

slavery, segregation, racism and socio-economic inequalities like their counterparts in the USA. In other words, how the NOI globally spreads and grows its influence beyond the border of the USA in geographical areas such as the Caribbean, Canada, West Africa and in Western Europe, particularly, in Britain and, to some extent, France.

Unlike the African Americans, the Afro-Caribbeans in UK do not have a similar history of civil rights neither a well-organised militant, radical and nationalist black organisations with definite goals and genuine power base. They came here as free people, not in the chain of slavery. Therefore, Afro-Caribbeans' experiences do not draw any parallels with their counterparts in the USA. It is the aim of this paper to explore why the NOI's ethno-religious, racial and socio-economic teachings attract Afro-Caribbeans in Britain.

The NOI, which may have as many as 10.000 members, supporters and sympathisers in the UK, is a particularly good example with respect to contemporary debates on globalisation. The NOI in the UK functions as the springboard from which the movement's officials and members plan to spread its ethno-religious/Islamic teachings, and racial and political agendas in Western Europe where African and Caribbean Diaspora are densely populated. These expansionist policies are clear instances of globalisation understood as a 'process by which the entire world becomes increasingly interdependent, so as to yield a "single place" (R. Robertson, 1989). But the NOI is not simply a passive accomplice to globalisation. Rather it acts as an ethno-religious movement and attempts to contend with global forces by constructing its own interpretations of that development, its own place and local communities of resistance. In other words, the NOI seeks to control the impact of globalisation while simultaneously searching for creative means to benefit from it. Therefore, globalisation involves a double process 'the particularization of universalism and the universalization of particularism' (R. Robertson, 1985). The NOI, in that process, tries to establish a search for particularistic identities based on race, ethnicity, and religion (Islam). Consequently, the NOI as a global ethno-religious movement attempts to form an ethno-religious identity, which cuts across ethnic and national boundaries.

Since there are significant scholarly and reliable studies available on the NOI's historical development (Lincoln, 1973; Esseim-Udom, 1970), transformation and schism (Mamiya, 1982, 1983, 1988; Lincoln, 1983; Marsh, 1984; Lee, 1988; Tinaz, 1996; Gardell, 1996), I do not wish to

reiterate the same story. Instead, I will give more emphasis on the NOI's UK chapter. Within the scope of this paper, I will examine two issues in turn: First, the relations between religion and ethnic-racial identity in forming global brotherhood. And secondly, the historical development of the NOI in the UK.

2. Religion, ethnic-racial identity and global brotherhood:

There is a close correlation between religion and identity. Religion appears to be one of vital sources of identity. Beals (1978:147), for example, contends that religion for an individual 'provides subjective access to a universe of meaning by which he is able to transcend the determinism of social identity and everyday experience. For the believer, religion opens up an "ultimate" identity that subjectively situates him as unique and free' (1978). Religion, therefore, as Abromson (1979) maintains, serves to form a unique and direct *Weltanschauungen* for its adherents.

When race and ethnicity issues are concerned, the position of religion becomes explicitly more essential as a determining factor. In the formation of ethnic identity, religion plays an important role. Hans Moll (1979:37), for example, argues that religion, as the sacralisation of identity, reinforces ethnic identity by delineating the ethnic group from its surroundings. This intimate relation between race, ethnicity and religion becomes more apparent in the case of black diaspora. Yinger (1994: 265) maintains that there is 'close connection between religion and ethnicity' when African Americans are concerned. Similarly, Hammond and Warner notice that while the correlation between religion and ethnic identity is getting weak among other ethnic and racial communities in the USA, that correlation among 'black Americans', particularly, 'Black Muslims' does not lose its significance (1993: 66). For the Nation of Islam, the notion of religion and identity and its relation to ethnicity and race is extremely important and has been sacralised. This notion derives from two assumptions; First, according to Elijah Muhammad, institutional founder and leader of NOI between 1934-1975, Islam is the original and 'the Natural religion of the Black Nation. It is the nature in which we are made' (E. Muhammad, 1965:80). Reducing Islam to particular race and ethnicity, he further maintained that '...Islam is actually *our* religion by nature. It is the religion of Allah and not an European organised white man's religion'. Therefore, 'Islam is the original religion of *all black mankind*' (E.

Muhammad, n.d.: 48-52). For African Americans and Afro-Caribbeans to become Muslim or a member of the NOI is to reclaim their lost-religion and identity and to return to their ancestral faith which have been vanished over years through slavery, forced conversion and colonisation respectively.

Second assumption is that although it is difficult to document the exact number of Muslim slaves, along with other African American Muslim movements, conventional and unconventional, the NOI considers that significant number of slaves taken and captured from the West Africa in the chain of slavery were Muslims (Nyang, 1993; A. Muhammad, 1984; Austin, 1984). For them, particularly, the NOI, becoming a Muslim and joining the Nation is understood as a process “to reunite with their own kind” (Essien-Udom, 1970:85). Islam, therefore, revives the ethnic heritage and generic memories of their past and assists to rediscover their cultural and spiritual ties with Africa.

