Chapter Six

Conclusion

Crises, Conflicts and Current Trends

Just as the black Muslim movement had a number of conflicts with the world outside, the white government and the white society, so it had some internal conflicts and tensions too which marred its growth and impeded its progress at the height of the movement's popularity and fame. Suspension of Malcolm X from the movement, his split with Elijah Muhammad, the new movement that Malcolm X launched since his leaving the Nation of Islam, his pilgrimage to Mecca, his assassination etc. were events that created repercussions not only in the black Muslim society, but in the black American society as a whole. The death of Elijah Muhammad, the supreme leader of the movement, its leadership later by his son, and his break with Louis Farrakhan and the further split of the movement were events that considerably changed its character. Emergence of the phenomena like the Black Panther Party and the impact of the Marxist ideology came coupled with this. This had a telling effect on the cultural and literary scenes too. The transformation that Baraka underwent later has to be seen in this light. Its more palpable impact is yet to be seen in the coming years. In anticipation, this concluding chapter is focused on these issues and an evaluation of the current developments.
Malcolm's Split with Muhammad

Malcolm's split with Elijah Muhammad which happened in 1964 was a major landmark in the history of the movement. The Nation of Islam led by Elijah Muhammad has never been the same since its most influential demagogue, Malcolm X left it. A large number of his followers left the movement and thronged around him for a new mobilization. As for the Nation of Islam, it was only the first of a long chain of events and the beginning of a long process of change that it was destined to undergo in the subsequent years.

For Elijah Muhammad, it was an experience of the falcon not hearing the falconer, and for Malcolm X, it would have been inevitable in the course of his growth and the realization of things which so far he had seen only through the eyes of Elijah Muhammad. It was at once a result of Malcolm X's new awareness and an event that let him see things for himself. That his break with Elijah Muhammad, if not at that stage in particular, was the result of his new understanding of the genuine ideology of Islam, and that it brought him closer to the genuine message of Islam are beyond doubt. The version of Islam that Elijah Muhammad propagated, howsoever he was justified in the Afro-American context, cannot be followed long. The more one gets close to the genuine teachings of the holy Qur'an and the tradition and life of prophet Muhammad, the final messenger of Allah, the less will be one's inclination to remain in Elijah Muhammad's camp. In the unique context of the Afro-American society's predicament in the white-dominated America, Elijah Muhammad's strategies would have been, to an extent, right; but it still remained at odds with the genuine teachings and
doctrines of Islam. Certain of the doctrines that Elijah Muhammad propounded especially the ones concerning the racial superiority of the Blacks, the myth of Yacub's creation of the white race, Elijah Muhammad being entitled to be known as "the Messenger of Allah" and the rituals and practices in everyday life, would be found embarrassingly different from the teachings of Islam on these matters.

For all these reasons, Malcolm's break with Elijah Muhammad had been, if not so identified then, on ideological grounds too. Perhaps Elijah might have foreseen things when he took actions against his most influential and popular minister. If a break at this stage over a trifle of disobedience of Elijah's instructions had not taken place, it would have, no doubt, happened at a later stage with more ideological overtones. John O. Voll points out:

> The message of Islam provided a way for a Malcolm X to break away not only from the racism of American Whites but also of the early Black Muslim movement, led by Elijah Muhammad. Islam has provided a new perspective for the emerging morality of identity and pluralism in the American context. (214)

We have reasons enough to believe that, by this time, the genuine ideology of Islam had begun to overreach the black American society removing the cobwebs of ideological barriers that Elijah Muhammad and others had made as a necessity.

