



NEWSLETTER



O.I.C. RESEARCH CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE

MAY 1982

No: 1

Message of H.E. Habib Chatti, Secretary General of the OIC

At present the world is going through an important change dominated by various complex factors. This change is proceeding towards a point where the balance between two aspects of human existence is disturbed, i.e. the material and the spiritual aspects.

The accelerated development of technology and material welfare on one hand and the deterioration of civilization and menacing poverty on the other, have led the human soul both in the rich and the poor parts of the world to a growing anxiety. Conflicting factors in the relationship among the human masses should also be considered.

In the last decade of the 14th Century Hijra, corresponding to the last quarter of the 20th Century, which is filled with events and activities, the Islamic World shows unique characteristics. Hundreds of millions of Muslims are endeavouring to realise the noble values of the eternal message of Islam.

With this message the Muslim Umma became the "Middle Nation" with the mission of forming the balance between the matter and the spirit on general social and human levels on one side, and on personal and individual levels on the other side rejecting all sorts of extremes and excesses.

In 1969, Israel did not think that its criminal act

FROM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S DESK.

Dear Reader!

The first issue of our Newsletter is now with you. It is being published in Arabic, English and French which are the official languages of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. To start with, it will be published regularly every six months. However, as the activities of the Centre get into full gear, we intend to make it a quarterly feature. The present issue, being an inaugural one, contains more comprehensive information than an ordinary newsletter is actually warranted to do. The succeeding issues shall therefore be different in contents and format. Maximum effort has been made to reflect our activities in this newsletter. How far we have succeeded is up to you to judge. We shall therefore look forward to receiving your valuable comments. The opinions expressed by our esteemed readers shall be published in our next issue under the caption of "Views and Reviews" and will appear regularly in the following issues.

Let me express my sincere thanks to H.E. Habib Chatti, the Secretary General of the O.I.C., for kindly sending us a message for the first issue of the Newsletter. We are carrying it with gratitude.

As H.E. The Secretary General so eloquently expressed in his message, the Islamic world is in dire need of promoting solidarity and brotherhood. In this connection, the para-

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of burning the Al-Aksa mosque would bring up the latent Islamic force to the surface and find its proper place on an international level. The first Islamic Summit held in Rabat that same year gave birth to the Organisation of the Islamic Conference as a basic step towards the solution of the Palestine problem and OIC became the focal point of all efforts for the realisation of Islamic solidarity at economic, social and cultural levels.

The Member States recognized the necessity of forming specialized bodies to ensure Islamic solidarity in various fields. Thus the establishment of a research centre for Islamic history, art and culture was proposed by the Turkish Government at the 7th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) which was held in İstanbul in 1976.

This Centre has been functioning for less than two years and has undertaken a great responsibility. Its mission is to carry out studies and research in different areas of Islamic civilization to uncover the bright aspects of this civilization whose heritage is spread over fourteen centuries. It has also undertaken to act as coordinator between various institutions working in the same fields in and outside the Muslim world, so that wastage of effort and money - from which the Muslim world started suffering nowadays - will be avoided.

The Centre started working from the first day to carry out these two noble objectives. 11th ICFM (held in Islamabad in 1980) and 12th ICFM (held in Baghdad in 1981) approved its work programmes and the budget respectively for the two years. Its Governing Council was constituted at the 12th ICFM and is composed of ten eminent scholars of Islamic culture and art from different Member States of the OIC. These members were chosen in regard to their specialization and to the principle of geographical distribution.

We are happy to know that the Governing Council has also approved the two work programmes. The Centre started carrying out these programmes with noticeable urgency and a realistic and practical approach towards the objectives drawn in its establishment statute together with the purpose of realising the hopes expected from the Centre by the Islamic world.

On this occasion of the publication of the first issue of the Newsletter, I wish to record some important points.

mount importance of greater cooperation among the Islamic countries in the fields of science, technology, economics and politics is self-evident.

But the ideal of Islamic solidarity will still be difficult to realise, if the objective of cultural integration is not accorded its rightful place and given the priority it merits. How can this objective of cultural integration be achieved? We honestly think that this can be accomplished through an awareness of cultural identity which is consciously created as a result of scientific enquiry and dedicated research work. It is here in the realm of the 'cultural renaissance' that our Centre can make a useful contribution.

I must say a word of praise for the nucleus staff of the Centre who worked hard to produce this Newsletter in a short period of time. But for their concerted effort, it would never have seen the light of the day.

May God guide us on the right path.

Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu

Firstly, I would like to thank the Turkish Government for granting the beautiful and historical premises which is in excellent harmony with the nature of the Centre and its importance. We also would like to give our thanks to the Turkish Government for completing the formalities which give diplomatic status to the Centre.

Secondly, I urge the Member States to send their mandatory contributions, which were decided upon by the ICFM, to the Centre's budget so that it can carry on its work.

Thirdly, I wish to call on all the Member States and institutions to send generous donations for the restoration of Çit Kasrı (Çit Palace) which was recently allocated to the Centre by the Turkish Government. 'Çit Kasrı' is one of the pavilions in the beautiful, historical Yıldız Palace complex.

Lastly, on this occasion, I would like to thank those who work in the Centre for their devotion, self-sacrifice and continuous efforts in the achievement of these noble objectives in spite of all the difficulties and the lack of means. I wish them all success and ask God the Almighty to help them in their sincere work.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CENTRE

THE GOVERNING
COUNCIL



A view of the Present Premises of the Centre.

The proposal for the establishment of a research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture at Istanbul was mooted by the Turkish delegation at the 7th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers convened in Turkey in 1976. The proposal was accepted in principle and the Turkish Government was requested to submit a detailed report on the subject. The venue of the proposed Centre - Istanbul - was also agreed on due to its being the repository of a great Islamic culture and civilization. The consequent report prepared by the Turkish Government was considered at the 8th ICFM held at Tripoli (Libya) on 16-22 May 1977 where it was also decided to start consultations with the Islamic Solidarity Fund with a view to seeking its assistance in funding the Centre. The legal form and the establishment statute of the Centre was approved at the 9th ICFM held at Dakar in 1978. The first programme and the budget of the Centre were formally approved at the 11th ICFM held at Islamabad in May 1980. In the 12th ICFM held at Baghdad

in May 1981, two amendments to the establishment statute of the Centre were moved and agreed on. One concerned the increase in the number of members of the Governing Council from 9 to 10, while the other related to the clarification of an ambiguity regarding the contributions of member states to the Centre's budget. The negotiations between the Turkish Government and the OIC General Secretariat for the grant of diplomatic status to the Centre were successfully concluded and agreement to this effect was signed between the two parties in November 1980 in Jeddah. An amended text of the agreement was signed again in May 1981 and was also approved by the Turkish Cabinet. The agreement awaits final ratification from the National Security Council of Turkey after being passed by the Consultative Assembly.

When finally ratified, this step will go a long way in attracting competent professional staff from member Islamic countries.

THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

The Governing Council of the Centre is composed of 10 members drawn from various member countries of the OIC. They are prominent personalities in their respective disciplines. The present Council was approved by the 12th ICFM held at Baghdad in May 1980, on a suggestion by the Secretary General for a period of three years and in accordance with the dictates of the principle of geographic distribution. The names of the current members are as follows :

8. Dr.Emin Bilgiç, Professor of History, Faculty of letters, Ankara University (Turkey)
9. Eng. Abdul Kader Hamza Koskak, Secretary General, Organisation of the Islamic Capitals, Makka (Saudi Arabia)
10. A member from the Islamic Republic of Iran (yet to be nominated)

The Director General of the Centre and the



A view of the First meeting of the Governing Council of the Centre.

1. Dr. Ahmad Abdul Sattar al-Jawari, Scholar (Iraq)
2. Raja Fuziah Binti Raja Tun Uda, Director General, Malaysian Handicraft Development Corporation, (Malaysia)
3. Dr. Mahmoud Zouber, Director, Ahmad Baba Islamic Centre (Mali)
4. Dr. Muhammad Sijelmassi, Scholar in Islamic Arts (Morocco)
5. Arch. Sami M. Angawi, Director, Hajj Research Centre, Jeddah (Saudi Arabia)
6. Dr. Afif Bahnassi, Director General of Museums and Antiquities Damascus, (Syria) chairman
7. Mr. Saleh al-Mahdi, Director, National

Secretary General of the OIC are the ex-officio members of the Governing Council. The first annual meeting of the Governing Council was held in Istanbul on 10-12 November 1981.

The Council reviewed the past performance of the Centre and decided to "give thanks and appreciation to the Director General and his staff for the achievements performed in the past period and for the valuable initiatives which led the Centre to execute this serious and important work promptly." The Council also agreed to the Centre's 1982/83 work programme, which will be submitted to the 13th ICFM to be held at Niamey (Niger) for final approval.

