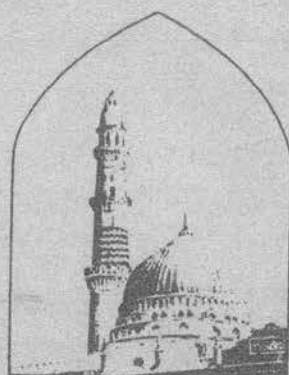


ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF EUROPE

TEN YEARS OF ITS ACTIVITIES

1973-83



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ISLAMIC COUNCIL OF EUROPE:
TEN YEARS OF ITS ACTIVITIES

The Islamic Council of Europe was established in London in May 1973. For the first few years of its life, the Council focused its efforts on the preservation and development of the religious life of Muslims of Europe, giving them a sense of identity and promoting understanding and harmony between Muslims and people of other faith. However, since Islam is a complete code of life, the Council's field of activities began to widen with the passage of time and it found itself addressing more and more Islamic issues. The process is still continuing.

To fulfil its mission, the Council has held a number of international conferences, seminars and exhibitions; published books, pamphlets, magazines and research papers; monitored the media and responded to correct distortions, bias and misrepresentations concerning Islam and the Muslim world; issued a large number of press statements; liaised and coordinated with Islamic movements and organisations; assisted in the establishment of mosques, organisation of Islamic education

for Muslim children in the West; provided financial assistance to Muslim organisations, students, refugees, and individual hardship cases, during the past ten years of its existence.

The Council is an independent, non-governmental organisation . It enjoys "Observer" status with the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and participates in that capacity in Islamic Summits and conferences of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of member states. The Council has also the "Observer" status with the United Nations' Department of Public Information. The Council is funded by private donations from those who believe in and support its aims and objectives . The salient activities of the Council over the past 10 years are briefly described in the following.

CONFERENCES

International Conference on Islam and the Challenge of Our Age.

The Council held this major international conference in London from 3rd to 13th April, 1976 on the occasion of the World of Islam Festival. The inaugural session was held in London's famous Royal Albert Hall and the remaining ten sessions in the Royal Commonwealth Society. The conference was inaugurated by His Royal Highness Prince Muhammad al Faisal . Others who spoke at the inaugural session included late Shaikh Abdul Haleem Mahmud, Shaikh Al-Azhar; H.E. Dr. Ahmadou Karim Gaye, Secretary General, Islamic Secretariat, Jeddah; Dr. Muhammad Natsir, former Prime Minister of Indonesia and Chairman of Dewan Da'wah

Islamia, Mr. Sadiq Al-Mehdi, former Prime Minister of Sudan; Mian Tufail Mohammad, Amir Jamat-e-Islami, Pakistan; Professor Muhammad Qutb, Professor Muhammad Asad and many more. Perhaps never in contemporary history so many Muslim luminaires from all parts of the world got together to explain to the world the different aspects of the religion and culture of Islam. In all, outstanding Muslim scholars, too numerous to name, presented 33 papers on different topics at the conference, which attracted large audiences, both Muslim and non-Muslim, and received wide media coverage. The conference emphasised its belief that the Muslim Ummah can play its rightful role in meeting the challenges which confront mankind today only by establishing an Islamic model and its projection before the world at large.

International Economic Conference

This conference was held by the Council in London between July 4-9, 1977 on the theme: The Muslim World and the Future Economic Order. This theme was chosen by the Council in view of the fact that the prevailing economic orders were devoid of any moral basis and had proved to be arbitrary, sterile and unjust.

The conference was inaugurated by H.E. Dr. Karim Gaye, Secretary General, Organisation of the Islamic Conference and was spread over 12 working sessions. The participants comprised a highly select group of Muslim scholars, statesmen, ministers of finance, commerce, planning, education, petroleum and mineral resources, agriculture and governors of central banks and high

officials of several organs of the United Nations; including representative of U.N. Secretary General.

The Conference reviewed the present economic policies, plans and institutions in the Muslim states and emphasised the need for the creation of an economic order based on the Islamic principles of equality, justice and balanced relationship. It called upon the governments of Muslim states to fulfil their duty for the establishment of a peaceful and equitable Islamic economic order in their countries, to serve as a model for the salvation of mankind. The conference concluded by making a number of recommendations in the areas of data and information flow, planning, industry and technology, oil, money and finance, social security, trade and institutional framework for cooperation amongst the Muslim states.

International Seminar on Muslim Minorities

This seminar was sponsored by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and was organised by the Council between July 22-28, 1978. It was instigated by the growing persecution and denial of human rights of Muslim minorities in many parts of the world.