From the perspective of the NOI’s above assumptions, I find a parallel with Daniel Hervieu-Leger’s argument that ‘religion as a memory passes from generation to generation in interpreting the formation of religious identities of young French Catholics’. She contends that the feeling of belonging and the process of religious identification ‘depends on the group or individual being conscious of sharing with others a stock of references to the past and remembered experience to hand down to future generation’ (1994:125). However, while French Catholics’ mobilisation efforts to restore their religious identity are real and represent a rediscovery, NOI’s emotional and nostalgic assertions aim to reclaim their “lost” and “stolen” religious, racial and ethnic identity, that are left in their *memoire*, both imaginary and reconstructed (Conversations with James A. Beckford, July 2, 1998).

In discussions of any form of identity, the role of past and shared experience has to be borne in mind. Wallerstein considers the shared past of the given community as a basis for identity formation. He argues that ‘the pastness is a mode by which persons are persecuted to act in the present in ways that they might not otherwise act. Pastness is total persons use against each other. Pastness is a central element in the socialisation of individuals, in the maintenance of group solidarity, in the establishment of or challenge to social legitimisation’ (1991:78).

Although Afro-Caribbeans in Britain were not subjected to slavery, segregation, harsh racism and socio-economic deprivation like their

counterparts in the USA, the NOI's teachings and its black nationalist thinking skill managed to influence people of the black diaspora. It is customary to hear talks and conversations in black diaspora like "my / our people", "our folks", "my brother / sister" in order to express their shared feelings and experiences of their own kind in the past and at present regardless of geographical locations and contexts. The Afro-Caribbeans, for example, draw parallels between their experiences- race riots, socio-economic difficulties in 1960s- and African American civil rights and nationalist activities, programmes and marches in the same period. According to Dr Muhammad Yasser, formerly Rudy Braithwaite, political activist and director of the NOI 10 000 Man March held in London October 1998, 'there were not exact parallels, but, to some extent, there were similar experiences of our folks here and black Americans in the USA...very similar so...' (Yasser, telephone interview, April 2 1999). He particularly points out the disappointments and dissatisfactions of Afro-Caribbeans here saying that

Well, I think that, first of all, the Afro-Caribbeans are as a shutter of slavery. They have revolutionary kind of spirit. Even though they may come and of course, the situation within a society such as Britain which is intrinsically racist, they have an antipathy, they have all this had an antipathy to the system. What has happened after, say, forty or so years, people had left the country [Britain] long ago mentally. That's the thing with most of Caribbeans, you see, many of them came here with an intention of staying because of the demise of work and poverty and so on. They came to Britain because they were told that it was a land of hope, glory, success and everything else....

Yasser further makes comments on the impact of the NOI, and sources and inspirations of black nationalism. He says that 'It is the NOI that really brought a new dimensions to all perspectives. But it has all, there has all been a [Black] movement all time in black diaspora, like the Marcus Garvey movement, the Bunch and so on. Most of the Black Nationalist and civil right groups could reach each other easily, they could link up together'. The most interesting thing is that, Yasser counts, 'everyone of these leaders of the Black Americans in America were Caribbeans; look at Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, Minister Farrakhan, they were all Caribbeans. Caribbeans were sources of inspiration for Black nationalism...' (Yasser, Interview).

Therefore, the NOI's members especially from Caribbean descent feel a strong affinity to black nationalist tradition. The NOI's ethno-religious and quasi-Islamic teachings, racial and political agendas and self-help and self-sufficiency economic programmes have been attracted and appealed to young Afro-Caribbeans from the late-1980s onwards. Black Britons are converting to the NOI by mobilising black masses to form a global brotherhood and unity among black people. However, the notion of brotherhood extends beyond and cuts across national and religious boundaries. This phenomenon could be understood at two levels; the first is that the NOI's objectives of unity and brotherhood belie colour and racial or ethnic lines and aim to form a global unity and brotherhood among black people regardless of religious and political differences. Secondly, it stretches that platform to include other Muslims, peoples of east and oppressed people all over the world (Conversations with the Captain of Mosque # 1A, East London, December 14, 1997).

3. The Nation of Islam's Development and Impact in Britain:

The NOI is no longer just an entity within the borders of the North America. It expands its influence, ideology and objectives beyond the North America where Black Diaspora densely populated. It is possible to track down the NOI's global impacts in Britain as far back to the early 1960s. Its influence will be examined in three historical periods. However, first I will give brief information on first two periods and then focus on the last period and current impacts of the NOI in the UK.

a) The first period: Black power and nationalist thinking enjoyed a relatively short but notable era of notoriety in Britain, primarily through two Black organisations, the Racial Adjustment Action Society (RAAS) and the Universal Coloured People's Association (UCPA). The ruling bodies of these two organisations were heavily influenced by revolutionary, militant and radical Black Power movements' teachings, objectives and agendas in the USA (Cashmore, 1979). The British Black Power groups shared almost similar objectives, teachings and agendas with their counterparts in the USA. The driving force behind these two organisations was to generate self-serving resources and seek revolutionary struggle to liberate black people with its own social, political and economic objectives and programmes which were inspired by both Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael's writings and speeches.