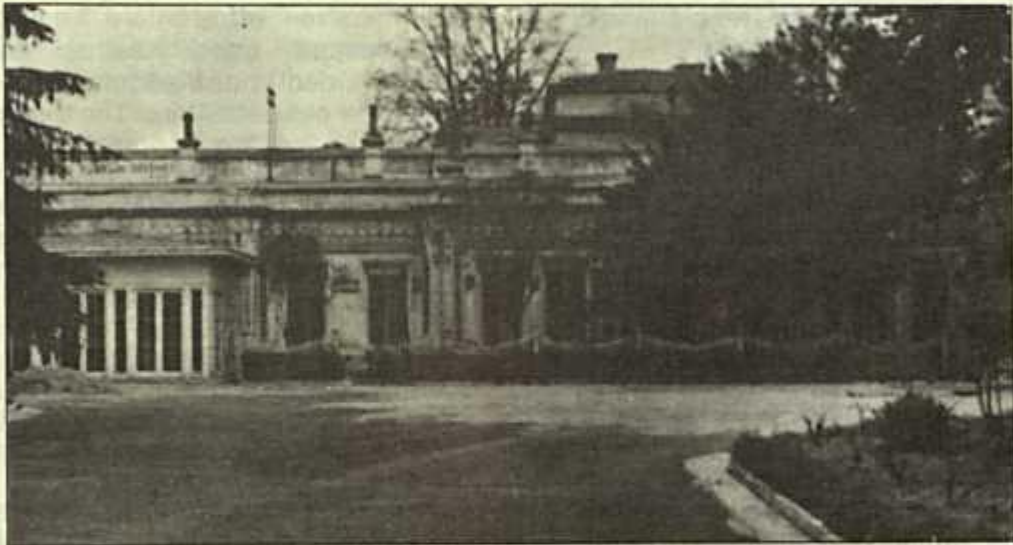
YILDIZ PALACE

The Present Location of the Centre

The Centre is presently functioning in a small historical pavilion known as "Seyir Köşkü" (sometimes mentioned as Set Köşkü), on the grounds of the Yıldız Palace. It was built by Sultan Abdulhamid II (1878-1908) and is located next to the "Büyük Mabeyn Palace" overlooking the Yıldız mosque. The Büyük Mabeyn Palace was constructed by Sultan Abdulaziz (1861-1876) who also built the mansions called "Malta Köşkü", "Çadır Köşkü" and "Çit Kasrı". It is said that "Seyir

most magnificent building in the palace. Many heads of state, emperors, kings and queens were entertained here. Çit Kasrı was built to receive the foreign representatives. Yıldız Palace is a complex of buildings built by different Ottoman Sultans. It is assumed that the Palace received its name from the hill (Yıldız Tepesi) on which it was built.

The Yıldız Palace functioned as a small self-sufficient city, with a population of 12,000



"Çit Kasrı" - the new additional building of the Centre in the Yıldız Palace offered by the Turkish Government.

Köşkü" was built in three days on the eve of the official visit of Wilhelm II, the German Emperor and King of Prussia. The objective was to enable the German emperor to watch the ceremony of Friday Prayers and military parades from this small pavilion and it was used for this purpose for many other foreign representatives and dignitaries.

Yıldız Palace is a typical example of Turkish palace architecture. It was a complex of buildings and gardens, covering an area of about 15 acres. The Palace had four big portals and three courtyards. In the forecourt were the Büyük Mabeyn building, Çit Kasrı and other buildings housing the prominent palace officials. Büyük Mabeyn was the nucleus of the whole complex and was the largest and the

people. The Palace contained a theater, a valuable library and archives, a museum for military weapons, a zoo and a birdhouse.

There were artificial lakes, rare birds and plants in the park. The Palace had its own repair shop, carpentry shop, foundry, sawmill and porcelain factory. This is a brief history of the Yıldız Palace, which accommodates the present premises of the Centre. In the Republican period, the Yıldız Palace was, for a while, used as a Military Academy and Çit Kasrı housed the library of the Academy. The Centre is thankful to the Turkish Government for the grant of "Çit Kasrı", a more spacious building in the Yıldız Palace, in view of the expanding staff and structure of the Centre and insufficiency of the present building.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

RESEARCH:

Research forms the main segment of the programmed activities of the Centre. Many interesting research projects have been initiated and are in various stages of their execution. A particular effort has been made to ensure that these projects are original in concept and content, and live up to high academic standards expected of the Centre. The main research projects currently in progress are briefly detailed below:

1. A Bibliography of the Translations of the Meanings of Holy Quran.

This is a very ambitious project and shall be completed in various phases. The first phase related to the preparation of a bibliography of the translations of the Holy Quran found in major libraries and museums all over the world, through survey of catalogues and other sources.

