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SANSA ROEIR\GE anne

effect could be described as impact â\200\224 once heard,

Hadi.

ve Last Poets was formed around in the streets the people were angry because

1968, originating from a writer's they felt they had been lied to and

workshop in Harlem. They took ~Shori-changedâ\200\235. The Last Poets describe their name from a poem by the South their form of expression as spoagraphics, African poet Willy Okanside which stated that is, spoken pictures: of black self- that this age was the last time poets would delusion, the exploitation of the poor of a ll

offer dialogue before guns took over com- races, and state attempts, in both the East pletely. In the late 1960s and early 1970s and the West, to smother and repress voices the Poets gave their performances predomi- of opposition and liberation. nantly in the streets of New York, Their early performances drew the atten- attracting large crowds each time. They tion of the small, but quality, independent were of the streets, speaking on the streets, record label, Douglas. They began releas- the language of the streets, to street people. in l), producing six albums The messages of their poems were refle- by 1977. They were then unable to find a tions of the times; born out of Black recording commitment giving both creative Nationalism, the dreams and hopes of freedom and financial return. This situation revolution, and the Nation of Islam in the continued until 1984 when they began late 1960s. Later their conversion to Sunni working with Celluloid Records. This led Islam resulted in a more directly Islamic to a new album last year, â\200\230Oh My influence in their work and this is still Peopleâ\200\231, and a policy of re-releasing their bound up with the struggle of the people. Previous records already collectorsâ\200\231 items.

â\200\230The Last Poetsâ\200\231 from 1970, and â\200\230This Is

That the Black Latin peoples in Amer- _Madnessâ\200\231 from 1971 have both been ica were oppressed in an understatement re-issued and have proved to be as fresh which still applies today. As Jalal Nurid- and as relevant now as they originally

din. has said, in an interview with rles were. Their words leap out at you. It is

â\200\234de Ledesma in The Wire: â\200\234The American impossible to ignore such tracks as â\200\230Wake

dream said each individual Could make it, Up Niggersâ\200\231, â\200\230When the Revolu tion Coma

out this did not apply to Black people. @sâ\200\231, White Manâ\200\231s Got A God Comp lexâ\200\231,

Wed believed we could accomplish some- or â\200\230Time (is running out)â\200\231, â\200\230Mean

| thing by working through the system, but, Machineâ\200\231 in particular (which was a lso

p50â\200\235

â\200\230Blessed Are Those Who

The Last Poets are a group which has had minimal exposure and yet was always had maximum effect on its listeners Over a period of time. That

Strugeleâ\200\231

never forgotten. Jak

Kilby profiles them and interviews one of their members, Sulaiman El .

released as a single) aptly marries a description of life today, and technological madness, with the message concerning the end of time described in the Book of Revelations.

The Poets use a framework of lead voice with a rhythmic rap accompaniment, plus conga drums and lately bass guitar. They have recently had a selection of their work published (by the Pluto Press), Vibes From The Scribes, and have just visited Britain, giving performances in London and Liverpool. They also took the opportunity to work on a new album using the recording facilities of the excellent Brent Black Music Co-op in West London. This work includes a truly epic poem on the history of Africe., charting the European colonial conquest; how the European nations agreed to carve up the African continent, and the resulting opposition of the people of Africa against this â\200\224 including Shaka Zulu and Muhammed Ahmed Al Mahdi. This continues right through the struggle for freedom and independence up to the present day, all contained in one poem! It is set to a laid-back Afro-Caribbean beat and rhythmic chant of â\200\230Black, back, back, back to Africaâ\200\231... yet another strong and essential work to be anticipated.

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pod ook

Blessed are those who struggle
Oppression is worse than the grave
Better to die for a noble cause
than to live and die a slave

Blessed are those who courted death
Who offered their lives to give

Who dared to rebel, rather than serve
to die so that we might live

Could you give us some background as to
what has been happening with the Muslims
in the US?

The Islamic movement is growing.
The so-called Black Muslim Movement, after the death of Elijah Mohammed, went through a dramatic change and many members converted to Sunni Islam. I say so-called Black Muslim Movement because they were black and they were telling people that Islam was the religion of the black man, and that the majority of the people of Africa were Muslims. Yet their doctrine was a far cry from Islam. They were mistakenly called Black Muslims by the media. In fact, they were Black Nationalists.

Is Islam mainly spreading amongst the
Black population in the US?

Oh definitely Blacks, but Puerto Ricans and other poor oppressed people in America are also accepting Islam.