The nation-wide rising popularity and press coverage of British Black Power came to the public awareness in the UK in November 1967 at the 3rd Annual Convention of CARD (*the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination*) when these two British Black Power groups were perceived as a growing threat to social order. The CARD was a British equivalent to Civil Rights groups in the USA like Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference that took and advocated more moderate reactions and policies to the issues of Black and race relations than Black Power groups. And it aimed to create an umbrella organisation before the passing of the 1965 Race Relations Act (Cashmore, 1979). At the above mentioned convention when British Black power groups sent their delegates to the convention the polarisation and division experienced between moderates and white members, and radical nationalists over the issues of nature of membership and organisation's constitutional amendment (*ibid*). However, earlier to that the impacts and influences of both Black religious-nationalist (RAAS) and secular and political thinking (UPAC) have already found sympathisers and supporters among disaffected sections of the black community in towns and neighbourhoods where African and Caribbean Diaspora are densely populated in Britain in mid-1960s.

Malcolm X, having defected from the NOI in 1964, visited in 1964 and 1965 several African and Muslim countries planning to internationalise and seek political supports for the African American struggle in the USA. He also visited Western Europe, especially Britain and France before his assassination. Malcolm X had been in Britain twice aiming to organise and arouse Black nationalist sentiments in Britain where the Windrush generation were experiencing at the time, race riots, social and economic problems. In Britain, he gave several speeches at LSE and Oxford University Union, visited a few districts of towns where blacks were significant number and met black political leaders and activists. At one of his particular meetings at Nkrumah House in Earls Court in London he addressed young black activists recommending that "never and never let the white man immobilise you by fear"(Yasser, interview). During his stay in Britain, Malcolm met with a Trinidadian, a fervent and militant activist Micheal de Freitas who was at that time a rent collector for the slum landlord, Peter Reckman, in Nothing Hill. Michael converted to Black Islamic version of Islam and then became Micheal X or Michael Abdul Malik. He was obviously impressed by Malcolm X's rhetoric and moved to organise what he intended to be a British version of the Nation of Islam. With his comrades, Micheal X formed the Racial Adjustment Action Society

(RAAS). They had a place called *the Black House* on Holloway Road in London where the society had its administration headquarters (Yasser, interview). The society attracted not only radical blacks but also liberal whites and other disaffected immigrants. As Stuart Hall says, 'Michael X actually had an impact on people on the ground' (BBC2 TV, Windrush, June 1998). Similar to the NOI and other Black power groups' objectives and agendas, in RAAS, Michael advocated the promotion of exclusively black issues and interests. He implored his comrades to stop passive policy and attitude turning the other cheek when encountering white hostility saying that 'stop twisting and hit back...our last name is Black' (*The Observer*, July 4, 1965, cited in Cashmore, 1979:45).

After the Race Relation Act passed, Micheal was accused of allegedly inciting racial hatred statements he delivered in Reading and was imprisoned for one year. Yasser remembers one of his inflammatory rhetoric saying that 'you, white folks have colonised us. You've got beating coming. And they're gone get it. We're gone give them...' (Yasser, Interview, 1999). However, because of his confused character and rough personality, educated black professionals and intellectuals were reluctant and did not take him and the society's policies very seriously. By the end of the 1960s, the RAAS collapsed due to organisational problems, internal conflicts and financial irregularities when Micheal X fled the country for Trinidad (Yasser, interview; BBC2 TV, Windrush, 1998).

Prior to the establishment to the RAAS, there were small black militant groups; most of them preached neo-Garveyite black nationalism. For example, Obi Egbuna formed a national black organisation based on similar objectives of the RAAS, although without religious commitments. His source of inspiration was Stokely Carmichael who visited the UK and addressed a black audience at London's Round House in July 1967. Later Egbuna was invited by the UCPA to lead the organisation in translating its more moderate approach into a fully-fledged militant black power ideology. The UCPA was more secular and political in outlook in comparison with RAAS, and it had more pragmatic programmes and objectives aimed at 'the establishment of separate educational, political and economic institutions and the encouragement of pride in the separate ideology of the black man' (Hiro & Fay, 1967:8). The British Black power movement would have appealed to black militants and activists who found RAAS's religious overtones discouraging (Cashmore, 1979:45-46).

However, this organisation also had similar fate to that of the RAAS when Egbuna and two officials of the group 'were arrested and charged with conspiring to murder white police officers, for which Egbuna received a three year suspended sentence. During his Old Bailey trial he spelt out the philosophy and plans of his newly created offspring of the UCPA, the British Black Panthers' (Cashmore, 1979:46). Consequently, both the RAAS and UCPA gradually lost their popularity among Afro-Caribbeans and further splintered and eventually faded into insignificance because of their deprived loci of authority and lack of clear ideological and organisational directions and structures. British Black Power movements, as Cashmore maintains, may have achieved little but they were important to the genesis and development of awareness necessary for the growth of later religious, social, protest and political black movements like the Rastafarian in the 1970s and the NOI's from the mid-1980s onwards.