This phase is almost nearing completion. Manuscripts available in world libraries and museums shall be taken care of in the second phase. In the third and final stage, translations and manuscripts in private hands, the existence of which is duly reported, shall be covered. The results of the first phase of the study were also presented in the form of a paper at the "15th Seminar of Islamic Thought" held in Algiers in September 1981. The discussions which followed also revealed a consensus among the Islamic delegations about the great utility of this research project and this has further strengthened our resolve to carry it out with greater conviction and vigour.

2. A Guide Book of Islamic Cultural Institutions

The idea of publishing such a guide book is to disseminate information on Islamic cultural institutions for the benefit of researchers and scholars throughout the world. The Islamic Cultural Institutions to be included shall comprise firstly the museums, libraries, archives which possess cultural materials and secondly the research centres, associations and organisations

conducting research on different fields of Islamic culture. Initially, about one thousand questionnaires were mailed in July 1980. The response was rather poor and consequently reminders, together with another set of questionnaires were sent again after plugging the loopholes detected in the first attempt. However, an experimental Guide Book was published in May 1981 incorporating the available information. But the project needs further intensive effort and another one thousand questionnaires are being forwarded to new addresses as well as to the old defaulters. The expanded and revised edition of the Guide Book is expected to be published in the near future. The cooperation of all concerned is also vouchsafed through the medium of this newsletter.

3. Islamic History Series

This is another important area of investigation for the Centre. There is need for re-writing and re-interpreting the Islamic history. This has become absolutely necessary under the changed circumstances obtaining in the world in the post-colonial era. This will help in fostering closer cooperation among the muslim countries by trying to remove the clouds of distrust and causes of dissensions which have been a legacy of the past. The importance of this project is therefore self-evident and need not be over-emphasised. This is however a monumental work and will need the cooperation of the eminent Muslim historians. The Centre is quite hopeful that the much needed cooperation shall be readily extended by all concerned. A beginning has been made by writing a "History of Turks". The first volume will deal with the history of the Turks from the time of their conversion to Islam into the Seljuk era. The project was undertaken by Turkish historians and has already been completed. Arrangements are afoot to bring out its English and Arabic translations in the not very distant future. The work on the second volume of the Islamic history series relating to "History

of the Ottoman State" is in progress.

The recently concluded inaugural meeting of the Governing Council also "approved the orientation of the Centre aiming to show the Islamic unity through history and to study, in particular, the history of the Islamic territories which are not well known in Africa and South East Asia". The writing of the history of lesser known Islamic territories in Africa and South East Asia is therefore the next priority of the Centre.

4 (a) Calligraphic Materials Project

This project is past the planning stage and is now in an advanced stage of execution. The project was planned on the basis of a strong evidence that no worthwhile research work has ever been done shedding light on the materials used in muslim calligraphy, although there is no dearth of work on the art of calligraphy itself. The present project aims to cover a whole spectrum of the writing materials such as the papers, the composition of ink, the pens, etc., and shall also take cognizance of the materials used in making such instruments. The Centre shall appreciate cooperation with other scholars and institutions who have interest or are working in this field.

4 (b) Preparation of a Documentary Film on Mr. Hamid Aytac

Mr. Hamid Aytac is a living legend of the world of calligraphy. He was born in 1891 in the city of Diyarbakir (Turkey) and later on moved to the metropolitan city of Istanbul where he studied the art of



Mr. Hamid Aytac (In the Centre) signing visitors book of the Centre.

calligraphy. In 1920's he became widely known as a professional calligraphist and an eminent teacher of the art of calligraphy. He commanded a wide following of students and disciples from all over the globe. He has three Mushafs to his credit and is termed by his contemporaries as the greatest calligraphist of this Century. The Centre is preparing a short documentary film on the life and works of this great calligraphist as a priority project and it should be available for screening during the Ramadan of 1402 H.

5. Research on Islamic Swords

The work on this research project is also under progress. The ultimate objective is to bring out a descriptive work on Islamic swords dated from the First Century Hijra to the 10th Century. The relevance of the subject can be explained away in terms of a general paucity of literature on weapons in the muslim world. Whatever little information on the subject has been established to exist in the East, has mostly filtered through and is based on Western sources.

