

## Springtime in Islamberg

# Radical Muslim paramilitary compound flourishes in upper New York state

By Paul L. Williams Ph.D., (author of *THE DAY OF ISLAM*)

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Dr. Paul Williams at the entrance of Islamberg

Situated within a dense forest at the foothills of the Catskill Mountains on the outskirts of Hancock, New York, Islamberg is not an ideal place for a summer vacation unless, of course, you are an exponent of the Jihad or a fan of Osama bin Laden.

The 70 acre complex is surrounded with "No trespassing" signs; the rocky terrain is infested with rattlesnakes; and the woods are home to black bears, coyotes, wolves, and a few bobcats.

The entrance to the community is at the bottom of a very steep hill that is difficult to navigate even on a bright sunny day in May. The road, dubbed Muslim Lane, is unpaved and marred by deep crevices that have been created by torrential downpours. On a wintry day, few, save those with all terrain vehicles, could venture forth from the remote encampment.



Muslim Lane

A sentry post has been established at the base of the hill.

The sentry, at the time of this visit, is an African American dressed in Islamic garb - a skull cap, a prayer shawl, and a loose fitting *shalwat kameez*. He instructs us to turn around and leave. "Our community is not open to visitors," he says.

Behind the sentry and across a small stream stand dozens of inhabitants of the compound - the men wearing skull caps and loose fitting tunics, the women in full burqa. They appear ready to deal with any unauthorized intruders.

The hillside is blighted by rusty trailers that appear to be without power or running water and a number of outhouses. The scent of raw sewage is in the air.

The place is even off limits to the local undertaker who says that he has delivered bodies to the complex but has never been granted entrance. "They come and take the bodies from my hearse. They won't allow me to get past the sentry post. They say that they want to prepare the bodies for burial. But I never get the bodies back. I don't know what's going on there but I don't think it's legal."

On the other side of the hill where few dare to go is a tiny village replete with a make-shift learning center (dubbed the "International Quranic Open University"); a trailer converted into a Laundromat; a small, green community center; a small and rather squalid grocery store; a newly constructed *majid*; over forty clapboard homes; and scores of additional trailers.



It is home to hundreds - - all in Islamic attire, and all African-Americans. Most drive late model SUVs with license plates from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, South Carolina, and Tennessee. The locals say that some work as tollbooth operators for the New York State Thruway, while others are employed at a [credit](#) card processing center that maintains confidential financial records.

While buzzing with activity during the week, the place becomes a virtual hive on weekends. The guest includes arrivals from the inner cities of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania and, occasionally, white-robed dignitaries in Ray-Bans from the Middle East.

Venturing into the complex last summer, Douglas Haggmann, an intrepid investigator and director of the Northeast Intelligence Service, came upon a military training area at the eastern perimeter of the property. The area was equipped with ropes hanging from tall trees, wooden fences for scaling, a make-shift obstacle course, and a firing range. Haggmann said that the range appeared to have been in regular use.

Islamberg is not as benign as a Buddhist monastery or a Carmelite convent. Nearly every weekend, neighbors hear sounds of gunfire. Some, including a combat veteran of the Vietnam War, have heard the bang of small explosives. None of the neighbors wished to be identified for fear of "retaliation." "We don't even dare to slow down when we drive by," one resident said. "They own the mountain and they know it and there is nothing we can do about it but move, and we can't even do that. Who wants to buy a property near that?"

## Islamberg's Grocery Store



Islamberg's Grocery Store

The complex serves to scare the bejeesus out of the local residents. "If you go there, you better wear body armor," a customer at the Circle E Diner in Hancock said. "They have armed guards and if they shoot you, nobody will find your body."

At Cousins, a watering hole in nearby Deposit, a barfly, who didn't wish to be identified, said: "The place is dangerous. You can hear gunfire up there. I can't understand why the FBI won't shut it down."

Islamberg is a branch of Muslims of the Americas Inc., a tax-exempt organization formed in 1980 by Pakistani cleric Sheikh Mubarak Ali Gilani, who refers to himself as "the sixth Sultan Ul Faqr," Gilani, has been directly linked by court documents to Jamaat ul-Fuqra or "community of the impoverished," an organization that seeks to "purify" Islam through violence.Ÿ

Though primarily based in Lahore, Pakistan, Jamaat ul-Fuqra has operational headquarters in New York and openly recruits through various social service organizations in the U.S., including the prison system. Members live in *hamaats* or compounds, such as Islamberg, where they agree to abide by the laws of Jamaat ul-Fuqra, which are considered to be above local, state and federal authority. Additional *hamaats* have been established in Hyattsville, Maryland; Red House, Virginia; Falls Church, Virginia; Macon, Georgia; York, South Carolina; Dover, Tennessee; Buena Vista, Colorado; Talihina, Oklahoma; Tulare Country, California; Commerce, California; and Onalaska, Washington. Others are being built, including an expansive facility in Sherman, Pennsylvania.



Before becoming a citizen of Islamberg or any of the other Fuqra compounds, the recruits - - primarily inner city black men who became converts in prison - - are compelled to sign an oath that reads: "I shall always hear and obey, and whenever given the command, I shall readily fight for Allah's sake."

In the past, thousands of members of the U.S. branches of Jamaat ul-Fuqra traveled to Pakistan for paramilitary training, but encampments, such as Islamberg, are now capable of providing boot-camp training so raw recruits are no longer required to travel abroad amidst the increased scrutiny of post 9/11.

Over the years, numerous members of Jamaat ul-Fuqra have been convicted in US courts of such crimes as conspiracy to commit murder, firebombing, gun smuggling, and workers' compensation fraud. Others remain leading suspects in criminal cases throughout the country, including ten unsolved assassinations and seventeen fire-bombings between 1979 and 1990.

The criminal charges against the group and the criminal convictions are not things of the past. In 2001, a resident of a California compound was charged with first-degree murder in the shooting of a sheriff's deputy; another was charged with gun-smuggling' and twenty-four members of the Red House community were convicted of firearms violations.

By 2004 federal investigators uncovered evidence that linked both the DC "sniper killer" John Allen Muhammed and "Shoe Bomber" Richard Reid to the group and reports surfaced that *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl was captured and beheaded in the process of attempting to obtain an interview with Sheikh Gilani in Pakistan.

Even though Jamaat ul-Fuqra has been involved in terror attacks and sundry criminal activities, recruited thousands of members from federal and state penal systems, and appears to be operating paramilitary facilities for militant Muslims, it remains to be placed on the official US Terror Watch List. On the contrary, it continues to operate, flourish, and expand as a legitimate nonprofit, tax-deductible charity.

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<http://www.canadafreepress.com/2007/cover052107.htm>

## **Radical Muslim paramilitary compounds flourishing across the United States**

### **Islamberg not the only radical Muslim compound flourishing in North America**

By Judi McLeod Monday, **May 21, 2007**



The two FBI types breaking bread with the enemy in the photo above at "Islamberg" look right at home to Canada Free Press (CFP). Notice the weapons these dudes are wearing at the dinner table?

Islamberg is just one of what is thought to be a half dozen radical Muslim paramilitary compounds flourishing across the United States, this one nestled in dense forest at the foothills of the Catskill Mountains on the outskirts of Hancock, New York.

Canada, home to at least one such compound, is no safe ground.

Now that the photos of the two unidentified FBI types have been published, we will undoubtedly hear that they were merely working undercover. But some sticklers would consider saying cheese from the dinner table of the enemy is over the top.

Hundreds of letters have deluged (CFP) since it published a story with pictures of [Springtime in Islamberg](#), written by *The Day of Islam* author Dr. Paul



Williams with the able assistance of Doug Hagmann, Bill Krayner and Michael Travis.

Many letter writers complain that local authorities are telling them they have never heard of the compound.

Islamberg is an al Fuqra house. "Fuqra has had a disturbing U.S. presence for more than 20 years." (The weekly Standard, March 18, 2002). "Today, half a dozen Fuqra residential compounds in rural hamlets across the country shelter hundreds of members, some of whom, according to intelligence sources, have been trained in the use of weapons and explosives in Pakistan."

In a world where authorities make like terrorism doesn't exist, Fuqra's founder and bossman, Sheikh Mubarak Ali Hasmi Shah Gilani, is not only alive and well--he has a road "Sheikh Gilani Lane" named after him. This road is not in faraway Pakistan, but right in Charlotte County, Virginia.

Charlotte County is a rural farming community in Central Virginia near the North Carolina border.

Like its counterpart in Hancock, New York, it is inhabited by proud Americans many whose sons and daughters are fighting for our freedom in Iraq.

"This is not only an embarrassment to the citizens of Charlotte County it is a disgrace to the entire country and an insult to the victims of 9/11 and those fighting overseas in the war against terrorism," wrote Martin Mawyer, president of the Christian Action Network.



"Sheikh Gilani has rubbed shoulders at international terrorist confabs with gunslingers from Hamas and Hezbollah, their mullah backers, and Osama bin Laden. And he has trained fighters for the battlefields of Kashmir, Chechnya and Bosnia." (the weekly Standard).

Dropping in on radical Muslim paramilitary compounds isn't good for your health. Two bloggers who posted the plucky Williams' Islamberg story had their lives threatened.

Most infidels, including even the local undertaker, are denied access to compounds such as Islamberg.

Indeed, the very undertaker denied access wrote a letter telling the author/journalist he was surprised he made it off the compound with his life intact.

The undertaker says he has delivered bodies to the complex but has yet to be granted entrance. "They come and take the bodies from my hearse," he told Williams. "They won't allow me to get past the sentry post. They say that they want to prepare the bodies for burial. But I never get the bodies back. I don't know what's going on there but I don't think it's legal."

As far as is known, Gilani launched his first U.S. operation without interference from any authority back in 1980.

By the 1990s, Fuqra's communes were being touted as havens where Muslim converts--many of them inner-city blacks, sometimes recruited in prison--could find new direction for their lives.

Why aren't people reading about these flourishing compounds in their hometown newspapers?

Does it require too much work for the mainstream media, or do politically correct times keep the topic taboo?

You'd think that these compounds would be a priority for Homeland Security, but they aren't.

One of the letters to Williams via CFP was from a member of Homeland Security asking for more information!

It seems to be politically incorrect to write about radical Muslim paramilitary compounds flourishing on American soil and politically incorrect to talk about terrorism.

For some American and Canadian citizens, it's welcome to life with a deadly enemy living right next door.