

THE MUSLIM COUNCIL OF BRITAIN

A step towards greater consultation, cooperation and coordination on Muslim Affairs in the UK.

Muslim Council of Britain Weekly E-Newsletter

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Reports and Event Updates

Understanding Islam Seminar

The Understanding Islam seminar, held on 5th August 2002 at the London Interfaith Centre, was an overwhelming success. Approximately 100 people attended, the majority of whom were non-Muslim. The event was organised by Brent Islamic Circle, the MCB Research and Documentation Committee and the London Interfaith Centre.

The seminar began with a recitation from the Holy Qur'an by AbdulWahid Hamid, a representative of the MCB and was followed by three concise and well delivered presentations by Sheikh Abdullah Hakim Quick, Professor Jamal Badawi and Shabir Ally. Then followed a lively session of questions and discussions.

The evening closed with a presentation of a copy of "Islam the Natural Way" and a decoration piece illustrating Islamic art, to the London Interfaith Centre, for their cooperation in this venture, on behalf of the MCB.

International Conference, Caux, Switzerland

Khurshid Drabu, the MCB's Constitutional Advisor, and Imam Dr AbdulJalil Sajid, former Chair of the MCB's Social Welfare Committee, were invited in their individual capacity to attend an international conference from 26 July to 29 July 2002 in Caux, Switzerland. The conference was attended by scholars and community leaders of different faiths from many countries of the world. It was hosted by Initiatives for Change (formerly the Moral Re-armament) which is jointly headed by Prince Hassan of Jordan, Dr Cornelio Somaruga and Professor Dr Raj Mohan Gandhi.

The conference was a dialogue amongst concerned Muslims and non-Muslims on Peace, Justice and Faith and discussed in particular the conflicts in Palestine and Kashmir. Delegates attending the conference showed great interest in the work of the MCB. Both Khurshid Drabu and Dr Sajid recommend that the MCB develop closer ties and partnerships where appropriate with Muslim and non Muslim organisations who attended the conference.

Muslim Safety Forum Meeting

Dr Abdul Raheem Khan, Chair of the Membership Committee, represented the MCB at the New Scotland Yard "Muslim Safety Forum Meeting" on 8th August 2002. The meeting discussed the distribution of posters and several information leaflets concerning the help and advice available in the eventuality of hate attacks against Muslims. The leaflets will also detail how to report all physical and verbal attacks. A pilot scheme is to be introduced within three London Boroughs: Barnet, Newham and Southwark, and will target distribution within mosques and institutions in September 2002. If feedback proves successful, this will then be rolled out throughout the rest of Britain.

Committee Updates

Media Committee

Briton convicted of attack on British mosque.

On 6th August 2002, Reuters published a news item detailing the conviction of a British security

guard for "taking part in an attack on an English mosque just two days after the September 11 assaults on the United States". Two charges of criminal damage were brought against Christopher Williams at Exeter Magistrates Court for an attack on the Islamic Centre in Exeter. The article quotes Inayat Bunglawala of the Muslim Council of Britain: "We hope it will send a signal that it's important that holy places of worship are protected" .

Konemann Update

The MCB site now includes correspondence with Konemann, the Publisher of "Islam: Art & Architecture", relating to a serious translation error. www.mcb.org.uk See Media Section, letters to Editor/Producer.

Legal Affairs Committee

Religious Offences Bill

The Constitutional Adviser to the MCB, Khurshid Drabu, drafted the MCB submission to the House of Lords Sub Committee on Religious Offences Bill with input from colleagues within the MCB. The submissions were lodged with the Clerk to the Committee on 9 August 2002. The Committee has invited representatives of the MCB to give oral evidence before it in October.

The MCB would like to thank all affiliates who made submissions to the Select Committee on the issues of Blasphemy Law and the need for law on incitement to religious hatred. The submissions concern the MCB view of not seeking an abolition of Blasphemy law, but rather to campaign for a comprehensive law on vilification that protects all faiths. The MCB also seeks a law that makes incitement to religious hatred a crime on the same lines as incitement to racial hatred but only more effective in its implementation ensuring that it is not used to target Muslim individuals or groups for prosecutions as the racial hatred law has been used against the Black and ethnic minority communities. Full text of the MCB submission is available at www.mcb.org.uk. See Committees Section, Legal Affairs.

Public Affairs Committee

On Monday 5th August, the Public Affairs Committee met to discuss a forthcoming programme of work including engagements with with political party leadership and policy makers. Sher Khan was elected Chairman.

Europe & International Affairs Committee

On Thursday 8th August, members of the Europe & International Affairs Committee met to discuss plans for future work. Mahmud Al-Rashid was elected as Chairman, the Vice Chairman is Tanzeem Wasti and Zymer Salihi is the Secretary of the Europe & International Affairs Committee.

Meeting with Bangladeshi Minister of Agriculture

On 2nd August 2002, A meeting was held between members of the European & International Affairs Committee and Maulana Matiur Rehman, Minister of Agriculture from Bangladesh and leader of Jamaat-i-Islami.. The meeting, held at East London Mosque, served to introduce the MCB to the Minister.

Condolence Meeting

A condolence meeting was held on 8th August to commemorate the passing away of Dr Mani al-Johani, previously Secretary General of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) and

Hassan Bahafzullah.

Membership Committee

In a meeting chaired by Ahmed Sheikh, MCB Assistant Secretary General, on 5th August, the committee approved applications for affiliation to the Muslim Council of Britain from the following organisations :

- UK Islamic Mission, Scotland Branch
- UK Islamic Mission, North Zone
- UK Islamic Mission, South Zone
- UK Islamic Mission: Midland Zone
- Khoja Shia Ithnasheri South London Jamaat
- Takaful Trust
- Redbridge Islamic Centre
- Islamic Society of Britain, London Branch

Events

Event: **Muslim Demographics - the way ahead**
Date: Thursday 26th September 2002
Contact: Chair of ReDoc, Dr Aziz Sheikh, c/o MCB office
Information: Topics for discussion include the census output on the religion question

Event: **Million Man March For Palestine**
Date: 28th September 2002
Time: 1.00 pm
Held By: The Muslim Association of Britain
Venue: Congregate at Hyde Park Corner and end in Trafalgar Square
Contact: MAB Head Office: 020 7272 2888 Mobile: 07958 329 879
Information: Play your part in the biggest mobilisation for Palestine in this country ever, insha'Allah.

It is a demonstration in support of all the Palestinian people. It is now no longer a concern only for Muslims; but for anyone, Muslim or non-Muslim, who realises and is aware that every human on Earth has a right to live and be treated fairly.

Event: **From Sabra and Shatila to Jenin: the humanitarian and legal consequences**
Date: 17th September 2002
Time: 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm
Held By: The Palestinian Return Centre (PRC)
Venue: School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), Lecture Theatre, Main Building, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London, WC1 0XG
Contact: PRC Head Office: Tel: 0208 453 0919; e-mail: info@prc.org.uk;
Website: www.prc.org.uk
Information: This public seminar marks the 20th anniversary of the Sabra and Shatila masasacre and will be chaired by Mr John Austin MP