PUBLICATIONS

The Centre is still in its stage of infancy, requiring a lot of groundwork and building of its infra-structure. The research projects briefly listed above are in different stages of their execution and the publications based on these shall gradually be coming out. The Centre has already published a guide book namely "A Guide Book of Islamic Cultural Institutions", the revised and enlarged edition of which shall soon be appearing. The Centre also published an illustrative brochure on the occasion of the third Islamic Summit at Taif. The publication of an updated edition of this brochure is on the anvil as a lot of water has flown under the bridge since its first appearance. The Centre has also a newsletter. The first issue of the newsletter is now in your hands. Suggestions at improving the style and contents of this newsletter would be most welcome. The present issue being the inaugural one, is not a prototype of the format of the succeeding issues. It shall appear every six months and keep the Islamic world abreast of the happenings at the Centre. The Centre also intends, as recommended by the Governing Council to publish occasional studies on history, art and culture and to make some of these available to researchers and scholars working in the field of Islamic culture.



H.E. Mr. Bülend Ulusu, Prime Minister of Turkey in the emerging Library of the Centre.

Libraries are essential and indispensable information centres that are prerequisite in every field of research. It can easily be said that the credibility of a research or an academic study is correlated to the information centre.

From this viewpoint, the Centre has given priority to the establishment of its library. Preliminary studies for the establishment of this library within the means of the Centre were taken up and eventually the library started taking shape. This library is already gaining an important place in Istanbul, a city of libraries on Islamic culture, and attracting the attention of local scholars. The present collection totals about 5,000 titles.

It was decided that the library collection would be made up of main references and rare books

related to the Centre's field of activity and the library is being built on this principle. Encyclopaedias, bibliographic works, catalogues, research works, as well as atlases, maps and albums are collected in this library. Attempts are being made to obtain the Constitution, development plans and national bibliographies of the Member States.

We would like to mention that newspaper cuttings of documentary value are being compiled and they will form a worthwhile section of the library collection.

Archive units are also being considered in addition to the library. Data collected in relation to the aforementioned "Translations of the Holy Quran" and "Islamic Cultural Institutions" will form the first unit of the Centre's archives.

PEOPLE AND EVENTS

It has been a cornerstone of the policy of the Centre to invite distinguished scholars from the Islamic world to Centre and have the benefit of their wise counselling and sound advice based on their scholarship and learning. The objective is to promote an exchange of ideas with a view to sharpening analytical tools and putting the available resources to the best possible use. The Centre had the honour of receiving the following distinguished guests during the calendar years 1980 to 1981.

Dr. Abdul Hamid Derhaly
Director General, Planning Department,
Saudi Arabia

Dr. Mohammed al-Tahir al-Jerary
Director, Libyan Jihad Centre for Historical
Studies Tripoli, Libya

Professor Dr. Abdullah al-Turki
Rector, Imam Mohd. Bin Saud University
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Sheikh Safwat Saqqa al-Amini
Assistant Secretary General, RABITA
Makka, Saudi Arabia

Dr. Mohammad Ahmad al-Sharif
Secretary General, Call to Islam Society,
Libya

Prof. Abdullah al-Mished
Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt

Dr. Hassan A. Ma'ayergi
Scholar from Doha, Qatar

H.E. Hakim Mohammed Saeed
President, Hamdard Foundation, Karachi
and Adviser to the President of Pakistan

Prof. Dr. Tayyib al-Najjar
Rector, al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt

Prof. Dr. Ahmed Mukhtar Omer
University of Kuwait, Kuwait
Mr. Bahy al-Adgham
Ex-Prime Minister of Tunisia



H.E. Mr. Bülend Ulusu, Prime Minister of Turkey
with the Director General of the Centre

In addition to the above-mentioned scholars and intellectuals, Turkish Prime Minister, H.E. Bülend Ulusu paid a visit to the Centre on 25 December 1981. He was apprised of the problem of shortage of space and was requested to use his good offices for the provision of a more spacious building in the Yıldız Palace. (It may be mentioned here that the request has already been granted, for which the Centre is grateful to the Prime Minister and his Cabinet). He also recorded his impressions in the visitors book in which he wished the Centre and the staff a resounding success.

The Centre also received an IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations) delegation during the month of February 1982. The Director General held useful discussions with them especially with regard to the extent and nature of the cooperation between the two organisations.

H.E. Alzouma, the ambassador of Niger in Bonn also visited the Centre and discussed with the Director General the arrangements in connection with the 13th ICFM to be held in Niger in May/June 1982. The Director General assured him his full cooperation on this regard.