However, apart from the growing tension between the two, Elijah Muhammad had an immediate reason for taking action against Malcolm X. It was a speech Malcolm X delivered at Manhattan Centre on
December 4, 1963 which was known as "God's Judgment of White America", the last speech Malcolm gave while still a member of the Nation of Islam. Talking about this event, Benjamin Goodman says:

Mr. Muhammad had been scheduled to speak, but he had to cancel and Malcolm suggested that he speak in his place, in order not to disappoint the crowd. Unlike most of his speeches, which though prepared and thought out in Malcolm's mind were delivered extemporaneously, this speech was typed. In it Malcolm dwells at some length on the March on Washington, using it to illustrate what he considered the failure of Negro leadership, showing how co-operative ventures with Whites invariably turn into co-opted ventures. This march started out as an all-black march, then it became an integrated march, and soon the Whites were in complete charge. Malcolm points out that the whole affair was controlled. People had to arrive at a certain time, march at certain times between two presidents - Washington and Lincoln - and leave at certain time. He notes that some black leaders whose speeches were known to be antagonistic to Kennedy administration were not allowed to speak. (20)

This is the speech that has come to be known as "the Chickens are Coming Home to Roost" speech, because of Malcolm's use of these words in the course of the evening. Malcolm used the phrase in response to a question from the audience about President John Kennedy's death. In fact, he was indicting white America, in a characteristic flight of rhetoric, for creating the climate of hatred and violence in which such an outrage
could occur. He expressed the opinion that Mr. Kennedy's murder was a case of chickens coming home to roost. Benjamin Goodman further writes:

A week or so earlier, just after President Kennedy's assassination, Mr. Muhammad had given strict orders that no minister should make any derogatory remark about the dead President. It should be remembered that a great number of black people really loved President Kennedy and, thought the messenger, to attack him might create enemies not only for the Muslims but for black people in general. When a minister speaks, he is not speaking personally but for all Muslims and for the Messenger: he is expressing the attitude and thought of the Nation of Islam. (21)

Following the speech, accordingly, Malcolm was called to Chicago by Muhammad, after which his suspension was announced. It was a ninety-day suspension, to run through March 4, 1964. Although there were basic differences between the two and the derogatory reference was only Muhammad's excuse for suspending him, Muhammad appeared to have been disciplining him as a father disciplines a child, expecting him to come through the trial a better follower. But Malcolm, despite his early inclination, was never destined to get back to Elijah Muhammad's camp.

Malcolm had, by this time, developed a number of issues over which he had differences with Muhammad. Not only that he would have taken Muhammad's doctrines pertaining to Yacub's creation of the white race, Elijah Muhammad being a messenger of Allah etc. as "symbolic" rather than literal truths, or as useful weapons in the struggle against the
enemy, but had been weakened in his respect for Muhammad over certain issues in his private life. Besides, he was not quite happy with Muhammad's line of the organization's activities. He had come to the conclusion that Muhammad's mode of operation had separated the Muslims from the front line struggles of the black Americans, and that theirs was only a "talk only" and "never do anything" programme. He observes:

If I harboured any personal disappointment whatsoever, it was that privately I was convinced that our Nation of Islam could be an even greater force in the American black man's overall struggle _ if we engaged in more action. By that, I mean I thought privately that we should have amended, or relaxed, our general non-engagement policy. (The Autobiography... 293)

Malcolm X passed the period of his suspension without making public appearances and involving in any kind of activities, with the hope of being taken back into the Nation and having a patch up with Muhammad. With the approach of the annual black Muslim convention in Chicago on February 26, 1964, he telephoned Muhammad and asked for a clarification of his status. He got a letter from Muhammad that left the question unanswered. He decided then that the time had come to act. After much soul searching, he became "able finally to muster the nerve, and the strength, to start facing the facts, to think for myself." On March 8 he announced that he was leaving the Nation of Islam and starting a new organization.
Organization of Afro-American Unity

By March 1964, when he quit the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X had been convinced that the black Muslim movement had "gone as far as it can" because it was too narrowly sectarian and too inhibited. He was, in fact, considering seriously the idea of forming a new organization — a broader platform — for working for the benefit of the black community as a whole. He said:

I am prepared to co-operate in local civil-rights actions in the South and elsewhere and shall do so because every campaign for specific objectives can only heighten the political consciousness of the Negroes and intensify their identification against white society... (Malcolm X... 18)

It was in the middle of March 1964, nearly eleven months before his death that Malcolm made a formal announcement about the formation of the new movement "Organization of Afro-American Unity" (OAAU). On March 12, he held a formal press conference at the Park Sheraton Hotel in New York in order to explain his new position in detail. The statement read on the occasion clearly revealed that he was fed up with Elijah Muhammad on two matters in special. In his strictly sectarian line of activities, Elijah Muhammad was not successful in uniting the Blacks as a whole. Secondly, that Elijah Muhammad and his movement were too inhibited when the black community badly needed dynamism. That was why he organized the new movement including black people of all creed to fight for their rights. His belief in Islam, at this stage, was not strained at all. He said in a statement that he was and would remain a Muslim. The journey to Mecca for hajj, a few weeks later, was to give him still
different experiences with the world outside and his outlook on these matters was to undergo further changes.