Do you feel that it gives you dignity?
â\200\230Definitely, because it gives you direction. You see in America people are bom into a society that is moving so. fast that it leaves you without spiritual direction. It is such a highly sophisticated, materialistic society in which. the whole concept of religion is sÃ©cond place. Because of the separation of Church and the state, religion has been more or less a taboo subject to talk about..in schools and places like that. Take for example, the signs they have in barber shops: â\200\230No religious or

political . discussions in hereâ\200\231. The emphasis is on money, money, money; SO consequently people are less interested in the spiritual world â\200\224 except in the poor communities where they

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do not have anything. In their despair these people turn to Islam. You know Islam does help to give dignity because it takes the dope fiends and turns them into Muslims. It takes the alcoholics and turns them into Muslims. It takes the thugs and turns them into Muslims. And once these people are associated with Islam they tum right around.

How do Mosques operate in the US?

In most of the large cities the Mosques stay open 24 hours a day. Brothers do what they call desk duty, making sure the Mosque is open for prayers, answering the phone, taking down messages, and logging all the phone calls that come in. There is also an active daâ\200\231wa programme in most of the Mosques where people go out to give daâ\200\231wa to non-Muslims because the job of spreading Islam requires that you go out to people who are not Muslims and tellâ\200\231 them about Islam rather than to people who are Muslims.

Do all the Muslims come in large numbers to the Mosques?
There are some Muslims who feel

. that they donâ\200\231t have to do what Allah

has commanded since they live in Western societies. They say â\200\234Oh these

are modern times and prayers are

things of the pastâ\200\235 and that kind of stuff, but the fact of the matter is that Allah has commanded us to pray in the past, in the present, and in the future. In America, Muslims take things very literally and it has been said that weâ\200\231re fanatics in our belief in Islam. People who come from other places shed their cultures to embrace American technological â\200\230wondersâ\200\231.. We in tum: are putting on Islamic clothes and garbs

because we want to identify ourselves

as Muslims.

What sort of problems have American Muslims encountered?

In the past many of our problems

had come from our Muslim brothers
from Muslim countries. They came
and brought racism with them â\200\224
Islamic racism â\200\224 where they have
actually referred to us as â\200\230you peopleâ\200\231
and made racist slurs at us. No
everybody, just some of them. They
told us: â\200\234You people are not real
Muslimsâ\200\235 even though we pray five
times a day. And we go to the
Mosques at fajr time, at dawn. But
when we go to say our dawn prayers
we very seldom see many of them
come: We see them at Friday prayers
but we donâ\200\231t see them in the Mosque
during the week except the very, very
few who come to fajr and isha (night)
prayers. But Allahâ\200\231s messenger, the
Prophet Muhammad (Peace and the
Blessings of Allah be upon him), has
said that prayers distinguish believers
from non-believers. â\200\234But for your
prayers Allah would not care for youâ\200\235:
He also said that the best prayers if the
fajr prayer. The Prophet further said
that you can tell hypocrites by the
prayers because surely fajr and isha
prayers (the dawn and night prayers)
are the two hardest prayers on the
hypocrites. Allah has commanded man
when to pray. He did not say, â\200\234If you
happen to go to a place where there
are not that many Muslims donâ\200\231t
prayâ\200\235. He didnâ\200\231t say nothing like that.
He said just the opposite.

I have met some Muslims who have said
itâ\200\231s OK to drink some wine or beer and

that oe Qurâ\200\231an only forbids Sas ce
hol..
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That is just an excuse for them to indulge in what they want to do. The Qurân says: "Be not pliant for surely they wish you to be pliant so they can be pliant". It tells you that you are not supposed to be half-stepping, you're supposed to be whole stepping. The problem with Muslims is that they have been half-stepping for Allah, but they've been whole-stepping for Satan, because Allah in the Qurân specifically forbids the drinking of alcohol. This is haram. It's not even what is called a makruh, an undesirable: No, this is haram, forbidden. Just like fornication is forbidden.

And those who commit those types of sins would be punished in Muslim states? Definitely, these things are specifically forbidden by the Creator. In America we do not have an Islamic state, as of yet. The only Islamic state that I know of is Iran. There are others who claim to be Muslim countries but not Muslim states. There is a difference between the two-. A Muslim country is a country with a majority who are Muslims; a Muslim State is a Muslim country that is governed according to the precepts of the Islamic law, the Sharia, based on the Qurân,

of the Prophet (Peace and the Blessings of Allah be upon him). The traditions are what the Prophet said and did himself as an example for us.

How do you go about with your da'wa work?