A total of 61 delegates from 24 countries participated in the seminar over 16 working sessions. The papers presented at the Seminar covered the review of basic data about the Muslim minorities, their political, educational, legal, religious, social and economic problems; the concepts of human

rights in Islam and the West; and the condition of Muslim minorities in Europe, Soviet Union, Burma, East and South East Asia, South Africa, Rhodesia, Botswana, Malawi, Muzambique, India, Yugoslavia, North America and Australia. The seminar also deliberated on the responsibilities of Muslim states towards the persecuted and oppressed Muslim minorities in securing for them their fundamental human rights.

International Conference on Defence and the Muslim World.

This conference was held by the Council in London between February 5 and 9, 1979 with a view to creating a better understanding of Islamic military concepts and to discuss ways and means whereby Muslim countries, individually and collectively, could develop effective self-defence capabilities to ensure peaceful and stable conditions necessary for their economic and social progress.

The inaugural address was by H.E. Mr. Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The conference also received messages of support by the Presidents of Tunisia, Libya, Indonesia, Bangladesh and H.M. the King of Morocco. The participants from 20 countries included defence ministers, chiefs of staff, high military officers, statesmen and experts on military technology. Alongside the conference, an exhibition of the latest defence technology was held in which the leading manufactures in the field from 10 industrially advanced countries displayed their products and services.

This important meeting was held on April 7, 1979 in London to welcome the Islamic revolution in Iran and to review the dangerous situation created by the signing of the Sadat-Begin treaty - the so-called Camp David Accords. The meeting, which received messages of solidarity from leaders of Islamic Movements in Egypt, Turkey, Indonesia, Pakistan and India was largely attended by the Muslim community in England, and was addressed by ambassadors, cabinet ministers, scholars and statesmen from Muslim countries.

The meeting passed a resolution viewing with grave concern the signing of Sadat-Begin treaty and re-affirming the resolve to continue the struggle for the liberation of Al-Quds, Palestine and other Muslim lands under the illegal foreign occupation. It also called upon the Muslim governments to extend their fullest support to such liberation movements.

International Islamic Conference for the Liberation of Muslim Lands

This international Islamic conference was organised by the Council in London between 24-27 May, 1979 with a view to appreciating the contemporary Islamic awakening, to discuss ways and means of consolidating it; to outline its implications for the Muslim governments and to define the terms on which the people of Islam should determine their international relations.

The conference aroused widespread and keen interest and was addressed by scholars, statesmen and representatives of Islamic movements. After in-depth deliberations on the important

issues facing the Muslim world, the conference passed a number of resolutions concerning the liberation of occupied Muslim lands, and the persecution of Muslims in a number of countries. It also denounced the biased, distorted and hostile reporting about Islam and the Muslim world by the Western media.

International Conference on Jerusalem

This international conference was organized by the Islamic Council, in London between 3-5 December, 1979. The aim of the Conference was to identify, analyse and bring out the true facts in correct historical, academic and multi-religious perspective with a view to dispel the distortions and misrepresentations created by the Zionist propaganda and thereby make a positive contribution to the solution of the problem of Palestine, and to the world peace.

The participants at the conference included distinguished Muslim, Christian and Jewish scholars and jurists from all over the world, as well as eminent lawyers, statesmen and representatives of several Muslim governments, the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Conference, the P.L.O. and Islamic Movements who examined objectively and in-depth the various aspects of the problem of Palestine and Jerusalem.

In addition to the inaugural and concluding sessions, the conference was spread over four working sessions during which distinguished speakers presented 12 papers.

For wide dissemination of facts and issues concerning the problem of Palestine and Jerusalem, the Council published

the papers presented at the conference in a book titled:
Jerusalem, The Key to World Peace.

ACTIVITIES TO MARK THE ADVENT OF 15TH CENTURY HIJRA

International Conference on Muslim Minorities

This international conference on Muslim minorities, like the one before it in July 1978, was sponsored by the O.I.C. and organised by the Islamic Council of Europe in London on 9th and 10th April, 1980. The conference was inaugurated by H.E. Mr Habib Chatti, Secretary General, Organisation of the Islamic Conference. It was spread over five working sessions, during which problems of Muslim minorities in Western and Eastern Europe, U.S.S.R, India, Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka, East Africa, Japan, the Phillipines and North America were discussed in detail by experts coming from the countries concerned. In the concluding session the International Commission on Muslim Minorities, established as an organ of the Council in pursuance of a resolution of July 1978 International Seminar, presented a number of case studies on the subject. The conference concluded by a speech by the Secretary General of the Council and the issue of communique.

International Conference on Prophet Muhammad and His Message.

This historic conference was organised by the Islamic Council of Europe in London from 12 to 15 April, 1980. The

and representatives of Islamic movements and liberation organisations, leading Muslim scholars and thinkers from all parts of the world.

The highlight of the conference was the proclamation of a Universal Islamic Declaration in the inaugural session. During the conference, the speakers explained various aspects of the life of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) and presented scholarly papers on the significance of Hijra, Tawhid, Jihad, the impact of Islam on history, the spirit of Islamic revolution and the political, social and economic systems of Islam. The conference also surveyed the main problems confronting the Muslim world and the Muslim Ummah.