When he returned to America after hajj, it was with a different understanding of Islam, particularly in the sphere of race. The new understanding he had of the genuine teachings of Islam that pertained to these matters gave him a clear direction on matters on which he was for long seeking light. He clearly understood that the solution to the problems of black Americans was to be achieved only through Islam, and that it was not the version of Islam propagated by Elijah Muhammad with the racist, sectarian character to achieve it. He found that Islam was broad enough to unite people of all sections and that only it could effect a perfect harmony between the race-split, race-vexed sections of the society.

As a result of the new awareness about Islam, Malcolm X discontinued altogether, by the middle of 1964, any advocacy of a separate nation, and began to say that all black people should stay in the United States and fight for what was rightfully theirs. He further found that Islam as a religion and mosque as one of its institutions were to support the struggle. He had even intended to organize the Muslim Mosque Inc. in such manner to provide for the active participation of all Blacks, despite their religious or non-religious beliefs.

It was for this purpose that he felt the requirement of the formation of the broader non-religious Organization of Afro-American Unity. By the time of his return to America after his first extended trip abroad in 1964, visiting Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Ghana, Morocco and Algeria, he had travelled enough to know the world and had delved
so deep into the genuine teachings of Islam that he was thoroughly transformed. Talking two days after his return on the impact of his visit to the Muslim world on his thinking, he said:

In the past, I have permitted myself to be used to make sweeping indictments of all white people, and these generalizations have caused injuries to some white people who did not deserve them. Because of the spiritual rebirth which I was blessed to undergo as a result of my pilgrimage to the Holy City of Mecca, I no longer subscribe to sweeping indictments of one race. My pilgrimage to Mecca ... served to convince me that perhaps American whites can be cured of the rampant racism which is consuming them and about to destroy this country. In the future, I intend to be careful not to sentence anyone who has not been proven guilty. I am not a racist and do not subscribe to any of the tenets of racism. In all honesty and sincerity it can be stated that I wish nothing but freedom, justice and equality: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness _ for all people. My first concern is with the group of people to which I belong, the Afro-Americans, for we, more than any other people, are deprived of these inalienable rights. (Malcolm X... 58-59)

Further, he had understood the significance of Islam in the modern world especially the race-vexed America. He states:

America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases the race problem from its society. Throughout my travels in the Muslim World, I have met,
talked to, and even eaten with, people who would have been considered "white" in America, but the religion of Islam in their hearts has removed the "white" from their minds. They practise sincere and true brotherhood with other people irrespective of their color. (Malcolm X... 59)

He further observed:

Before America allows herself to be destroyed by the "cancer of racism" she should become better acquainted with the religious philosophy of Islam, a religion that has already molded people of all colors into one vast family, a nation or brotherhood of Islam that leaps over all "obstacles" and stretches itself into almost all the Eastern countries of this earth. (Malcolm X... 60)

He was fully convinced that Islam alone was capable of removing racism from the modern American society. He observes:

True Islam removes racism, because people of all colors and races who accept its religious principles and bow down to the one god, Allah, also automatically accept each other as brothers and sisters, regardless of differences in complexion. (Malcolm X... 60)

Malcolm's trip abroad, while broadening his views on race, had in no way altered his militancy against racial oppression. In addition, it had deepened his identification with the colonial revolution. He appeared, since then, to have been struggling hard to evolve a practical course of action guided by the genuine ideology of Islam for the race problem of America. This, he insisted on being without ever causing a split in the
black American society. The Organization of Afro-American Unity was intended to serve this purpose. Although he worked most dynamically in a heftily scheduled chain of programmes in the next few months towards this direction, "spoke, agitated, educated and organized to create a new, non-religious movement to promote black unity and work for freedom..." (72) as George Breitman puts it in his notes in Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements, all his efforts were destined to be suddenly terminated by his unfortunate death in February, 1964.