DIRECTOR GENERAL'S SOCIAL CONTACTS AND RAPPORT WITH OTHER COUNTRIES AND INSTITUTIONS



H.E. Mr. Habib Chatty, Secretary General of the O.I.C.
With the Director - General of the Centre (3rd Summit, Taif)

The 1981/82 calendar year was a year of hectic activities for the Director General. His personal diplomacy has contributed a lot in creating new contacts in the member countries of the OIC while at the same time strengthening the old ones. These connections have proved very useful in solving many problems and were instrumental to promote stronger ties between the Centre and their countries. A brief resume of the meetings, conferences, etc., that he attended and the countries visited are detailed below:

- January 12-16, 1981- "Islamic Medicine Conference" Kuwait
- January 25-28, 1981- "3 rd Summit Conference", Taif, Saudi Arabia.
- March 18, 1981 - "3rd Session of the Commission for a Common Lunar Calendar", Tunisia
- March 30 to April 2, 1981 - "7th Session of the Islamic Commission for Economic and Social Affairs", Jakarta, Indonesia.

- April 7-9, 1981

Visited archives libraries, museums, and other cultural institutions in Malaysia .

- April 10-13, 1981

- Visited Bangladesh on the invitation of her Minister of Sports and Culture and was taken around their national archives, museums, and cultural centres.

- May 11-12, 1981

- Visited Jordan in the company of a group of Turkish professors where he was personally invited to the presence of H.R.H. the Crown Prince and discussions were held regarding the establishment of the " Royal Academy of Islamic Civilization Research" in Jordan.

- June 1-4, 1981

- "12th ICFM" Baghdad. The work programme and the budget of the Istanbul Centre for

- June 21-25, 1981 1982/83 was aproved.
- "Islamic Seminar" in Tokyo, Japan. as a member of the "15th Century Reawakening Commission. He also represented H.E. The Secretary General of the OIC.
- June 26-30, 1981 - "Opening Ceremony of the Third Mosque in Korea". Seoul
- September 1,1981 - "15th Century Hijra Islamic Seminar" Algeria. Presented a paper on the History of the Translations of the Holy Quran.
- Sept. 5-8, 1981 - Seminar on "Cultural Agreement" in Bahrain organised by ALECSO. Attended as the representative of the OIC.
- Sept. 14-18, 1981 "The First International Turkish Islamic History of Science and Technology Conference", Istanbul. Read his paper on "First Treatise on Modern Chemistry Printed in Turkey".
- Sept. 18,1981 - "The Second Islamic Sciences Conference" Istanbul.
- October 26, 1981 - "Inaugural Meeting of the Board of Directors of the World Centre for Islamic Education". Makka
- January 15, 1982 - Meeting of the 8th Islamic Commission Tripoli, Libya
- February 8, 1981 Meeting of the "Permanent Finance Committee" Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.



Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu, Director General of the Centre in audience with Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Korea, during his visit to South Korea in connection with the opening ceremony of the third mosque in Seoul.

FUTURE PLANS AND PROJECTS

The Centre has a challenging task ahead and has chalked out an interesting and constructive research programme for the future. The research projects being contemplated for the future can be reviewed from short, medium and long-term Perspective.

SHORT-TERM PROJECTS :

Under this heading can be included projects to be undertaken over the next one or two years. The Centre plans to carry out the following projects in the Short - term period.

- (i) Catalogue of the Mushaf Copies
This project is at the planning stage and involves preparation of a descriptive catalogue of the Mushaf copies found in the museums and libraries of Istanbul up to the 9th Century Hijra. The project has been assigned to two experts who are probing the problem extensively.

- (ii) Guide book on ottoman state archives

The Ottoman State Archives are a great source of basic and indispensable information regarding the history and administrative set-ups of a large number of Islamic states and muslim communities. A guide book describing these archives in detail is being prepared and shall primarily cater to the needs of scholars in Ottoman archives. A separate project shall involve deciphering the waqf documents relating to Palestine and "Al-Quds Shariff" and publishing the same with an index and explanatory notes. This shall be followed by a study of the documents related to Hameyn - the Holy Mekka and Medina.

- (iii) Archive of Clippings

This project relates to accumulation of newspaper clippings containing important news about the Islamic world or carrying articles relating to the fields of interest of the Centre. This exercise shall, over the years, become a regular and integral part of the Centre's activities. Interesting extracts from these

clippings may also be splashed on the pages of the newsletter of the Centre, in the nature of gleanings from the press.

MEDIUM-TERM PROJECTS

- (i) Audio-visual Unit

The Centre plans to establish an audio-visual unit. To begin with, it will form part of the library and archives unit, but during the course of time, after the problems of space and finance are overcome, it shall be expanded to work as a separate unit.

- (ii) Internship Programme

An Internship programme is also on the medium-term research agenda of the Centre. University students engaged in research in the fields of Islamic history, art and culture are intended to be associated with the Centre to reap benefit from the expertise and the reference library available in the Centre. Every internee selected through an interview shall be paid a stipend by the Centre. Only those students who have already completed their courses and are preparing to write their dissertations shall be inducted into the scheme.

- (iii) Internal Seminars

Holding internal seminars at appropriate intervals is also being planned as a medium-term activity. This shall however be possible only when the strength of the research staff is sufficiently increased and the research work gets into full swing. The idea behind such a seminar, to be held at the 'proposal stage' and to be given by a researcher involved in a particular project, is to help him in improving his technique and approach to the subject.

LONG-TERM PROJECTS

The following projects are envisaged in long-term perspective.

(i) Publication of an Academic Journal

The publication of an academic journal is envisaged in the establishment statute of the Centre. This is a challenging project and can only be undertaken when financial and expertise problems of the Centre are adequately solved. The Centre does not want to plunge headlong into this area without making sure that it will be a successful venture and that the journal shall be able to attain academic heights reached by similar journals of international repute.

(ii) Computer application

With the gradual expansion of the staff

and research activities of the Centre, it shall become absolutely necessary to resort to computer application in processing the accumulated mass of data. The idea will be to shift the emphasis from mechanical to electronic operations as the computer technology has enormously widened the scope and capability of information services.

(iii) Miscellaneous projects

Uniform standards for libraries in the Islamic world, the contribution of Muslims to the development of sciences, preparation of an incunabula of Islamic culture etc., are other projects being contemplated by the Centre.

THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ISLAMIC ART

The Centre is planning to hold an international symposium on "The Common Principles, Forms and Themes of Islamic Art" in April 1983. The exact date of the Symposium shall be communicated in due course. The Symposium shall be organised in Istanbul - a city known for its rich cultural heritage and shall coincide with the celebration of the advent of the 15th Century Hijra by the Turkish Government, the highlight of which shall be an international exhibition on Islamic Art to be opened in Istanbul. This will provide a rare opportunity to the observers and participants of the Symposium to witness the practical expressions of the Islamic Art. This is hoped to enhance the importance of the event and the occasion.

The title of the Symposium is significant and has been carefully selected. The Islamic Art did not spring up all of a sudden and out of wilderness. It took many centuries to develop and crystallise. The Islam spread to far off lands and regions and brought into its fold,

people of various colours, creeds and cultures. The Islamic Art therefore took different national and regional characteristics and traits. Thus it has variety and different blends. But there is a unity in this diversity of Islamic Art. The governing principles, dominant forms and underlying themes are however similar as the roots of all these regional manifestations of Islamic Art can be traced back to common sources. This point is also expected to get due weight in the Symposium and the discussions that will follow.

The dynamism and vitality of the past Islamic Art along with its present state shall form another point of discussion in the forthcoming Symposium.

The original and previously unpublished research works are expected to be drawn upon to highlight all these aspects of Islamic Art. The Centre shall appreciate recommendations and suggestions from Islamic Art scholars and other interested persons with a view to making the Symposium a success.

SPOTLIGHT ON CULTURAL NEWS

SPAIN The Neglected Mosque of Cordoba

One of Islam's greatest monuments in the Western world, the Cordoba Mosque, is crumbling from lack of attention. The Cordoba Mosque comes under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church because the Cathedral of Cordoba lies within the Mosque. Local residents say that tourists are picking off pieces of mosaic with their fingers, and parts of the walls are literally falling into the street where the ancient stones are picked up by the passersby. Moreover, the magnificent

Calendar for the years 1403 and 1404.

LIBYA - Conference on "Decolonisation of the History of the Turkish-Arab Relations"

The Libyan History Studies Centre, Tripoli will hold a conference in Tripoli, from the 18th through 23rd October 1982 on the "Decolonisation of the History of the Turkish-Arab Relations". A wide range of interesting and thought-provoking topics are expected to be dilated upon under the above-mentioned main theme of the Conference. Further



The Director General, Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu in audience with H.M. King Hussain and H.R.H. Crown Prince Hasan of Jordan.

stained glass windows are periodically broken by vandals and are not being repaired.

