientist, who had
    been expelled from the tribe of Shabazz, did secret genetic
    experiments on an island. He created the "blue-eyed devil;" 600 years
    later the "blue-eyed devil" assumed rule over the earth; the white race
    became "a curse on the superior black race"
- 1914 (WWI) is the beginning of the end of the rule of the "blue-eyed devil"
- 1930-34: Allah revealed himself to chosen blacks through the person of
    Wali Fard Muhammad
- ca. 2000: beginning of the "Battle of Armageddon" on American ground;
    Allah will destroy the "blue-eyed devil" completely and restore rule
    over the world to his black children

III. Rules of Conduct:

- Certain foods and drinks are prohibited (e.g. pork and full wheat bread,
    alcohol, cigarettes, drugs); only one main meal a day
- strict dress code (for women incl. head scarf and long dresses)
- man is head of family, women are to obey men at all times (no equality of
    sexes!)

- strict prohibition of all "fornication" (including premarital sex, gay sex or any sexual relationships with whites i.e. no interracial marriages!)
- 10% to 30% of income as regular contributions to the NOI + other donations
- five prayers a day; twice a week temple meeting; missionary duties
- economic self help, support of black business ("buy black"), strict work-ethic
- divine permission to self defense ("no more turn-the-other-cheek")
- obligation to learn as much as possible about black history, culture and tradition

IV. Rites and Terminology:

- Arabic greeting gestures and use of Arabic language in religious ceremonies (English is "bastard language" of the "blue-eyed devil")
- change of name: former surname, i.e. "slave name" is replaced by "X" upon entry in the NOI until it can eventually be replaced by an African, i.e. "original" name (e.g. Malcolm Little -> Malcolm X -> El Hajji Malik El Shabazz)

V. Organizational Structure:

- Temples (hierarchical order of the ministers)
- Fruit of Islam (paramilitary internal force, enforces code of behavior)
- "University of Islam" (separate school system)
- Publications: *Muhammad Speaks* (until 1975), *The Final Call* (since 1978)
- Economic "Empire" (separate, all black businesses; goal of complete economic independence from whites, including independence from government social programs)

VI. Outline of History:

1930: first temple of the Nation of Islam founded by Wallace D. Fard ("Wali Fard Muhammad") in Detroit; second temple organized by his follower Elijah Poole ("Elijah Muhammad") in Chicago
1934: death of Fard; Elijah Muhammad becomes sole leader of NOI; manifestation of the organization's theological doctrines and rules of conduct; slow growth until 1950's
1949: Malcolm Little ("Malcolm X") joins NOI while serving jail sentence in VA state prison; works for organization full-time after his release (1952); close relationship to Elijah Muhammad; becomes "national minister" (1963); his talent as a charismatic speaker leads to significant increase in NOI membership
1955: Louis Eugene Walcott ("Louis X"), former night-club singer, joins NOI

1964: after second journey to Mecca, Malcolm X rejects moral double standard of Elijah Muhammad as well as racist doctrine of NOI; adopts name "El Hajji Malik El Shabazz;" leaves NOI and founds the Organization of Afro-American Unity as well as the new Muslim Mosque Inc. in New York City. Louis X denounces Malcolm's "treason" and states he deserves death as a punishment

1965: assassination of Malcolm X, three members of the Fruit of Islam convicted for the crime but deny to have any official NOI order for the murder

1965-75: decline in NOI membership (partly result of Malcolm's departure as well as the successes of the integrationist civil rights movement, e.g. CRA of 1964 and VRA of 1965); death of Elijah Muhammad in 1975; his son Wallace ("Warith Denn Muhammad") moves black Muslims toward mainstream Islam

1978: Louis X adopts name Farrakhan; denounces Warith's approach and starts a new NOI organization, adhering to the old separatist teaching of Elijah Muhammad

1984: Farrakhan supports Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign, but his racist remarks and open anti-Semitism force Jackson to distance himself from NOI support

1993: Farrakhan attempts reconciliation with CBC, NAACP and other black groups by toning down his anti-Semitic rhetoric, but his aides don't (e.g. racist speech by his aide Khalid Badul Muhammad at Kean College in New Jersey)

1994: Farrakhan invited at NAACP's African American Leadership Summit

1995: Malcolm X's daughter arrested in January for plotting to kill Farrakhan in retaliation for what she believes was his role in her father's assassination
NOI is main organizer of the "Million Man March" in Washington D.C. (Oct. 16; white people and women not invited; among the speakers apart from Farrakhan were Jesse Jackson and CBC chairman Kweisi Mfume)

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