The few months since the formation of the Organization of Afro-American Unity and the trip abroad until his death, had been the most active period of Malcolm X's life. He had been found establishing a wide range of relationships with leaders in the United States as well as abroad and was involved in a number of public activities, rallies, campaigns, public meetings, interviews etc. most of which were related to the Organization of Afro-American Unity. It appeared that he had got an extremely clear idea as to what was to be done in the next few years, pertaining to the race problem of America. He was actually aware of the universal significance of the problem and the necessity of internationalizing their struggle which had only been sharpened by the new issues that pertained to capitalism and socialism that had struck him by then. He states:

But the point and thing that I would like to impress upon every Afro-American leader is that there is no kind of action in this country ever going to bear fruit unless that action is tied in with the overall international struggle. You waste your time when you talk to this man, just you and him. So
when you talk to him, let him know your brother is behind you, and you've got some brothers behind that brother. That's the only way to talk to him, that's the only language he knows. (Malcolm X... 89)

Assassination of Malcolm X and the Malcolm X Heritage

Malcolm X's life had been doomed ever since he left the Nation of Islam in March 1964. Considering the kind of activities Malcolm X had been involved in during the months following his split with Elijah Muhammad, one can only be apprehensive of his conditions. He was so explicit and his direction was very clear to others. That he was a threat to the governmental authorities while still a member of the Nation of Islam was evident from the statement made by President Kennedy in 1963 addressing a special news conference. He then stated, Benjamin Karim and others quote: "If the United States didn't hurry up and get the segregation bars down, all the blacks in America would be following Malcolm X" (156). But the condition only worsened since he left the Nation and undertook new activities. The establishment of the Muslim Mosque Inc. and the launching of the Organization of Afro-American Unity in 1964 created new enemies for him. George Breitman observes:

The task Malcolm set for himself in March 1964 was truly formidable. Almost alone, surrounded by new as well as old enemies, he set out, on unfamiliar terrain, to build a movement that would challenge the most powerful government in the world... government and its police agencies took Malcolm seriously. They regarded him as a
danger, not just a talker... (The Last... 71)

That Malcolm X himself had expected to be killed was clear from his talk to Attorney Milton Henry, one of his friends from Pontiac, Michigan, on 20th December, 1964. Such were the kind of experiences he had those days that in Henry's words "He seemed tired and worn. Exhausted. Used up." Besides the hostility of the white supremacists, now his former followers in the Nation of Islam, especially the volunteers of the Fruit of Islam (FOI), had turned hostile to him. Either working on their own or motivated and made instrumental by the agents of the white regime, FBI or so, they were after him. Attempts at his life had been repeatedly reported including the incident of bombing his house on February 14, 1965. By the beginning of March 1965, Malcolm was almost convinced that his assassination was soon to take place and that it was only a matter of time.

Eventually, it happened in the afternoon of February 21, 1965. Sunday, at the Audubon ballroom, in Harlem, New York, as he was addressing the large gathering of the OAAU rally. Two assassins with few accomplices, fired at him repeatedly from the gathering and he fell dead instantly on the stage.

The charge of assassinating Malcolm X, though a foregone conclusion, was put on the Nation of Islam, especially, some of the FOI volunteers. However, the role of the FBI and CIA in the event can, by no means, be overruled, only that FOI volunteers were instrumental.

The assassination of Malcolm X, the greatest leader of the black community in the present century, was a most important event in the recent history of the black American society. But Malcolm X's new
movement. by then, was not sufficiently organized, for his followers to vehemently go ahead with his mission to the destination the dead leader had in mind. His legacy remained in the hearts of millions of his followers and admirers.

