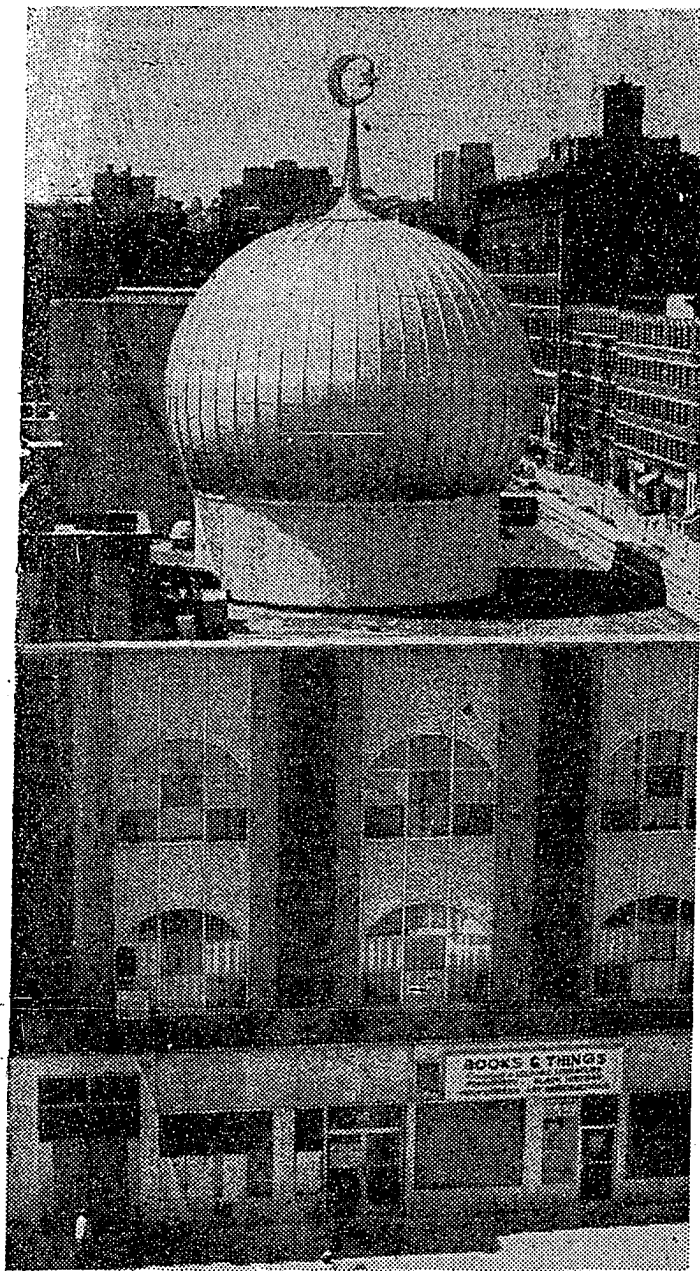


Muslim Center Blends Business, School and Mosque

By CHARLAYNE HUNTER

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Muslim Mosque 7 at Lenox Avenue and 116th Street, right, in Harlem. Revolving star and crescent are at dome's top. The new building replaced one destroyed in an explosion.

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Five years after a dynamite blast destroyed Muslim Mosque 7 in Harlem following the assassination of Malcolm X, a new building, topped with a dome and a revolving star and crescent, stands on the site. Beneath these symbols of the universal flag of Islam, Muslim ministers, educators and merchants are quietly working toward developing everything they say "a nation needs to be successful."

"We've got business on the bottom, education on the second floor and religion on the top — the way it ought to be," said Yusuf Shah, the amiable, heavy-set captain of the mosque as he led a small group of reporters through the three-story building at 116th Street and Lenox Avenue the other day.

The head of the mosque, Minister Louis Farrakhan, who is also national spokesman for the Chicago-based leader of the Muslims, Elijah Muhammad, as well as his East Coast representative, welcomed the visitors — the first to tour the building — and told them that they had been invited "to see what Mr. Muhammad is doing in the field of education here."

From Rental to Purchase

Before the blast, believed to be in retaliation for the murder of Malcolm X, who had broken with Elijah Muhammad, the Muslims only rented the top floor of the old building. During the refurbishing they secured a \$400,000 loan from a Harlem bank to buy the new air-conditioned building.

Now, stores owned and operated by the Muslims are open on the street and a school — The University of Islam in Harlem — is operat-

ing with 650 pupils ranging in age from 3 to 18. A second school is scheduled to open in New York "sometime in the very near future" to become part of the Muslim educational complex already operating in Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Washington and Atlanta.