The conference aroused immense interest, drew huge attendances, and was highly acclaimed. It also received wide and favourable media coverage; in the West and the Muslim world. As an example, the prestigious London daily, The Times, published a five column report on the Universal Islamic Declaration in its April 14, 1980 issue. In the opening paragraph of its report, The Times said:

" The promulgation of a Universal Islamic Declaration by the Islamic Conference, now taking place in London, fills a gap that has long been felt in the West both by Muslims and non-Muslims..... The possibility of such a declaration arises only from the existence of a body like the Islamic Council of Europe, with its general acceptability in the Muslim world as both authoritative and representative."

This exhibition, organised by the Islamic Council, was held in London from 23rd to 25th September, 1980.

Enteries to the exhibition included about 2,000 titles on the subject in English language by 200 participants from countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and the U.S.A. On the eve of the exhibition, the "Times Literary Supplement", in its issue of 19th September, 1980 devoted several pages to reviews of new and recent books on Islam and the Muslim world.

Concurrently with the exhibition, the Council also organised a 3-day seminar on the "Western Library Services and Resources Relating to the Muslim World".

In view of very warm response by the publishers of books on Islam and the Muslim World and the great interest shown by the public in the exhibition, the Council decided to make it an annual affair.

The second exhibition was held at the UNESCO in Paris from 3-5 June, 1981 at which 1500 books in French language, by 187 publishers, were displayed. The exhibition was inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, Director General of UNESCO and was attended by 5000 visitors, including diplomats, media representatives, writers, scholars, specialists in Islamic studies and leading publishers of books on Islam and the Muslim world.

The Paris exhibition was covered by the mass media including

French Radio and Television. The prestigious French daily, "Le Monde" devoted considerable space reviewing the exhibition and some of the more interesting French publications on display.

In accordance with the decision to make the exhibition an annual affair, the third and fourth exhibitions were held in London in 1982 and 1983 respectively.

CONFERENCES HELD IN COOPERATION WITH THE ISLAMIC COUNCIL

International Islamic Conference on Human Rights.

Cognizant of the fundamental importance of human rights in Islam, the Council organised a major international Islamic conference on human rights in Islam at the UNESCO in Paris on September 19, 1981.

The key speech was delivered by Mr. Salem Azzam, Secretary General of the Council. The inaugural session was also addressed by H.E. Mr. Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, Director General of UNESCO. During the conference, a number of eminent scholars, jurists and representatives of Islamic movements spoke on various aspects of human rights in Islam. The highlight of the conference was the proclamation of a Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration, based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah, was compiled by an international team of Muslim scholars, thinkers, jurists and representatives of Islamic movements.

The conference received congratulatory messages from the President and Prime Minister of France. Offering the conference his "warm wishes", President Francois Mitterrand praised the Islamic Council of Europe for organising the conference. He said: " The proclamation of a Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights, in this first year of the 15th Century of Hijra, cannot leave France indifferent..... France salutes your initiative". Eulogizing Islam, he said: "Islam has great responsibilities, as the bearer of high spiritual and human values. I hope that its message of brotherhood be extended for the struggle against injustice, oppression and intolerance".

The conference passed a unanimous resolution for the establishment of an International Islamic Commission on Human Rights. The Commission was accordingly established in December 1981 with Mr. Ahmed Ben Bella, the first President of independent Algeria, as its Chairman, and is functioning as an important organ of the Council.

The conference which received wide and prominent coverage by the French press, radio and T.V., passed a number of resolutions concerning respect for the Islamic code of human rights, monitoring human rights everywhere and taking necessary actions against violations.

International Islamic Conference on "The Islamic Council and the Muslim World".

The conference was organised by the Council in Paris on September 22, 1982. The aim of the conference was to focus on the major problems confronting the Muslim world, to analyse their cause and to articulate the stand of the Islamic Council on them.

The conference dwelt at length on the problem on Palestine and the role of the United States, the Soviet Union and other Western powers in creating and not only keeping the problem alive but also escalating it, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the massacres of Sabra and Chatilla, the Camp David Accords, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq war, the Islamic code of human rights and its implementation by Muslim governments, the disastrous effects of overproduction of oil by some Muslim countries and the hostile attitude of the Western media towards Islam and the Muslim world etc.

The Council issued a document titled, "the Islamic Council - What it Stands For", at the conference, which concluded by the issue of a communique spelling out the stand of the conference on the aforementioned problems and issues.