The legacy bequeathed by Malcolm X continues to have its stamp indelibly in the socio-political and cultural realms of the black people in America. In literature and art, he represents an image, a symbol, a message and an outlook. In social and political fields, he is a singular source of inspiration for the younger generation. In religion, his is a unique path that is to be followed by millions, though not as part of the organization that he had started. Now that Malcolm X stood for an ideology and followed a unique path, the ways were quite clear for the black Americans. Many celebrities of the black community were, in the subsequent years, attracted to Islam by his legacy. It continues to influence the new generations vitally, that even decades after his death the name of Malcolm X is an easy tool for stirring and mobilizing the masses. His name gets mentioned in the newspaper reports and public speeches on almost every day as an inevitable reference, which reveals the undying significance of this brave son of the black community.

The death of Malcolm X caused a great deal of repercussions in the Nation of Islam too. C. Eric Lincoln observes:

The Malcolm X affair shook the Nation of Islam, and although Muhammad's programs went on as before, in the economic sphere, Malcolm's charisma, his organizing genius, and his polemical ability were sorely missed for a time. Beyond that, although the organization he founded did
not survive, the Malcolm X cult did, and apparently it continues to plague the Nation of Islam. (The Black... 212)

However, the appointment of Louis Farrakhan who was trained by Malcolm X himself and was very close to him at the time he left the movement, as national minister, was a good strategy. Muhammad was, by this means, able to demonstrate his disdain of any influence Malcolm may have left in the Nation. Besides, the economic and educational projects undertaken by Muhammad kept the Nation of Islam going without much threats to its survival.

Nation of Islam after Muhammad

After having shaped and guided the Nation of Islam for more than forty years, Elijah Muhammad died on February 25, 1975, following a long debilitating bout with acute bronchitis at Conk County Mercy Hospital in Chicago. Leaving no room for confusion, he had passed the mantle of leadership to Wallace D. Muhammad, his fifth son. But Wallace Muhammad who later changed his name to Warith Deen Muhammad, in the line of traditional Islam, was destined to tread his own path rather than moving in the path of his father.

Warith Deen Muhammad, who at an earlier stage, had been expelled from his father's movement, had established contacts with the immigrant Muslims of the United States, a considerably large society then, and learned about the true teachings of Islam followed elsewhere in the world, and was also in close connection with Malcolm X until the latter's death. Now as the supreme leader of the Nation of Islam, true to his moral principles and to the memory of Malcolm X with whom he had
shared them, he made sweeping changes in the national leadership as well as significant ones in the NOI doctrines. He changed the name of his father's organization to the World Community of Al Islam in the West which later came to be known as American Muslim Mission and brought it within the compass of traditional Islamic teaching, and permitted the Whites to be admitted into the Mission's membership.

However, a black Muslim movement did continue and the old name did not die. In 1975, Louis Farrakhan, who had become Minister of New York Mosque Number Seven after Malcolm's death a decade earlier, broke with Warith Deen Muhammad and established his own Nation of Islam. In addition to the name, Farrakhan also retained much of the essential spirit and black nationalist dogma that had defined the NOI for the past few decades. Discontent among old NOI factions inside Farrakhan's new organization produced other splinter groups, like the one headed by John Ali.

The Nation of Islam, under the leadership of Minister Louis Farrakhan, is still a powerful organization in its own way. It has been successful in attracting a considerable number of new followers and converting many black celebrities to their version of Islam. The credit of this achievement goes partly to the legacy left behind by Elijah Muhammad whose doctrines and myths were still in popularity, and partly to the influential leadership of Farrakhan. Compared with Warith Deen Muhammad, Farrakhan is a very powerful and charismatic leader. This is evident from the "One Million Men March" he conducted in Washington D. C. in October 1996, the "One Million Women March" held in Philadelphia in October 1997 and the huge rallies conducted time
and again in the United States capital and other cities. The movement is, further, reportedly getting encouragement and support from the Trotskyists and socialists of the United States in the recent times. The meeting conducted by the Trotskyist organ "Socialist Action" in San Francisco in December 1995 to discuss the huge NOI rally in Washington held previously is suggestive of this.