b) The second period starts with Imam W. D. Mohammad's, then Wallace Muhammad's missionary policies aiming to spread a true version of Islam to the black diaspora. When Imam W. D. Mohammad became leader upon his father's death in 1975, he gradually transformed his father Elijah Muhammad's the NOI from black nationalist and political lines to the mainstream of Islam by introducing reforms and changes in beliefs and practices, and moderating the political and organisational policies of the movement (Lincoln, 1983; Mamiya, 1982, 1983; Marsh, 1984; Tinaz, 1993, 1996). By the late 1970s, he sent some of his Imams to the Caribbean, Belize, Trinidad, Guyana, Jamaica, and also Britain (Marsh, 1984). For example, he sent two envoys to Britain to teach and spread Islam among the Afro-Caribbeans; Imam B. D. Murad Deen and Abdul Aziz. The latter defected and rejoined Farrakhan's NOI in the early 1980s and changed his name to Akbar Muhammad, and now is Farrakhan's and the NOI's International Representative. The former has remained loyal to Imam W. D. Mohammed and was sent as his special emissary in the UK for two different periods, one was from 1979 to 1983 and the other was from 1985 to May 1999. During his stay he has been employed by the Muslim World League in London branch as an Imam to teach Islam, its basic beliefs and principles to new Muslim converts at the London Central Mosque and Muslim World League. And he organised and designed some courses at weekends at those centres for newly converted Muslims (Murad Deen, Interview, 1997; Tinaz, 1998).

He was a familiar face and fervent speaker at Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park London on Sunday afternoons in the late 1980s and the early

1990s to talk about Islam, Christianity and comparative religious issues. He has also been invited by Muslim Students' Islamic Societies at university and college campuses as a Guest Speaker to give talks on Islam, Muslims in USA, and particularly when the issues of African American Muslims and Malcolm X are concerned he was a reliable source in the UK to provide insight information. Since the early 1990s, Murad Deen has worked as a prison Imam in the Holloway Prison mostly teaching Afro-Caribbean inmates (Murad Deen, interview, 1997; BBC2 TV, Black Britain August 27, 1996). Numerous people became Muslim and interested in Islam mostly Afro-Caribbeans through his da'wah activities, courses, speeches and programmes. He maintained that he was pretty sure that thousands people became Muslims by his efforts to spread Islam among Afro-Caribbeans. Consequently, his successful da'wah activities and efforts bore fruit and with the financial supports of Muslim organisations like The Muslim World League and others he played significant role in opening the first Muslim Prison Masjid in the UK at the Holloway Prison London in June 1998 (Murad Deen, interview, 1998, 1999a; Tinaz, 1998).

However, during his stay in the UK, Imam Murad Deen has sometimes received suspicious and isolationist treatments from some Muslim leading figures and organisations due to his former religious / Islamic experience in the NOI. He once confided in me that in his early years in the UK there was no problem until some Muslim leaders and some Salafi Islamic movements dug out that he was an active member and Minister in the NOI during Elijah Muhammad's era. That created some suspicions and distant stance towards him among orthodox Muslims in UK. He has especially received harsh and negative treatments from ultra-orthodox or fundamentalist Salafi groups like Jam'iat Ihyaa' Minhaaj Al-Sunnah. It took a pretty long time for him to clarify his position, affiliation and commitment that he was no longer a member of the NOI. He explained and followed the changes and reforms initiated by Imam W. D. Mohammed in the process of Islamization and transition of the movement from black nationalistic stance to the mainstream Islam (Murad Deen, interview, 1997, 1998; Tinaz, 1998).

During his job as a Prison Imam, Murad Deen also experienced negative and discriminatory treatments from the Prison Service Chaplaincy and its officials. The issues he raised are mostly related to political and administrative allegations like the use and share of facilities provided by the Prison Services. He moreover maintained that when his Islamic courses and lectures had attracted more inmates than other faiths' representatives and that engendered some sort of jealousy among Christian Chaplain Priests and

Prison officials as well. That atmosphere eventually put more barriers and limitations his access to the facilities provided by Prison Service Chaplaincy (Murad Deen, interview, 1998, 1999a). Imam's particular and personal experiences draw parallels with the findings of Beckford and Gilliat's work about religion in prison. Their study examines the relations between the Church of England and other faiths in the Prison Service Chaplaincy. They noticed that how the struggle for equal opportunities in a multi-faith society is politicizing relations between the Church, the state and other religious and ethnic minorities. They consider that it was due to the increasingly controversial role of the Church of England Prison chaplains in facilitating the religious and pastoral care of inmates from non-Christian backgrounds, whose numbers among the prison population have been growing. Beckford and Gilliat conclude maintaining that it is time to reconsider the practice of keeping ethnic and religious minorities dependent on Anglican Church brokering roles of their access to prison chaplaincy. (See further discussions of the transmission of religion and struggle to control and regulate services and facilities in prison, Beckford, 1997a; Beckford & Gilliat, 1998).

