



PATIENCE AND PERSUASION GO A LONG...LONG...WAY.....

Eighteen months of patient tactful, but also at times hard and firm negotiations with the British Charity Commissioners have at last brought us a major breakthrough: we have secured registration on our terms as a charity. This, apart from the obvious advantages of centralized and efficient administration, also exempts the MUSLIM INSTITUTE TRUST funds, income and property from all taxation.

There are and always have been many 'Islamic' charities in Britain, but their scope has almost invariably been limited to Britain or cities or other areas within Britain. The MUSLIM INSTITUTE insisted and won the point that Islam recognises no geographical, ethnic or political boundaries and that the Muslim ummah is worldwide and, therefore, the MUSLIM

INSTITUTE TRUST must have the necessary legal power to pursue its objectives 'anywhere in the world.' Similarly, we insisted and secured the right to support or sponsor similar work undertaken by either individuals or organisations throughout the world. The MUSLIM INSTITUTE TRUST shall be able to draw its resources - human, intellectual, spiritual and material - from Muslims anywhere and sponsor similar work anywhere. The MUSLIM INSTITUTE is thus truly universal.

This has given us the wide base and flexible constitutional framework within which we can now proceed to develop the MUSLIM INSTITUTE complex of activities.

At times during these 18 months it appeared

that we might be deprived of this initial objective. But Allah ta'la has rewarded the patience of the Preparatory Committee and of the FOUNDER members of the MUSLIM INSTITUTE throughout the world.

The next step is for the framework of a Learned Society to be created in the form of a company limited by guarantee. This will carry the title of The MUSLIM INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH AND PLANNING. A committee is now putting final touches to the draft Articles of Memorandum of this Learned Society.

The five brothers who have executed the TRUST DEED on our behalf are: Dr E.M.O.Elamin, Dr M.A.Moin, Mr M.Sarwar Rija, Dr Ghayas Uddin Siddiqui and Dr Kalim Siddiqui.

Memorial Lectures in Bahrain and South Africa

Some months ago the Preparatory Committee decided to establish a series of memorial lectures in different parts of the world and named after some of the great Muslim scholars and statesmen of the past. These lectures will be organised and financed by FOUNDER members of the MUSLIM INSTITUTE in their respective parts of the world.

The MUSLIM INSTITUTE in London (for the moment still in Slough!), will choose the lecturers and topics according to its overall plan and priority of research. It is important that the lectures, though perhaps delivered in far flung parts of the world, should form part of a coordinated whole.

Already two such lectures have been arranged - one in Bahrain and one in South Africa. FOUNDERS in Bahrain have chosen to name their annual lectures after Ibn Sina while those in South Africa have chosen Imam Al-Ghazali. The lectures in South Africa will be held in conjunction with the Islamic Council of South Africa.

The inaugural lecture in Bahrain will be held in January 1977 while the lecture in South Africa has been fixed for 27 November this year. The lecturers and their topics are under consideration. Any suggestions will be welcome. The FOUNDERS in Bahrain have set aside Bahrain Dinars 500. We hope that in the next few years similar lectures will have been established in most parts of the world.

TWO RESEARCH FELLOWS

The MUSLIM INSTITUTE now has two Research Fellows.

They are Dawud G. Rosser-Owen, and Ziauddin Sardar. Both are full-time. Rosser-Owen is a political scientist specialising in the politics of South-east Asia. But, since his conversion to Islam in 1964 he has learned Arabic and has read widely. Sardar is a young physicist and information scientist.

THE ROAD TO MADINA

More has been written about the life of the Prophet Muhammad than about any man in history. Yet most Muslims today know only the bare outlines of the Prophet's life. In any case, the (western) educated Muslim has access to only a fraction of this literature, some of it written by hostile Orientalists.

The time has also come to get away from the traditional framework of description; we now need to ask and answer the question as to how the method of the Prophet can be applied today to achieve similar civilizational goals of the ummah? For us that would be THE ROAD TO MADINA.

The study is conceived in three volumes. Volumes II and III will be collections of specially commissioned and written articles by leading scholars. Volume I will be written by a single scholar as an introduction to and summary of volumes II and III. Volume I will also stand as a complete and self-contained study for the general reader and the non-specialist.

The MUSLIM INSTITUTE invites suggestions on all aspects of the project. We hope to have made enough progress to publish one or more volumes to mark the celebrations of the Fourteenth Centenary of the Hijra in four years from now.

The Islamic Secretariat at Jeddah has, at the suggestion of the MUSLIM INSTITUTE, set up a committee to draw up plans for the worldwide celebrations of the hijra centenary. The MUSLIM INSTITUTE's memorandum on the subject was adopted by the Islamic Foreign Ministers at their conference in July 1975/Rajab 1395. Copies of the Memorandum are available from the MUSLIM INSTITUTE.

SEMINARS:

The First Year

The 1975-76 series of the MUSLIM INSTITUTE seminar programme is in progress. In October 1975, Dawud Rosser-Owen gave a paper, "Social Change in Islam - The Progressive Dimension." The November seminar had to be cancelled because the speaker who was coming from abroad could not leave his country! In February 1976 Ziauddin Sardar gave a paper, "A Research Approach for Muslim Social Scientists."

The next seminar is on 19 March 1976 when Dr Ghayas Uddin Siddiqi will give his paper, "Historical Approaches to the Reconstruction of Muslim Civilization: The Crisis of Scholarship." To make up for the

cancelled November seminar, an additional seminar has been arranged for May when Muhammad Sarwar Rija, an educationist, will present a paper. He has still to formulate the exact title of his paper.

Ziauddin Sardar represented the MUSLIM INSTITUTE at the *Colloque organisé par la Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers on "Peut-on re-diriger la science?"* or "Can science be re-directed?" held at Paris 4-5 December 1975. Sardar's paper, "The Quest for a New Science" was well received by the assembled professors of the occidental tradition without necessarily accepting his thesis. Even when wrong, the pundits of the western intellectual tradition can afford to be arrogant because they and their frameworks are part of a living (though sick and dying) civilization. Our past, by contrast, has been cleverly hidden from us and the future remains sufficiently uncertain for the west to ignore it a while longer as a serious challenge. But the appearance of unapologetic Muslims at such high-brow intellectual gatherings in the west is beginning to raise eyebrows! They have more surprises coming.

For far too long the west has invested large amounts of money and intellectual resources in developing the Orientalist tradition in order largely to project a distorted view of Islam. We have to concede that to a large extent they have succeeded as well. What is more, the universities in Muslim countries today are little more than replicas of the universities in the west.

Even research on Islam in these so-called 'Muslim' universities is based on the assumptions of the Orientalists.

The MUSLIM INSTITUTE - and one hopes similar institutes throughout the world - have to work very hard to reverse this process and repair the damage to the intellectual tradition of Islam.

PROGRAMME 1976-77

This is now under active consideration of the Academic Committee. We hope to be able to offer two short introductory courses and the seminars, in addition to memorial lectures. A series of occasional papers will also be published.

OFFICIAL FIGURE

British postal charges, in the last 12 months, have gone up by 143 per cent. The MUSLIM INSTITUTE does use the British Post Office.



Safar 1396/February 1976