We have reason to believe that the Nation of Islam under the leadership of Louis Farrakhan is of considerable influence among the black masses of the United States and that the separatist doctrines, though alien to traditional Islam, still have an appeal in the black society. The American regime is believed to be, as in the past, sowing seeds of discord in this community to weaken their power. Recent incidents persuade one to come to such conclusions. The police case filed against Dr. Betty Shabazz, widow of Malcolm X, and Qubila Shabazz, his daughter, charging them to have attempted the life of Louis Farrakhan, the NOI supremo, is one of this kind. It appears that the FBI was making use of the strained relationship between Malcolm X's family and the NOI leadership since the assassination of Malcolm X, for their ulterior purposes of causing further splits and differences in the black Muslim society.

However, Farrakhan and Dr. Betty Shabazz realized the truth about the matter and joined hands to defeat the conspiracy of the state agencies. A meeting with thousands of participants was held in the Apollo Theatre in Harlem, New York in early 1995 for celebrating the unity of Minister Louis Farrakhan and Dr. Betty Shabazz. They are reported to have decided to work on a co-operative basis for the common goals of the
black community.

C. Eric Lincoln appears to have made a right appraisal:

Whatever the fortunes of Islamic orthodoxy, Farrakhan's movement (which retained the name Nation of Islam) will scarcely be affected, because for the millions of Blacks whose lot has not been measurably improved by the cosmetics of racial change, the vision of Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam still represents a self-determined identity and a tangible effort at reversal. And it remains a visible expression of rage and hostility that still pervades significant segments of the black undercaste. To the Nation of Islam it is quite clear that the denied and the disinherited are still black; the deniers and the disinheritors all still white; and Armageddon remains an inevitable necessity if things are to change. (Race... 164)

The Armageddon might, perhaps, have lost its doctrinal significance and its time implications. However, Armageddon, in the sense of the struggle against racial oppression and social injustice only continues with ever-increasing relevance.

The well-known and widely discussed Attica Rebellion of early 1970s was, in fact, one such struggle inspired by the black Muslim teachings. Recalling this revolt of the prison inmates Richard X Clark, a black Muslim minister of leadership role in the incident, wrote later:

On Thursday, September 9, 1971, 1200 inmates at Attica State Prison in upstate New York revolted against the inhuman conditions of the prison. They seized thirty eight
prison officials as hostages and held D-yard of the prison for four days, setting up their own kind of self government within the prison walls.(v)

Richard X further reported that on Monday morning, September 13, 1971, an assault by State Troopers and Correction Officers of the prison on D-yard resulted in the deaths of forty three men — thirty two inmates and eleven of the hostages. Eighty other inmates were so severely injured in the assault that they required surgery.

The non-religious movement the Black Panther Party was another black organization on the struggle line. Many of the activists of this movement were attracted to the black Muslim ideology and found in it encouragement and inspiration for their struggles. If Huey Newton and Bobby Seale were two to represent the seventies, Mumia Abu Jamal, a noted journalist, serving time in prison since 1981 over an apparently false charge, is a representative of contemporary America. A Black Panther Party activist attracted to the doctrines of Islam, Jamal has long been waging a lone battle against racial oppression and discriminatory policies.

**Warith Deen Muhammad and the American Muslim Mission**

The changes that Warith Deen Muhammad brought over his father’s Nation of Islam were deliberate and well meant. Since his father on his deathbed called him in, rehabilitated and made him his successor, Imam Warith Deen worked systematically to transform the movement into a mainstream Muslim community, in the line of the Islamic society abroad. In 1976 he declared that his father was not a prophet or
messenger of Islam and consequently started to replace the theology of the Nation with that of traditional Islam. The black Muslims soon came to be called Bilalians after the African companion of Prophet Muhammad of Arabia. The community mouthpiece "Muhammad Speaks" was renamed "The Bilalian News." Temples became mosques, ministers became Imams, and the Islamic rituals began to be observed. In 1980 the name of the paper was changed to "The American Muslim Journal" and later to "The Muslim Journal."