In the early May 1999, Imam Murad Deen resigned from the position he held over eight years in prison and left for good to Egypt to improve his Islamic knowledge and take course in Islamic studies and Arabic language at Al-Azhar University (Murad Deen, interview, 1999b). In autumn 1999 he finally returned to the USA from Egypt. He is currently resides in Atlanta, GA, and works at Imam W. D. Mohammed's the Muslim American Society's (MAS) programmes like prison ministry and education (Telephone conversations with Sister Zubaydah Madyun, Public Information Officer of the Muslim Journal, February 15, 2000 and Sister Della, Secretary of Atlanta Mosque, February 19 and 20, 2000).

c) The third period refers to the final globalisation attempt started from the mid-1980s and onward. This is the NOI's more direct and systematic policy designed by Minister Louis Farrakhan seeking to heighten awareness about the NOI, its teachings and programmes. The last mission has been growing in religious, race relation and political importance in local and nation-wide levels in the UK since the early 1990s. It all started when the BBC gave a negative news coverage of Min. Farrakhan's Madison Square Garden speech on October 7, 1985. The media portrayal sparked interest among many young Black Londoners, and they wanted to know more as to why the British Governmental agencies vehemently despised Farrakhan. By December 1985, the NOI sent two special envoys to London, Khalid A.

Muhammad and Akbar Muhammad, to increase interest and awareness about the movement (R. Muhammad, 1997a).

In early January 1986, Min. Farrakhan was invited by the Hackney Black People's Association in East London to address black audiences. As soon as the British-Israel parliamentary group in Commons found out that Farrakhan was coming to London, they promptly called the Home Secretary, to ban his visit. Michael Latman, chairman of the group at the time, urged the home Secretary, then Douglas Hurd, on January 11, in a letter stating that 'Farrakhan's presence in Britain would not be conducive to the public good and would be likely stir up racial hatred' (*Caribbean Times*, Jan. 17-23, 1986). Almost immediately, on January 15, The Home Secretary Douglas Hurd announced that 'L. Farrakhan's presence in the UK would not be conducive to the public good' and issued the exclusion order (*Final Call*, August 16, 1997). Consequently, the ban caused polarisation among British people; while Jewish and mainstream society seemed to be pleased about the exclusion order the Afro-Caribbeans saw it as an insult to their community and responded overwhelmingly to a call to lift the ban (*The Voice*, February 1, 1986). Here, the state or government was directly involved in the management of a religious movement reminds Beckford's contentions (1985, 1993, and 1999). He argues that 'there seem to be much higher degrees of administrative arbitrariness and secrecy in the official response to problems generated by NRMs in Britain' (1985:242). He continues that 'in the absence of constitutional guarantee of religious freedom, opportunities exist for the exercise of official discrimination against NRMs' (1993:136). In the case of NOI, its social perception and leader's media portrayal, and most importantly, the lobby system's indirect pressure, which was the Jewish parliamentary group on the government, were essential reasons in issuing the exclusion order.

Since the issue of the ban, the word has gone out in the Black community and aroused the awareness and sympathy for Min. Farrakhan and his message. Although the exclusion order still remains for over 15 years, the NOI's literature like newspaper, *the Final Call*, and Min. Farrakhan's tapes began circulating among young Afro-Caribbeans and were displayed on stalls at Street Markets in densely populated black towns. In 1988, young Afro-Caribbeans began holding small meetings at homes to study and discuss the NOI's teachings, like Minister Wayne Muhammad of East London Mosque #1A, his wife Marceeah and Minister Micheal Muhammad of West London Mosque #1B and others. These early activities gradually attracted more people through racial, colour and social milieus (Balch and

Taylor, 1977) and networks (Snow *et al.*, 1980). The following year, in February 1989, the NOI UK pioneers established their first transatlantic ties by participating in Saviour's Day in Chicago where they subsequently met and were welcomed by Min. Farrakhan. Having been blessed by him, they returned to the UK with a special mission authorising them to establish their first Study Group in Brixton. From this first study group eventually three Mosques and one Study Group spawned in the London area, and other Study Groups in big industrial cities where Afro-Caribbeans' numbers were significant like Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Nottingham etc. The three NOI's Mosques in London are; #1A was located and formed in 1994 in Stoke Newington & Dalston areas of East London. Min. Wayne Muhammad heads this Mosque. #1B Mosque was formed in 1991 in Shepherd Bush area of the West London and headed by Min. Micheal Muhammad and Asst. Leo Muhammad. And the Mosque #1C is located in Brixton where the majority of its residents is Afro-Caribbeans, and headed by Min. Hilary Muhammad. In February 1997 the North London group formed the Study Group in Tottenham & Enfield areas and today is headed by Bro Bertram Muhammad (R. Muhammad, 1997b; Conversations with Asst. Min. Leo Muhammad, October 9 and November 14, 1998 and Min Wayne Muhammad, December 14, 1997). On February 27, 1997, Min. Farrakhan ordained the East London group as the NOI's first Mosque in Europe. The Mosque supervises other study groups outside London in Birmingham, Manchester and other industrial cities. It also helps and monitors a study group in Paris and the interests about the NOI in Belgium, Denmark, Holland and Germany where its influence has already been felt (R. Muhammad, 1997a; Tinaz, 1998)).

