

Conferences/Seminars

Seventeenth Annual Conference of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists

Rabi' al Awwal 18-20, 1409/October 28-30, 1988

The Seventeenth Annual Conference of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists was held *Rabi' al Awwal 18-20, 1409/October 28-30, 1988*, at Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. "Development of Contemporary Islamic Thought: Theory and Application" was the theme that attracted over 120 participants from United States, Canada, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Trinidad and India, as well as numerous student "drop-ins".

The conference broke new grounds and topped all former annual conferences, in the size of meetings, quality, and diversity of presentations, and set a number of records that may stand for many years to come. Most of the discussions were scholarly and conducted in a spirit of good humor—often disagreeing without being disagreeable.

The program included 26 papers, in addition to special sessions. Although the sessions were spread over three days, as many as 16 sessions had to be held concurrently to accommodate the participants. Topical divisions of concurrent sessions were successful at holding "session-hopping" to a minimum. The array of papers covered almost all subdisciplines and current research orientation in Islamic social sciences. Abstracts of the papers given in the program were helpful in planning and choosing which session to attend. After the sessions, there was an array of opportunities to widen one's experience. The banquet, and the dinners and lunches at Iowa State University Memorial Union allowed for a relaxed, yet stimulating, setting. Those who preferred more tension in their leisure, continued their discussions in small groups.

For the first time, the conference began with a session on "Western and Muslim Women" chaired by Salahuddin Malik of the State University of New York, Brockport. Sharifa Alkhateeb of the International Institute of Islamic Thought surveyed "Feminist Issues and Their Implication for Islamic Women," explaining how Western feminist values were incapable of successful transplantation to Muslim Societies. She pointed out the existing numerous values in Islam while recognizing the need for social change of traditional non-Islamically based mores. Vanessa Khadija Payton, of Morgan State University, discussed "Polygamy and American Muslims." Her paper focused on the cultural indoctrination of American male and female Muslims and the practicality of polygamy amongst these groups. Sadekka Arabi of the University of California, Berkeley, presented her wellresearched paper "Western

Anthropological Studies of Women in the Middle East,” exposing the fact that the methodology used by anthropologists prevents them from objectively studying Middle Eastern women. Zohair Hussain of the University of South Alabama was supposed to personally give his paper on “The Centrality of Justice and Jihad in Islam” in another concurrent session; however, due to flight delays, he was unable to do so and his paper was presented by other participants of the session on his behalf.

The following session was also an innovation in AMSS conferences. Titled “Bridge Building Between Muslims and Christians,” it was a dialogue between Robert Miller of St. John Episcopal Church, Ames, and Dawood Zwink of the Islamic Society of North America. T.B. Irving chaired this session and Mushtaqur Rahman served as moderator. More than 300 persons attended the session which concluded with such a lively question and answer session that the session had to be extended two times.

The first full day of the conference, Saturday, began with a session on “Political Science” chaired by Mumtaz Ahmad of MRM Research Associates of Washington, D.C. This session had three presentations: Wafa Hozian of William Peterson College presented her paper on “Sayyid Jamal al-Dīn al-Afghani in Islamic Political Thought;” Mohammad Shafiq of the University of Peshawar, Pakistan, discussed “The System of Government in Islam (Parliament vs. Shurah);” and Hakim M. Rashid of Howard University described “The Islamic and Western Perspectives of Human Development.”

Another concurrently held session was chaired by Anis Ahmad of the International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan. This session also had three papers presented; Hassan Shahbazi of the University of Maryland presented a paper on “Ibn Khaldun and the Evolution of Kurdish Economic and Political Structure;” Farid Alatas of John Hopkins University discussed “Ibn Khaldun and Ottoman and Iranian History—Their Religion, State and Revolution;” and Louay Safi of Wayne State University described “Modern Islamic Movement in Egypt.”

The session on the Muslim Minority in India was chaired by Mohammad Amjad of the Iowa State Board of Parole. Junaid Ahmad of Jan’s International presented his study on “Indian Muslims as a Perplexed Minority.” Omar Khalidi of Massachusetts Institute of Technology discussed “Muslims as a Minority in India.” Sayed Hamid, former Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, India, served as a discussant in the session.

Concurrent with the Muslim Minority session was a session on Education chaired by M.A.W. Fakhri of Chicago State University which had three papers presented. Rasha al-Disūqī of the University of Wales discussed “Islamization of Non-visual Arts.” Kamal Nimer of the Islamic Saudi Academy in Washington, D.C. described “The Mission and Accomplishment of the Islamic Saudi Academy.” Mozaffar Partowmah and Sarjan Baha of the Association of Muslim

Scientists and Engineers then discussed "Education in Muslim Countries."

The session on "Islamic Principles and Practices" was chaired by Ilyas Ba-Yunus of the State University of New York at Cortland. In this session Ela'Eddin Kharufa, a retired judge of Yemen High Court discussed "Interest and Usury in Islam" and Suleiman Abu Kharmeh of the University of Iowa presented his joint-paper with Rex Honey on "Decentralized Planning in Jordan."

The concurrent session on "Pakistan After the Geneva Accord and Zia" was chaired by Manzooruddin Ahmad, Vice-Chancellor of Karachi University. In this session Nayyar Zaidi of Daily Jang, Pakistan, reviewed the "United States-Pakistan Relations in the 1980's; Sulaymān Nyang of Howard University discussed "Afghan Struggle and Its Implication on the Muslim World;" and Manzoor Ahmad of Karachi University discussed "Pakistan After Zia." Mumtaz Ahmad of MRM Research Associates of Washington, D.C. served as a discussant.

The most interesting and thought-provoking session of the Conference was held after Salat-ul-Dhuhr and lunch on "Islamization of Knowledge" chaired by Mushtaqur Rahman of Iowa State University. AMSS President AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, explained "The Concept and Methodology of Islamization" to a packed hall. This session was designed to stimulate further debate on Islamization and to enlighten social scientists on the work that the AMSS and IIIT have been doing in this area. Mona Abul Fadl, of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) and Salahuddin Malik of the State University of New York, Brockport also participated in the discourse. Never before has any session on the Islamization of Knowledge generated more interest and debate than was evident at this session. The discussions were so absorbing and enlightening that this 45-minute session was extended by another 60 minutes with consent of the participants.

After the Salat-ul-Asr and a coffee break, the AMSS al Fārūqī Memorial Lecture was chaired by Sayyid Muhammad Sayeed of the International Institute of Islamic Thought. The Memorial Lecture was given by Zainul Abedin, Editor of the *Muslim Minority Affairs Journal*, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

The al Faruqi Lecture was followed by the AMSS Annual Banquet given at the impressive Gateway Center. This year's banquet also created history in that it was keynoted by two speakers: Anis Ahmad of the International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan and Manzooruddin Ahmad, Vice-Chancellor, Karachi University, Pakistan. Mahmoud Rashdan chaired the banquet and served as the Master of Ceremonies.

Following the banquet, the Business Meeting was held at the Gateway Center. M.A.W. Fakhri presented a report on the Discipline Councils, and Mohammad Abugideiri gave his Treasurer's report. The meeting was then opened for discussions and suggestions from the floor. Since the term of

the Executive Board will end by December 1988, Sulaymān Nyang of Howard University was elected Chairman of the Nominating Committee charged with circulating and tabulating the ballots for the new Executive Committee to be announced by the end of January 1989.

The final day of the Conference, Sunday, had 5 sessions. The first session chaired by R.A. Shah, Vice-Chancellor of Shah Abdul Latif University, Pakistan, had three papers; Ilyas Ba-Yunus of New York State University, Cortland, discussed "Basic Ingredients of Islamic Social Theory," Ghulam M. Haniff of St. Cloud University gave a paper on "Islamic Activism in 20th Century," and Hassan Yahya of Michigan State University described "Factors Influencing the Satisfaction of Muslim Organization Members in the Greater Lansing Area." Concurrent to this session was another session on "Islamic Communication Systems" chaired by Mohammad Abugideiri of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists, in which three papers were presented. Fayyaz Ahmad of the University of Srinagar discussed "Principles of Interpersonal Communication in Islam; Ghulam Nabi Fai of the Islamic Society of North America made a presentation on "Islamic Communication Theory and Application" and Salman Al-Farisi Yusuf of Temple University gave his paper on "Commercialization of Knowledge in Nigeria and Its Impact on Muslims."

The session on "Islam and Social Sciences" was chaired by Mahmoud Rashdan of the International Institute of Islamic Thought which had two papers presented. Anis Ahmad of the International Islamic University discussed "Islamic Political Thought: Theory and Application," and Rashid A. Shah of Shah Abdul Latif University described "The Status of Social Sciences in the Third World."

Concurrent to the session on Islam and Social Sciences was another session on "Islam and Society." It was chaired by Manzoor Ahmad of the Institute of Objective Studies, Delhi who also had two papers. Najwa Swaileh of the University of Birmingham discussed "The Effects of Ramadhan Fasting on Maximum Oxygen Uptake and Maximum Performance," and Robert Delk of the American-Islamic College discussed his "Thoughts of Being a Muslim Social Scientist."

The concluding session was a Round-Table Discussion, another innovation in AMSS Conferences. The theme of the discussion was the Muslim Ummah: Educational Challenges and Trends. Among the participants of the Round Table Discussion were Sayed Hamid, former Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University, Pakistan; Manzooruddin Ahmad, Vice-Chancellor, Karachi University; Manzoor Ahmad, Dean, Karachi University; and others.

Mushtaqur Rahman
Univ. of Iowa
Ames, Iowa