The leadership ceased preaching racial hatred that identified the white man as the devil, relaxed the strict discipline of the NOI order, and disbanded the Fruit of Islam, the militia of the Nation. Despite the differences with Louis Farrakhan and the split that followed, Warith Deen continued to carry out his plans. In 1985 he decentralized the organization and minimized the authority of the National Council of Imams distancing himself from the daily affairs of the organization and delegating most of the central responsibilities to the local imams. He instructed his local mosques to integrate themselves into the larger Muslim community.

Commenting on the achievements of Warith Deen Muhammad, Gubbi Mahdi Ahmed, a one-time scholar of the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal, Canada, and the former president of the Islamic Society of the North America, states:

Imam Warith Deen Muhammad finally succeeded in transforming his father's organization into a mainstream Muslim group acceptable to the Muslim world. Thus he became an acknowledged leader among the Muslims of America and the international Islamic community, but not
without a high price. The Nation's economic empire crumbled following several economic crises and membership dropped sharply as many believers, including some dynamic leaders, left the organization. (20)

Today, however, the American Muslim Mission does not attract the media the way Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam does for the simple reason that it does not propound the separatist doctrines and that it is now at one with the mainstream Islamic society abroad and the immigrant Islamic organizations in the U.S on almost all significant issues. Not that it is not without dynamism and a considerable body of followers, rather it is very much active and in good terms with the immigrant Islamic organizations like Muslim Student Association (MSA), North American Islamic Trust (NAIT), Muslim Community Association (MCA), Muslim Youth of North America (MYNA), Muslim Arab Youth Association (MAYA), and Federation of Islamic Associations (FIA).

In short, in the words of Gutbi Mahdi Ahmed, "Despite the radical changes that have certainly affected its structure and popularity, the American Muslim Mission (AMM) remains the largest and by far the best organized indigenous Muslim community" (MA-18). Commenting on the significance of Warith Deen Muhammad's role, C. Eric Lincoln states:

If Wallace, fluent in Arabic and well-known and respected in the Muslim capitals of Asia and Africa, can bring the erstwhile Nation of Islam into fully recognized communion with international Islam, he will have accomplished a master objective for the rapid expansion of Islam on the North American continent. A prominently visible, orthodox
Muslim community in the United States would have political, social and economic implications which in time might well be expected to reverberate far beyond the ghetto which gave it birth, a possibility for which the traditional American religious community has done little, if anything, to prepare. (Race... 165)

The indigenous as well as the immigrant Islamic mobilization has been of a very important role in the transformation of the social structure of the American society for several decades now. Now its significance is increasing tremendously as the Muslim population has been increasing considerably and is assumed to bring about radical changes in the traditional attitude to the race problem. Analysing the phenomenal growth of the Muslim society in the United States and commenting on the possible role of Islam in future in the emancipation of the black masses, C. Eric Lincoln observed in the late 1980s:

Today, as a result of the modification of our immigration policies, our economic and military interests in the Middle East, the influx of Muslim students, and the continued growth of indigenous black Islam, it is reliably estimated that there are between two and three million Muslims in the United States. At the present rate of growth, the Muslims will soon be our third largest religious presence following the Protestants and Catholics. How this will affect a religious climate which has always considered Blacks a class apart awaits the determination of history, but there is a convention that every new religious option makes the neglected soul
more dear. In that case, Islam may well play a vital part, direct and indirect, in the reconstruction of our traditional attitude about race and religion. (Race... 168-169)

**Black Liberation, Socialist Revolution and the Malcolm Phenomenon**

The ideological disposition of Malcolm X towards the end of his life had been misconstrued by many of his followers. The reason was that he had not got sufficient time to make his stand clear for his followers and to channel them to his line of thought. His life-long battle against the discrimination, exploitation and oppression of his society and his struggle for self-determination came to be wrongly understood to culminate in a Marxian revolutionary outlook.

Amiri Baraka and George Breitman were two prominent figures who tried to view it in this light. Baraka, without ceasing to be a Muslim, becomes a Marxian sympathizer and involves in left wing socio-political activities and moulds his creative outlook accordingly. Many of his essays written in the late 1970s evince this tendency. "Marxism and the Black Community." "Black Liberation / Socialist Revolution," "Black Liberation Today," essays included in 1974-79 collection *Daggers and Javelins*, and "Malcolm as Ideology," an essay included in Malcolm X in Our Own Image, a collection of essays edited by Joe Wood, clearly show Baraka's attempts to describe the struggles and final disposition of Malcolm X in terms of Marxian doctrines and ideology.