The brightly painted corridors in the school here are lined with bulletin boards containing such messages as "Up you mighty nation, build," and "Fashion, black man. Produce. Create. Earth first. More jobs for self."

A Military Touch

In classrooms, young Muslim women, clothed in floor-length white robes and long headpieces of the same material, spoke to the pupils in almost hushed, but firm, voices.

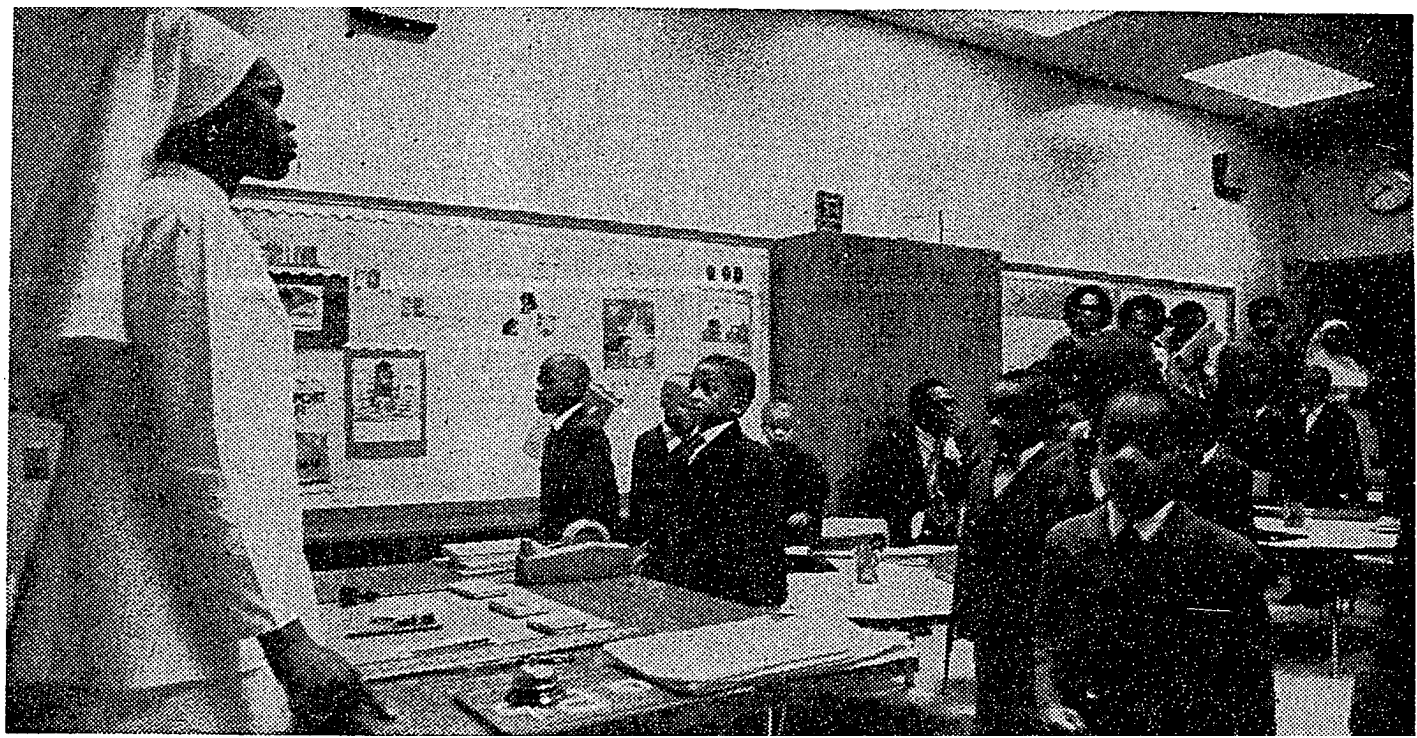
"Intibah, hah!" a young woman called to a class of first-level boys, most of whom, until that moment, were sitting quietly in their seats, wearing suits, white shirts and either bow or string ties.

At the sound of the Arabic command, the students rose swiftly to attention.

A second command in Arabic, and the boys, aged 4 to 6, turned left face, then right face, all the while chanting multiplication tables.

At the end of the exercise, the teacher gave the command to sit, and jubilantly concluded the exercise with the words: "Give praise to Muhammad!"

Later, outside the classroom, in front of a sign that said "The black man created the universe — Science begins



Tyrone Dukas

Visitors at right observing a teaching sister instruct a boys' first-level class in mathematics. Children came to attention and turned left and right face in response to Arabic commands as they chanted multiplication tables.

with Allah (One)," one of the visitors asked about the "emphasis on militarism."

Captain Shah smiled indulgently and deferred to the director of the university, Brother Clark X.

He explained that while some might look upon the exercise as "militaristic," the Muslims did not. "We believe in recreation along with coordination of mind and body," he said.

He also explained that Muslim children attended the school 50 of 52 weeks of the year, the boys in the morning and the girls in the afternoon,

with Tuesdays off for recreation. Otherwise there are no extracurricular activities, no rest periods and no lunch hour.

A small percentage of the pupils are not Muslims. And, according to Brother Clark, there is a waiting list of at least 150, mostly from non-Muslim families, for the fall, when, after a two-week recess, classes resume.

The curriculum consists of mathematics, science, history, language, arts and reading. In each class subjects are taught alternately in English and Arabic by a faculty of five men, 10

women and two student teachers.

Dr. Seymour Gang, superintendent of Public School District 5, visited the school in May and praised the "most up-to-date modern school establishment, with such modern features as closed-circuit TV and teachers who had B.A. or master's degrees in the areas in which they were teaching."

Officials of the school said that they expected to receive accreditation from the state as a result of Dr. Gang's report to Albany.

A visitor inquired about the kind of textbooks used. "The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches that we don't want to get so angry as to abdicate truth," said Brother Clark X. "Their textbooks [those used in public schools] do not completely satisfy our needs, but we take the good and separate it out from the lies."

He said the Muslims hoped eventually to produce their own textbooks.

Captain Yusuf also pointed proudly to a telescope — "so they can check out the stars and other planets" — and boasted that the students themselves had put together the closed-circuit television system "and can take it apart again."

On the ground level, an \$80,000 restaurant, to be called Salaam East, is under construction alongside an already completed book store and a men's clothing store that features some of the latest body shirts and wide ties in bold print and dramatic colors. A women's clothing store is scheduled to open, along with the restaurant, in the next two months.

"You can't be too stiff," said Captain Yusuf. "I got a lot of ties like this." He pointed to his own multi-colored pastel tie.

There is also a health-food



Minister Louis Farrakhan, the head of Harlem Mosque.

store and a bakery featuring such items as Shabazz bean pie and Shabazz all-beef sausage — products that are now being distributed to and sold in supermarkets throughout the city.

Copies of Muhammad Speaks, whose circulation of 600,000 a week makes it the largest black weekly in the country, were given to each visitor.

The tour was concluded on the top floor in the mosque — a bare room with plush, thick cranberry-colored carpeting, where Minister Farrakhan answered questions.

Concentration on Unity

Asked how the Muslims felt about Malcolm X now, he said they felt today just as they did "when he defected from us in 1964." He added, however: "The Messenger [Elijah Muhammad] has said that today black people should not concentrate on the things that create division among us, but should concentrate on those things that we have in common, so that we go to build something of value to our people."

A tall, slim, handsome man with a slow, quiet and deliberate manner, Minister Farrakhan, 37, talked briefly about "prosperous" Muslim farms in Georgia, Mississippi and Alabama with thousands of acres of land. He mentioned, too, that the Muslims are sponsoring a rally next Saturday against narcotics at 115th Street and Lenox Avenue — "the dope capital of the world," he said.

He then touched on the following points in response to questions:

¶The separation of boys and girls in school: "There is a natural attraction between male and female. And when [they] are close together, we have found that the natural attraction begins to work. And they're not so attracted to the wisdom that they are here to learn . . . so that we won't have sweethearting going on while education is supposed to be going on."

¶A 50-week school year: "We are 400 years behind, 100 years up from slavery. We have a lot of catching up to do. And though we are to enjoy life, we have no time for a lot of play and a lot of sport."

¶On the relationship of the "Nation of Islam" to the United States: "It is like a child growing within the womb of its mother. It's drawing from its mother to develop something independent. As it grows and develops, it is only a matter of time before it must come forth out of that dark place into the light . . . for when the umbilical cord is cut, the baby breathes with its lungs instead of its mother's; its heartbeat gets stronger as it grows and develops. We are striving for total independence from white America. That is our ultimate goal — freedom, justice and equality in our own sphere, because we believe that we can never get 100 per cent freedom, justice and equality in the house of our enemies. We must build that kind of house for ourselves."