Apart from the above religious centres and groupings, the NOI has also other institutions like educational and economic and business enterprises. The NOI has three schools; in Brixton called New Mind School which offers courses at weekends, in Shepherd Bush called the Star Chamber Academy and in Hackney offering full-time nursery, primary and secondary schooling (Rees, 1997; Moss, 1998; Wazir, 1998; Macey, 1998) with a distinctive dress codes and curriculum.

With its traditional self-help and self-reliance economic teachings, the NOI displayed a very positive image for Black Britions. Enterprises like restaurants, shops and groceries, bookstores and clothing (Elijah's Garden, the People's Trust, Respect for Your Life Bookstores, Respect for Life Clothing Company and etc.) began to appear in black neighbourhoods. To supplement the *Final Call*, the NOI's official newspaper, the UK members

publish newspapers and magazines to spread the movement's teachings and agendas, and approach news dealing with black issues and problems from black perspectives such as "*Sign of Times*", "*Power*", "*What education*" and so on. The NOI also uses other mass media organs to disseminate its message to large audiences. For example, Asst. Minister Leo Muhammad regularly gives two talks in a week on Radio Broadcasting on Tuesday and Thursday evenings between 9:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. in London FM Unix, 101.2 MHz (Tinaz, 1998a, 1998b & 1999).

Up until April 1998, the UK Chapter, like France and African branches, was attached to the NOI's and Min. Farrakhan's International Representative office based in Accra, Ghana. From May 1998 onwards the NOI's European Chapters are under the administration of the NOI's East Coast Regional Representative, Minister Benjamin Muhammad, formerly Benjamin Chavis and General Secretary of the NAACP, oversees area that stretches from Main to South Carolina in USA, as well as to the UK and France (*Final Call*, June 16, 1998).

However in the early 1990s power struggles and personal conflicts broke out among leading figures of the NOI in the UK among Ministers Wayne, Michael and Leo and that eventually led to form separate and independent Mosques from each other (Cohen, 1997). In the early years Minister Wayne Muhammad was regarded as representative of Minister Farrakhan and leader of the NOI UK chapter. The power struggle has since been sorted out by Min. Farrakhan's personal intervention (Tinaz, 1998). Currently each Mosque and Study Groups are directly responsible to Chicago and receive religious, spiritual and moral instructions and directives from Chicago the NOI National Board and Min. Farrakhan. But they are attached organisationally and administratively to the East Cost representative. In 1998 with the instructions from Chicago, the NOI UK officials formed a sort of loose organisational structure by closely co-operating with each other but not patronising over others and appointed Minister Hilary Muhammad of Mosque #1C South London as the NOI's UK chapter Co-ordinator (Tinaz, Field Research Notes, 1998b & 1999).

4. Making serious inroads and recognition in Afro-Caribbean Community:

From the early 1990s onward, the NOI members can be seen around London and other cities through the presence of their paper sellers, speakers for the

da'wah activities and rallies to raise black people's issues and problems. The NOI's discourse offered real alternatives and practical solutions. With its distinctive religious beliefs, racial pride and self-love mottos, self-help & do for self economic principles, and its members' clean and respectful role models in manners and appearances, the movement has successfully attracted mostly black youths since the early 1990s. For the youths, the NOI offers a formula for black people's empowerment, doing for themselves, gives self-esteem and dignity, trains black youths how to become productive, industrious and respectable people, and reforms and rehabilitates people by turning them away from crime, drugs, and alcohol. However, many considers their joining the NOI as a direct reaction to the ineffectiveness of Christianity, more specifically, the black churches' lack of interests and programmes. To them, Christianity is seen as a White Man's or Europeans' religion, but Islam as an ancestral faith (Thomas, 1992; Roy, 1992; Armah, 1995). Behind the NOI's success, it appears to be that it finds a very fertile ground in places where unemployed, disenchanting black youths, as Nehose rightly points out, 'are looking towards something that will offer them security and deal with life issues' (Armah, 1995). These are given priorities by the NOI thus making them both attractive and promising.

Mostly in black neighbourhoods, rank and file black people have noticed the effectiveness of the NOI's programmes and subsequently their views of the group have gradually changed in a positive way. In densely black populated areas such as Brixton, Shepherd Bush, Hackney, Tottenham and so on, residents and sometimes civic authorities have welcomed the NOI members and praised their efforts to create clean, drug & alcohol free and safe environments. And more importantly, the NOI's members present role models for disaffected black youths (Bhatti, 1992; Thomas, 1992; Armah, 1995).

Even among black professional and political figures, it is possible to notice the change of their posture towards the NOI. From the early 1990s, the NOI's officials in Britain have been working successfully to reach out to black professionals and politicians (Roy, 1992; *Weekly Journal*, Sept. 21, 1995). The NOI UK chapter managed to mobilise over a thousand black participants from all walks of life to a London Summit on October 16, 1995 in order to show a global solidarity with the Million Man March in the USA in October 1995. The rally received moral and organisational supports, and appreciation from some leading black professionals and politicians (Francis & Obianwu, 1995; Baird, 1995).