The instructions of the Prophet when he sent his early companions (may Allah be satisfied with them), to give da'wa to people, to call them to Islam, were these: "First tell the people that there is no God but Allah, teach them that. After they have accepted that, teach them that Muhammad is

his messenger. After they have accepted that, teach them to pray. After they have begun to do that, then

teach them about zakat (alms). After you have established that, tell them that fasting during the month of Ramadhan is enjoined on them. After they have established that then tell them that

Allah requires them to make the

prerimage to his house, the Kaaba, in
a Â» MU they are able to. do soâ\200\235.

women, an inns, male and

female too. And He has said specifical-
th

ly: â\200\234I have not Created the men and the
djinns except that they should worship

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what Allah has said, and the traditions

meâ\200\235. That is the purpose of all of u
â\200\234Qn this planet. So Allah has given us a
way to follow. Muslims come to the
West, do all sorts of things and try and
Justify that. But they must remember
what Allah, Subhana Wa Taâ\200\231ala said:
â\200\234Surely, anyone who imitates a people
is one of cae Take the Jews and
Christians as your friends, they are
friends to one another and anyone
who does that is one of. themâ\200\235. So
when: people try to justify what they
do and water down Islam, they really
are just putting a nail on their own
coffin.

The Creator is the ultimate cause of
all things. For Allah Subhana Wa Taâ\200\231ala
has created everything. He is the
Creator; He is the ultimate cause of all

this effect that we â\200\230come into contact
with. It is a matter of Muslims being
sincere. Itâ\200\231s like a man came to me and
found out that I was a Haji. He said,
â\200\234Oh, you went on hajj!â\200\235 I said, â\200\234Yes, I
went on the hajj, alhamdulillah!â\200\235 He
said, â\200\234Oh yes, my father went to the
hajj three timesâ\200\235, | replied, â\200\234Oh Allahu
Akbar! Good for him, but have you
been to hajj, brother?â\200\235 He said, â\200\234No,
brother, I have not made hajj but my
father hasâ\200\235. So I said, â\200\234Well, answer
me this question. When your father
eats, does it make you go to the
bathroom brother?â\200\235 â\200\234No, of course
not!â\200\235, he said. What I was basically

- trying to say to him was that each

individual Muslim has an obligation to go to Makkah on the hajj. Your fatherâ\200\231s hajj ainâ\200\231t nothing to you, Allah is going to judge him on his hajj, itâ\200\231s just like the case of Noah and his son.

Is there much real opposition to Islam in America? â\200\230

Rap Brown and they made a big thing out of him saying â\200\234Burn, baby, bumâ\200\235

Jewish newspaperman for so long, and is gullible enough

Sure, colossal. But the Opposition; you understand, only makes it more interesting. At first they tried all kinds of things to stop Islam but now they have begun to develop a respect for the Muslims. Anywhere you could go in America you might see Muslims. Even in the southern states you see Muslims walking around with turbans on. These are black Americans who have accepted Islam, they were born black but they are Muslims first. Take Iman Al Amin. In the past, he was known to_the world as a black American.

revolutionary. His name then was H

during the 1960s but he converted to Islam a few years back. They still have him come into colleges to speak to black audiences and of course he has to give them an Islamic point of view now because he sees things in another way..

I was in the US five years ago at the time of the Iranian hostage crisis. I could not believe the kind of things going on, like bumper stickers on cars with slogans like â\200\230Nuke Iranâ\200\231, without any consideration of anything else that was happening in that Situation...

Much of that type of thing was being orchestrated by- the Zionists. First of all they started saying the Iranians were killing Jews, that the Iranian Revolution was being unfair, expelling Jews, killing Jews, holding a

that kind of stuff.
The Jews are in a very strong Position politically in the US. They

control the press, they put a lot of finance into campaigns of politicians,

and they effectively control New York City. The Mayor there is Jewish; the City Controller, who controls all the money, is Jewish; two or three of the District Attorneys are Jewish; the Medical Examiner is Jewish; two of the Borough Presidents are Jewish and they control the political scene in New York. In fact, I just read in today's Herald Tribune that Arab-Americans are in danger from extremist Jewish Organisations that have been suspected of assassinating Arabs in New York, and in other parts of the US, as well as anybody else who takes an anti-Zionist stand.

When the Iranian Revolution came about, the Jews undertook a campaign to villify Imam Khomeini in cartoons; they even made Halloween masks of the Imam's face to play games on Halloween, to make him look like a monster. The American reading public

though, to the

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grass-roots Christians. The born-again,

the newspapers say
cagan is a Kingâ\200\235, at first
etd laugh at it, but the next
know they will all be
ah, King Reaganâ\200\235. They
p to believe whatever the
E say, whatever the televi-
â\200\230as the truth; and they donâ\200\231t
jt, they just blindly follow. A
â\200\230people in the US had other.
which never got aired.

imperialism, sometimes Christ-
sometimes itâ\200\231s all three mixed

In the US they try to blow away the
Christian thing. Thatâ\200\231s why you had
is hard Black backlash from the

than paid, so they look at the whole
work ethic as a punishment. On the
other hand, the white population bene-
fited from the misery of the Blacks and
consequentlyâ\200\231 after the abolitionâ\200\231 of
slavery they took the same attitudes
that they had. The same attitude of
superiority still exists especially among
the poor and middle-class Whites more
than among the rich Whites. This is so
because the former view the Black
people as being in competition for
their jobs. Consequently we had some
major riots in the US over the years.
Black people were attacked in the
streets, like in the great riots in St
Louis and in Chicago. The riots took
on violent forms. They burnt a Black
orphanage in Cooper Square in New
York. The little girls who ran out of

they're like grass-root people, even though there is a high degree of conservatism among them because of

the regions they come from, primarily

from the southern and the western regions where the mentality of the people has always been prejudiced and biased as a result of their legacy of slavery. Let's take the attitude towards work among the Black people. Their attitude towards work has not been the same as that of the white people. Although the black people can and do work hard, but when they do have jobs, their expectation from their jobs is not the same because their work ethic is not the same.

From the African perspective, work was associated with pain. In other words, when Blacks went out to the fields in the morning, they had to go and there was no reward for them

because at the end of the day they

didn't get paid for their labour. As a matter of fact, they were cursed rather

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like seventeen-seventy-six

when the thirteen devils gathered

to unleash their bag of tricks

Then sige! means the images

they've created to fool the world

like the colours on Old Glory

the flag that they unfurled

Now red was the colour of the Indian man
White was the Jinns who stole the land
Blue was the eyes that hypnotised

the building were stoned to death.
Whites did that. Those girls they didn't burn to death, they beat to death. All this was an expression of their anger because they thought they were going to lose jobs as a result of the migration of Black people from the

south to the north-east. These attitudes still exist today. As a matter of fact, there is an organisation called SPONG (Society for the Prevention of Niggers Getting anything) which was formed by Whites, especially from the Italian community after the civil rights movement started going in the 1960s. This organisation is still functioning with a dues paying membership! Along with the Klu Klux Klan and the White Citizens Council and the Nazi Party of America, and all of the many many other societies to oppress the Africans in the US. And Islam is viewed as a threat because it has been attracting large numbers of Black people and other oppressed minorities. Islam has the mechanism for organisation, for political action. It has its own political system. _

People who are not Muslims in Africa, I think, have some understanding of Islam but when it comes to Europeans it is as if youâ\200\231re waving a red flag. This is my experience; the closer I get towards Islam, people try to do all kinds of things to take me away from it, to confuse me. Iâ\200\231ve realised that theyâ\200\231re really afraid of Islam...

Not only that but Satan is also inspiring them, because Allah says in the Qurâ\200\231an: â\200\234All ye who believe take not Satan as a friend for surely Satan is an avowed enemy to you...â\200\235 He also says: â\200\234Oh children of Adam, did I not command you not to take Satan as a friend, for surely Satan is an open enemy to you, an avowed enemyâ\200\235. So Satan, the forces of evil are always there fighting the forces of good. That is why Muslims like to quote the Prophet Muhammad (may the Peace of Allah _be upon him) who said: â\200\234The

reatest_fight 3 jihad
(self) for surely it is the jihad al akbarâ\200\235.
The great hght is the fight of the self,
to fight with yourself. And that is true
â\200\224 the greatest fight you'll ever have
will be the fight with yourself â\200\224
keeping yourself in _check. However,

jat does not exclude you, in the path of Allah, defending Islam against physical attacks from outside forces. That which you believe in, you are supposed to defend. You have to. Put it like this: blessed_are those who.

struggle, oppression is worse than the
grave; better to die for a noble cause

than to live and die a slave $\hat{A} @ @ \hat{A}^\circ \hat{A} \gg \hat{A} \odot$

Those girls they
ey beat to
an expression of

â\200\230they would laugh at it, but the next

Ng you know they will ail be
saying, â\200\234Yeah, King Reaganâ\200\235, They
are souped up to believe whatever the Slavery they took the sa
newspapers Say, whatever the teleyi_ that they had.

Sometimes imperialism, Sometimes Christ. Major riots in the
lanity, BCC ICOMECr Sma) three mixed Blac
together, ..

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