

GROUP 3 Black Muslim Initiatives

Document K Katrina Haslip [photo]



In the above photo, Katrina Haslip, a devout Muslim and a formerly incarcerated person at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, demonstrated with AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) outside the Health and Human Services building to protest the federal government's omission of women from clinical trials.

Citation: Katrina Haslip [photo], Susan M. Chambré Research Files on Volunteer AIDS Organizations, Yale University Manuscripts and Archives. MS 2054 Box 9 Folder 4.

Document J Rashida Abdul-Khabeer (formerly Hassan)

Oral History Transcript [selected clip]

Abdul-Khabeer's Black Muslim faith encouraged her to believe that each person has a mission in life, a path he or she must follow with devotion. Hers, she decided, was to defeat the grim statistics of Blacks dying from AIDS. In 1985, she co-founded and led BIBASHI <https://www.bebashi.org/>, the first African-American organization in the United States to address the AIDS crisis.

Citation: "Malcolm X Speech," Philadelphia, September 25, 1986. (original VHS)

<http://afamaidshist.org/files/original/a41f90012343f921be8de72d57d926dd.mp4> Found in her personal collection of historical papers about AIDS online at the African American AIDS History Project.

<http://afamaidshist.fiu.edu/omeka-s/s/african-american-aids-history-project/item-set/723>

Rashida Abdul-Khabeer ["Malcolm X Speech," September 25, 1986]

(Audio recording time stamp: 0.33-5:00) “. . . what has happened to black people all of my life and probably from the beginning when they landed here on this continent, was to suffer *prayerfully*, but to suffer nonetheless.

One of the reasons that Bibashi had to come into being was because those organizations that existed to provide public health education for minority people didn't, couldn't, haven't, won't provide education for the minority community.

[applause] Today I had to really study hard as to what I was going to say and one of the things I thought I had better define was minority. The Webster dictionary says a minority is the smaller, inferior part compared to [unclear]; to be unimportant in size or degree. . . . We are a part of a population, different from others in some characteristics and are often subject to differential treatment.

As in other health issues, Black people are also being discriminated against even within the gay community when it comes to being educated about AIDS. We have worked very diligently in Bibashi with the Philadelphia AIDS Task Force. We were committed to participating and networking with a variety of organizations whose intent was to provide *minority* education. When I started working with the Task Force two and a half years ago, the statistics were even. In the white community

there were 84 cases, this time last year. In the black community there were 81 cases. Everybody was committed and we fought and we went on public information trips to present information on THE disease that was affecting THE people. Then the numbers began to change and last November BIBASHI along with other groups including the Philadelphia AIDS Task Force said it's time to do something about the changes in the numbers which were representing an increase in the number of cases in the Black community particularly and what has now become a problem within the Hispanic community. January of this year in Philadelphia, there were 231 cases of AIDS confirmed by the Philadelphia Health Department. At that time, there were 112 cases, half the [total] number were among Blacks, 13 were among Hispanics.

The other day I received a report from the Health Department that said effective as of July 31st there were 338 confirmed cases of AIDS in Philadelphia and 168 of them are now Black, 148 are among whites, 21 now among Hispanics AND we have *just now* got a minority educator for the Philadelphia AIDS task force. Now I know some of you may be offended by the fact that I would say anything against the Philadelphia AIDS Task Force, but I think what is important to understand is: THAT IS WHERE THE RESOURCES ARE! and our people, a minority-- those differing comparatively to the population--have the right to be educated, have the right to have resources committed, have the right to stand here with you and say that we are dying from this disease and YOU are making it OUR disease.

If in your presentations to your community you don't remember the Hispanics and if you don't remember the Blacks, I guarantee you we will be there to haunt you for it.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]

Question for Exploration:

Consider the metaphor of “haunt” in relation to history. What happens when a leading activist who voices shared anger “disappears” from any historical record?

Except for Rashida Hassan’s personal collection on the Online African American AIDS History Project, there are almost no documents in historical archives about or by Muslim AIDS activists/leaders. What can account for that? Is it plausibly—
Lack of activists/leaders/organizations? Few white media covering Muslim events?
Shortage of Black journalists? Lack of archives?

Following are the steps in preserving an archival record. Identify at least one challenge a Black Muslim AIDS activist might have to overcome at each of the four steps.

1. A religious leader becomes an activist despite barriers of gender, race, religion, etc.
2. Activists or organizations document their activism OR a reporter / videographer creates visual or audio recordings of events as they take place.
3. Creators of these records recognize their value and donate them to an archives for public access and long term preservation.
4. Every archives has a collection policy that defines what they consider worthy topics to acquire..

REPORT OUT: Name potential for bias when relying on primary sources and consequences of forgetting some voices