George Breitman in his famous work *The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary* attempts to show that Malcolm X had, in his last year, shown symptoms of becoming a champion of Marxism
and viewing the socialist revolution as a means of black liberation. Breitman observes:

Malcolm was beginning to think about the need to replace capitalism with socialism if racism was to be eliminated. He was not sure if it could be done, and he was not sure how it could be done, but he was beginning to believe that that was the road to be traveled. (68)

Baraka goes even to the extent of criticizing Spike Lee for not highlighting this aspect of Malcolm X in his film on the dead hero. In his renowned essay "Malcolm as Ideology," Baraka remarks:

Recent and proposed attacks on Malcolm X by the bourgeoisie (including Spike's film) seem to indicate that they do not intend for Malcolm's image to survive either. No accurate historical portrait can be drawn of Malcolm without some ideological precision, rendering each of his changes, his stages, in exact dimension. But the bourgeoisie's intentions are not clarity of image, but the exact opposite. (32)

It is true that the trips undertaken to the African and Asian countries had brought him in touch with the developments in the world outside. The Cuban revolution and the developments in the third world countries also had attracted his attention. As a representative of a society that has been under prolonged oppression, it was only natural for him to view sympathetically the struggles of people elsewhere in similar predicaments. This does not follow that he was attracted to the Marxian ideology. He was rather more deeply influenced by the genuine doctrines
and practice of Islam, the religion he had not so far rightly understood. It was not in the third world countries where struggles in the Marxian line were progressing that he personally witnessed how an ideology could eradicate the evil of racism, but in Mecca and elsewhere in the Muslim world where he experienced, shockingly and embarrassingly, how perfect brotherhood prevailed in the human society where colour, race, or caste didn't effect any kind of discrimination. It was the revolution that Prophet Muhammad had achieved in the seventh century Arabian society that struck his attention. It was the image of Bilal, the African companion of the prophet that kindled the fire in him. He saw in it the truly effective revolution that changed the world thoroughly. The letters he wrote from Mecca and other Muslim capitals, and that part of his autobiography describing the last few months of his life reveal the fact that he had, by then, got the light that he had, so long, been searching for. It was the light of the genuine teachings of Islam which achieved the highest kind of revolution in the social, economic, political and the rest of the spheres of human life.

Back in America in early 1965, Malcolm had a clear sense of direction. His voice was a determined one. He had a vision of what was to be done. The two enterprises he started - the Muslim Mosque Inc. and the Organization of Afro-American Unity - clearly suggested that he had understood that a revolution in the worldly sense itself was quite badly needed for his society and that it alone could not liberate his people in the absence of a powerful ideology to support them in a positive survival. This he quite convincingly found in Islam, the ideology that liberated him. But for a thorough social change he needed a popular base; hence
the attempts to appeal to his people irrespective of creed.

That he tried to internationalize the race problem and tried to establish relationships with other struggling societies in the world is true. That he had genuine sympathy for the oppressed and the exploited communities in the world also is true. But there ends his Marxist affinity. Beyond that, especially in ideological matters, he didn't appear to have shared anything from it.

In fact, what people like Baraka would have sought and be happy with was what Malcolm X struggled to organize in the very last stage of his life _ revolutionary Islam _ the Islamic ideology which will emancipate their society from exploitation and effect a lasting brotherhood, an ideology that will teach the Blacks to accept the Whites as their brothers and the Whites to accept the Blacks as their brothers. Unfortunately, neither of the two black organizations the Nation of Islam led by Louis Farrakhan and the American Muslim Mission led by Warith Deen Muhammad succeeded in this respect. Farrakhan's movement still clings to the myth-oriented doctrines of Elijah Muhammad and champions the separatist outlook while Warith Deen Muhammad's organization, though it embraced the true ideology of Islam, failed to satisfy the black American's zeal for revolution. This appears to be the circumstance in which many former activists of the black Muslim society turned to Marxism for a solution.