The second event that has boosted the image of the NOI in the eyes of the Afro-Caribbean community was the role it played in the Steven Lawrence Inquiry, a black teenager who was murdered by five white youths. The NOI provided support and solidarity by invitation from the family and supporters of the Steven Lawrence case. Thus, while the mainstream media portrayed the NOI as a negative and disruptive presence during the inquiry (see newspapers on June 30, 1998 like *The Times*, *The Express*, *The Mail*, *The Daily Telegraph*) the Black media projected the movement as a progressive and appreciative that aimed to protect their legitimate rights and social justice (see newspapers like *Caribbean Times*, 10 July; *New Nation*, 6 July; 1998 and Slater, 1998a,b). Consequently, the NOI's status has further improved among Afro-Caribbeans especially among the black professional organisations. More importantly, they recognised and accepted the NOI in to their fold as a mainstream black civil rights organisation in the UK. Now, the NOI takes very important position and credibility among conventional civil rights groups' umbrella organisation, *the Black United Front*. In October 1998, the NOI further increased its credibility by mobilising Afro-Caribbeans and organising the 10.000 Man March in London in order to raise the awareness of their common shared problems. It is due to these NOI initiatives that the organisation now seems to constitute a significant position and legitimacy among conventional black civil right organisations in Britain. And their perception of and posture towards the movement has changed and they no longer isolate it, in the contrary, regard it very highly (Tinaz, 1998a).

5. Tense relations:

However, on the other hand, the NOI have been confronting difficulties and tense relations with local authorities and governmental agencies in running their businesses and performing educational and cultural programmes. For example, in Hackney Borough of London, they had tense relations with council members (Snow, 1997; *Weekly Journal*, Nov. 17, 1994; Ogunleye, 1997a,b). The Department of Education had threatened the NOI's schools with closure for running unregistered schools (Macey, 1998; Wazir 1998; Moss, 1999). According to the law, all private schools are legally required to register (Macey, 1998; Moss, 1999). Later the threat for closure was partly lifted when the Department agreed that the NOI's schools could be provisionally registered (Moss, 1998).

Moreover, the NOI's more direct and prolonged tension has been happening with the Home Office. For a long time, the NOI UK officials have been fighting and lobbying to lift the ban on Farrakhan's entry to the UK, which was issued on January 15, 1986. Not only the NOI UK officials and organisations have been campaigning to lift the ban but other black professionals, activists and community leaders are also working and lobbying like Labour Party MP late Bernie Grant, who was president of the UK-arm of African Repatriation Movement and Paul Twino, the Operation Farrakhan Campaign, Lee Jasper, the National Black Alliance and currently advisor for the London Mayor, Ken Livingston, on race relation issues (*Final Call*, September 16, 1997, Ogunleye, 1997c,d; Macey, 1997). As a result of these campaigns in November 1997 the current Home Secretary Jack Straw began considering to review the case for possible lifting the exclusion order on Min. Farrakhan. However, his considerations and the hopes to lift the ban were dashed when the NOI's members were involved in Steven Lawrence public inquiry on 29 June 1998. The following days the Home Secretary announced the outcome of his review of the exclusion order on July 2, 1998 and was inclined to maintain the ban because of the involvement of the NOI's Fruit of Islam in the inquiry (Carrol, 1998; Burrell, 1998). Almost over a year later, he reiterated the government's well-worn position to extend indefinitely the ban on Min. Farrakhan because the Minister's "presence in the United Kingdom would not be conducive to public good for reasons of race relations and the maintenance of public order" (Ogunleye, 1999). That decision, of course, caused disappointments and negative reactions among Black activists, supporters and sympathisers of the NOI in the UK.

Although the NOI's direct involvement in the incident is questionable there is no doubt that the Home Secretary seemed to be overwhelmed in making his decision by the mainstream media campaign against and portrayal of the movement. As discussed earlier the mainstream media portrayed the NOI as a negative and disruptive presence at the inquiry, the Black media projected it as a progressive and appreciative that aimed to protect their legitimate rights and social justice (*Caribbean Times*, July 10, 1998; *New Nation*, July 6, 1998). Here the media portrayals of the NOI and its leader, Farrakhan and its members, reminds Beckford (1995, 1997b, 1999) and Richardson (Richardson, 1996; Richardson & van Driel, 1997) of the contentious nature of the media with regard to its bias and conditioned approaches to the NRMs (New Religious Movements) which are sensationalist, one-sided, bias and misinformative in perspective. This

derives from different focuses of interest. Beckford compares the media and social scientist's treatments of NRMs, short-term vs long-term; practical vs theoretical; and episodic vs continuous (1997). Therefore, the media portrayal of and treatments of the NOI and its leader, Farrakhan, have played a crucial role in creating two contrasting images of him, negative and positive. While the NOI and Farrakhan have been portrayed in dominant white society and mainstream media as militant, racist, separatist, dangerous, bigot, hatred and anti-Semitic, among significant section of Black press, and African Americans and Afro-Caribbeans, the movement and its leader and members have been highly respected and regarded as role model, for the youth and the vocal voice and spokesman of oppressed people.