International Islamic Conference on "Islam Today"

This international Islamic conference was held by the Islamic Council in Islamabad between 10-12 December, 1983. It was inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and was attended by 95 delegates from different parts of the world, including the leadership of Afghan Mujahideen. In fact, Islamabad was chosen as venue of the conference to affirm solidarity of the Muslim world with the historic struggle of the heroic Afghan people for liberation of their homeland from the Soviet occupation. It devoted itself to a thorough examination of the major ideological, political, economic and cultural problems besetting the contemporary Muslim world.

The Council released at the conference a historic document entitled "A Model of an Islamic Constitution", spelling out the framework of an Islamic state in modern times. The document represents the consensus of a large number of Muslim Ulema, jurists, statesmen and representatives of Islamic movements around the world.

During the conference the participants discussed different aspects of the Islamic state, society and economy,

and emphasised the need for rebuilding the socio-political order of Muslim countries on the foundations of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The conference also called for a more judicious utilization of the vast economic resources of the Muslim world, in accordance with the principles of Islam and in the best interests of the Muslim Ummah.

The conference attracted large audiences throughout the three days of its deliberations and received wide coverage by the media, both in Pakistan and abroad, particularly in India and Bangladesh.

PUBLICATIONS

In order to project Islam and the Islamic approach to various important issues, the Council has published a number of books, pamphlets, research papers, surveys and periodicals. It also produced audio and video cassettes, commemorative medallions and stamps. These are listed below:

Books

1. Islam - Its Meaning and Message.
2. The Challenge of Islam.
3. The Muslim World and the Future Economic Order.
4. Jerusalem - Key to World Peace.
5. Muslim Communities in non-Muslim States.
6. The Spirit of Islam.
7. Concept of an Islamic State
8. Islam and the Problem of Israel.

9. Islam and the Contemporary Society (jointly with Longmans Publishers)
10. Call from the Minaret: Islamic Values and Education.

Pamphlets

1. The Quran and Its Impact on Human History
2. The Life of the Prophet Muhammad
3. Objectives of the Islamic Economic Order
4. Islam and the Crisis of Modern Age.
5. The Islamic Concept of World Economic Order.
6. Inaugural Address, International Economic Conference.
7. Children's Book on Islam (in English, German, and Dutch)
8. Universal Islamic Declaration (in English, Arabic, French and Urdu)
9. Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights (in Arabic, English and French)
10. A Model of An Islamic Constitution (in Arabic, English and Urdu)
11. The Straight Path.

Cassettes

The Council has produced the following audio and visual cassettes.

- * Islam as a way of life, comprising a set of 14 audio cassettes in Arabic.
- * Issues vital to the Islamic world, comprising a set of 12 audio cassettes by eminent Muslim scholars.
- * Prophet's prayers, comprising one audio cassette in Arabic and also in book form.
- * The Battle for Beirut, a film with commentary in English and Arabic about the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the massacres of Sabra and Chatilla. The video cassette can be viewed on T.V. screens with VCRs.

Commemorative Medallions and Stamps

The Council has so far produced three medallions, each to mark the International Conference on "The Muslim World and the Future Economic Order (July, 1977)", the International Conference on the Liberation of Muslim Lands (June 1979)", and the beginning of the 15th Century Hijra. Commemorative stamps were also issued to mark the first and the last of the above events.

Monitoring of the Media and Press Statements

The Council regularly monitors the media and responds to correct distorted, misleading and hostile news, articles and comments etc. about Islam and the Muslim world. In addition, it issues press statements on a range of issues, such as violations of human rights, persecution of Muslim minorities, false propaganda aimed at discrediting Islam, occupation of Muslim lands etc. The press statements are distributed to newspapers, news agencies, embassies and relevant organisations. Also having built up credibility as an authoritative Islamic body, the Council is approached from time-to-time by radio and television broadcasting services in the West for authentic information and facts on Islam and its stand on various religious, social, political and economic issues in order to plan their programmes. The Council also maintains contact with journalists, human rights organisations and influential and important personalities in pursuance of its aims and objectives.

During the past ten years, the Council has spent considerable sums of money on public relations activities,

providing financial support to mosques; on Islamic education; on purchase and distribution of Islamic literature, supporting Islamic organisations; publishing books, pamphlets and magazines; participation in international conferences, such as the International Conference on the Question of Palestine organised by the United Nations in Geneva in September, 1983 and the subsequent review conference held in August, 1984; and financial assistance to students refugees and other hardship cases.

Another important initiative taken by the Council towards the end of 1983 was the establishment in London of a Muslim Workers Unit. The need to set up such a Unit was keenly felt due to the increasing denial of political, economic and social rights and privileges to the Muslim workers of Europe; as well as due to the growing hostility and discrimination against them by public and private bodies and some sections of the majority communities. The decision to set up this unit was taken after holding a number of meetings and consultations with representatives of Muslim and non-Muslim organisations, as well as with prominent persons, who were concerned with the raw deals which Muslims, particularly Muslim workers, were receiving in Europe.

" وَأَخِرُ دَعَوَانَا أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ "