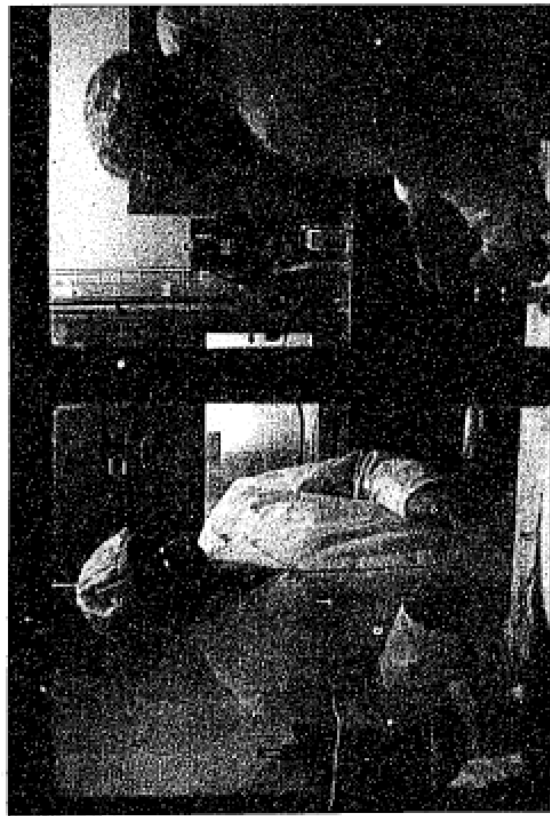


Muslim Scholars in Nigeria Rally Support for Afghanistan's Taliban



ANTHRAX IN KENYA?—Unidentified technicians at Kenya Medical Research Institute at Kenyatta National Hospital test samples of powder found in suspicious mail for the bacteria that causes anthrax last Thursday. Powder in a package sent from Atlanta, Ga., to Nairobi tested positive for the anthrax spores, and tests were being carried out on two other pieces of mail.—AP PHOTO BY KHALIL SENCER

GUSAU, Nigeria (AP)—Islamic scholars in Northern Nigeria publicly condemned U.S.-led airstrikes on Afghanistan, with some calling on Nigeria's Muslim community to assist Afghanistan's Taliban rulers with contributions of money and weapons.

A one-day meeting of about 40 Nigerian scholars, representing 24 Nigerian Muslim groups and including sheiks from a dozen northern states, was held Saturday in a hotel in the city of Gusau. Organizers entitled the gathering: "America's New War: Against Islam or Afghanistan?"

Sheikh Yakubu Musa, a well-known fundamentalist leader from the northern state of Katsina and

one of the most senior scholars at Saturday's meeting, urged Nigerian Muslims to "be prepared for a jihad." He also called on Nigerian Muslims to "help their fellow Muslims in Afghanistan."

"We shall help them financially and with munitions," he said without elaborating.

Nigeria's Muslim emirs, the country's most senior Islamic leaders have remained largely silent on the issue, and were not present at the meeting.

Nigeria, a West African country of 120 million people, is divided between the overwhelmingly Muslim north and the majority Christian south. Tensions between the two communities have repeatedly

exploded since the introduction of Islamic law, or Shariah, in several northern states. Thousands have died in the clashes.

"Every Muslim should see himself as Osama bin Laden," Musa said. "America thinks that if they kill Osama bin Laden, that is the end. But many Osama bin Ladens will surface in the world."

"We are aware of the plan of America after attacking Afghanistan. Their next move is to attack Iraq, after that will be Syria. Nigerian Muslims must therefore not go to sleep," Musa said.

President Olusegun Obasanjo has pledged the support of his West African nation to a "broad-based international coalition" against terrorism.

Mozambican Muslims Protest U.S.-Led Attacks

MAPUTO, Mozambique (AP)—About 2,000 protesters marched peacefully to the U.S. Embassy and the U.N. offices in the Mozambican capital Saturday, calling for an end to U.S.-led attacks on Afghanistan.

The marchers, who were watched over by a small contingent of riot police, carried posters reading: "Long live the Taliban," "Yes to peace, no to war," and "Islam is for peace."

The protesters also demanded that America provide evidence against Osama bin Laden, the prime suspect in last month's attacks on the U.S.

The march, staged by an associ-

tion of 13 Muslim organizations, brought traffic in Maputo to a standstill.

"We are marching in solidarity with the people of Afghanistan and to show that the Muslim world is against the attacks," said Amale Camal, one of the organizers.

Black Muslims Say They Feel More Discrimination, Even from Other Blacks

By TANIA FUENTEZ
Sentinel Wire Services

ATLANTA (AP)—Michelle Bryant always felt as comfortable spending Sunday mornings at Ebenezer Baptist Church with hundreds of Christians, including her husband, as she did at Friday prayer services with fellow Muslims.

Lately though, she's noticed the way some people—including other blacks—stare, question her about her religion or ask about the traditional hijab that covers her head.

"Since the attacks, there have been more questions about my faith more so for clarity, even from my husband," she said outside the Atlanta Masjid of Al-Islam.

"There's been such a bias against our faith. You don't hear about the good things going on," said Bryant, a 50-year-old IRS tax examiner from Atlanta. "We are here, we're not going anywhere and we're not terrorists."

According to widely varying estimates, there are 1 million to 3 million black Muslims living in the United States, many converting in the 1960s and 1970s. Unlike many immigrant Muslims, they don't have Middle Eastern features or accents. Still, black Muslims say they have been subjected to subtle and not-so-subtle religious discrimination in the past six weeks.

"We had incidents here," said Hassan Yamini, a 55-year-old truck

driver and an imam at the Abdullah Muslim Islamic Center in Syracuse, N.Y. "Some of the members have been harassed, people yelling at them. 'Pull that rag off of your head,' or 'Go back to your country.'"

Yamini was born in Mississippi. Ayisha Abdul-Salaam is a 22-year-old teacher at Pace Academy, a private school near Buckhead, in one of Atlanta's wealthiest neighborhoods. A second-generation Muslim, Abdul-Salaam says her loyalties have been questioned.

"At school, the environment has been supportive," she said. "But a lot of African American Christians are afraid of it (Islam) and they don't understand why an African

American would want to be Muslim."

Jimmy Jones, a professor of world religion and African studies at Manhattanville College in New York, ignores the occasional taunting or stares.

"I dress in a way that's apparent that I'm different," said Jones, who was raised Southern Baptist and has been Muslim since 1979. "I was in the store the other day and I saw a brother in his Army fatigues. I spoke but he didn't speak back — subtle things like that make you aware."

Imam Plenson El-Amin of the Atlanta Masjid says metro Atlanta has about 22 mosques with approximately 75,000 members—about 40 percent of them black.

Nearly 1,000 attend the Atlanta Masjid, said El-Amin, who converted 30 years ago. Hundreds gather there for Friday prayers each week.

Children from the nearby Mohammed Schools file in and remove their shoes like their adult

counterparts, face East and kneel. Side by side, men find a place in the front on the floor, women and children toward the rear. Attendance rises for celebrations after Ramadan—a month of fasting—and after hajj, Muslims' pilgrimage to Mecca, El-Amin said.

Days after the terrorist attacks, the mosque received crank calls. Instead of worrying about the de-tractors, El-Amin focuses on words of support from non-Muslims.

"Sometimes it's difficult," he said. "You have many Christians who feel like it (the attacks on Afghanistan) conflicts with their beliefs, too. It's not something that everybody's comfortable with."

"The same hurt we felt on Sept. 11, we have to feel when it happens anywhere."

Bryant says the United States has to respond to the Sept. 11 attacks, but she doesn't think bombing a poor country like Afghanistan is the answer.

"I didn't have an answer but I

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Making the Connection II

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