Although the ban still remains and he can not physically enter the UK, government agencies are still unable to prevent access of his message and influence to the country. Min. Farrakhan's teachings and programmes penetrate into the national borders of the UK by global forces like mass media and telecommunication. On special occasions he can address his followers through telephone hook-ups, live satellite-broadcasting, circulation of the NOI's literature; newspaper, books, tapes etc. On behalf of Min. Farrakhan, the top labourers of the National Board like Min. Benjamin Muhammad, Min Akbar Muhammad, Min. Ismael Muhammad, and Min. Ava Muhammad visit the UK from time to time to convey his message and agenda. Their visits also motivate the believers here and mobilise black activists (*The Final Call*, June 16, 1998; July 13, 1999; August 17, 1999). Once Asst. Min. Leo Muhammad explained to me the irrelevance of the ban indicating that "although he [Min. Farrakhan] can not enter this country [the UK] psychically and talk to us and teach us he is morally and spiritually always present here to inspire us, guide us and lead us..." (Conversation with Asst. Min. Leo Muhammad of Mosque #1B, March 25, 1999).

Both the government's involvement in the management of a religious group (Beckford, 1993) and the mainstream media's negative portrayal and posture towards the movement and its leader seem to contribute and help increase great interest in the movement among mostly young Afro-Caribbeans. They often question whether there is freedom of speech and expression in Britain or not, pointing the government stance and double standards of the NOI and its leader. They maintain and express their disappointments stating that while other nationalist leaders like Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of French National Front, and Jerry Adams, Sinn Fein's leader were allowed into the UK but when a black leader is concerned like Min. Farrakhan the government officials insist on keeping the exclusion

order on him (Francis, 1994; Ogunleye, 1999; *The Final Call*, July 14, 1998). They see it as a discrimination against and double standards towards the black community. For the media portrayal of Min. Farrakhan, NOI, Black activists and the NOI's UK officials frequently criticise the media's controversial policy in reporting Min. Farrakhan's speeches. They blame the media for decontextualising his speeches and its reluctance to give coverage of the NOI's positive programmes and contributions to society. (Conversation with Asst. Min. Leo Muhammad, March 25, 1999). Consequently, the government's stance and media's portrayal ironically appear to help to have laid a solid foundation of sympathy and admiration for the NOI and its leader Min. Farrakhan in Black Diaspora in the UK.

However, more interestingly, the NOI UK members not only receive harsh critiques and discriminatory treatments from the mainstream society, government and media, the Sunni Muslims and institutions are also distant with and suspicious of the movement for its heterodox teachings and practices like concept of God, prophecy, hereafter, fasting etc. They do not regard NOI's members as true Muslims (See the history of orthodox Muslims' discriminatory treatments of the NOI in the USA, Tinaz, 1993, 1996; Cohen, 1997; Essien-Udom, 1970; Yasser, Interview, 1999). In response to those critiques, the NOI's officials and rank-and-file members point out the orthodox Muslims' contradictory religious practices between the text and practice in daily life, referring to selling and consuming alcohol, gambling and promiscuous affairs. They criticise mainstream Muslims for not properly observing and practising Islamic rules and moral conducts (Conversation with Min. Wayne Muhammad of Mosque #1A, Dec. 14, 1997). Similarly, Asst. Minister Leo Muhammad complained to me once of orthodox Muslims' rejection and dilemma of the NOI and its members, saying that 'they reduced Islam to symbols, dresses and external appearances. They judge you according to your physical appearances. Allah does not look at your external looks but your heart and deeds' (Conversation with Asst. Minister Leo Muhammad of # 1B, March 25, 1999). He often bitterly attacks the orthodox Muslims' critics at London Hyde Park Speakers' Corner stating that,

You wear a long gown and think that makes you a Muslim, or say that we are not Muslims because we wear a suit? Shaddup, you fools! You liars. The clothes do not make the man, the man makes the clothes. We do all the prayers you do, and we fear no but Allah, as you do...We are the ones standing up against the

Caucasians...against the enemies of God. We're more Muslim than you (Cohen, 1997:26).

6. Conclusion

Contrary to Stuart Hall and Darcus Howe's contentions (Cohen, 1997; Howe, 1998) who argue that the NOI would not gain wide-spread popularity and acceptance in the black community and manage to mobilise black politics and leadership, the movement appears to be a vocal voice and display a strong organisation and solidarity that is taking root in Black Diaspora. The success of the NOI in influencing the black agenda is its call to embrace all factions of the Black Community in order to form a broad base unity regardless of their religious and political differences, which it sees as being divisive.

Racially motivated attacks and killings of black youths like Steven Lawrence and Michael Manson in recent years and the police forces and law enforcement's agencies slow move to investigate resulted in black people losing confidence and trust in the civic authorities (Tendler, 1999). Because of this, Afro Caribbeans see a necessary the existence of a strong black organisation whether it is political, nationalist or religious, such as NOI in order to raise awareness of black issues and problems. This gives to rise to its popular acceptance among the rank-and-file Afro Caribbeans and mostly black activists in the UK. It seems that the NOI gains more respect and credibility in dealing with black people problems, an area where the conventional civic authorities and organisation are supposed to be active, however, they seem to have failed (Hunter, 1999). The most salient and interesting point is that the NOI is attempting or managing to construct its peculiar ethno-religious identity, nationalistic objectives by forging race, colour and religious issues.

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