Would the Islamic world act to save this great Islamic monument before it is too late.

Arabia : The Islamic World Review
November 1981

ALGERIA - "Commission for a Unified Lunar Calendar"

In continuation of its earlier deliberations, the 4th meeting of the member states of the Commission for a Unified Lunar Calendar was held in Algiers on 3-4 March 1982. The Commission is composed of religious scholars and astronomers which hail from the following member States of the Commission, namely, Algeria, Bangladesh, Iraq, Indonesia, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunis and Turkey. The Commission approved the Lunar

enquiries can be routed to the address below:

The Preparatory Committee of
the Arab Turkish Conference,
Libyan Studies Centre,
Hay al Andalus, P.O.Box 5070,
Tripoli, Libya

JORDAN - "The Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research"

A meeting of the Governing Board of "The Royal Academy of Islamic Civilization Research" in Amman was held on 8th April 1982. The academy has been established under the patronage of H.E. the Crown Prince of Jordan and is designed to carry out research in the field of Islamic civilisation. The Centre wishes the Academy great success in its future academic pursuits.

UNITED KINGDOM -

A. Seminar on "The Arts in Islamic Lands"

The "Islamic Arts Foundation" recently established as a charity organisation in the U.K. organised a seminar on "The Arts in Islamic Lands" in Farnham Castle, England on 26-28 March 1982. Seminar papers and extracts from the discussions will feature in the first issue of the quarterly journal which the Foundation plans to launch. The Foundation, during the course of time, also intends to carry out a world-wide survey of Islamic architecture. With an impressive array of names on its Board of Directors and the assurance of Unesco cooperation, we are confident that it is going to have a bright future. We wish the Foundation a happy start.

B. The Middle Asia Studies Association, Oxford, U.K.

The above-mentioned Association has now been replaced by an Institute, whose principal medium will be a journal scheduled to appear in early summer 1982. This will carry articles especially dealing with the history, politics and culture of the region. The new organisation also plans to promote research dealing with Soviet Central Asia and Kazakhstan, the ethnically related regions of China, namely, Xinjian Province, Afghanistan and Iran. The research will also extend to the Central Volga-Ural regions of the USSR, the Muslim North Caucasus and Azerbaidzhan which share many problems with Central Asia.

Address: Mr. S.E. Wimbush
P.O. Box 131
Oxford OX1 2NJ

C. Symposium on The Art of the Seljuks

The University of Edinburgh shall hold a symposium on "The Art of the Seljuks" on August 29 through September 2, 1982. The symposium will cover all major aspects of the art of the period such as architecture, painting, pottery and metal work. In addition to that, separate sessions are also expected to be held on epigraphy, external influences and recent excavations. For further details, please contact:

Dr. R. Hillenbrand
Department of Fine Arts
University of Edinburgh
19 George Square
Edinburgh EH8 9JZ

PAKISTAN - International Exhibition on Islamic Books.

An International exhibition on Islamic books

shall be held at Karachi (Pakistan) in June 1982 under the the aegis of National Hijra Committee of Pakistan. The organisers have requested the cooperation of all individuals, organisations and publishing houses in the Islamic world to send their recently published Islamic books for display in the exhibition. The safety of the books and manuscripts shall be guaranteed by the Government of Pakistan. The books and the manuscripts may be sent to the following address:

National Hijra Committee
75 Muslimabad, New Town Post Office
Karachi, Pakistan

SYRIA - "History of Sciences" Conference

The Institute for the History of Arabic Science, Aleppo University, Aleppo, Syria, held a conference on the subject of "History of Sciences" in Aleppo on 14-15 April 1982. A similar conference was held on May 13, 1981. The above-mentioned conference was organised in continuation of the last one and could take up its thread of academic discussions from where it was left. The Centre conveyed its best wishes for the success of the Conference.

TUNISIA - Symposium on Pre-Ottoman and Ottoman Studies

The Centre for Economic and Social Research Studies, University of Tunis, plans to hold a symposium on "Pre-Ottoman and Ottoman Studies" on 13-18 September 1982. The symposium aims at making a comparative study of the two periods especially with regard to their social, cultural, economic and political implications and impacts.

INDIA - The 2nd Quran Congress

The second Quran Congress of the International Association for the Study of the Quran will be held in New Delhi on 12-18 December 1982, under the sponsorship of "The Indian Institute of Islamic Studies", New Delhi, India. The first Quran Congress was held in Canberra under the auspices of the Australian National University on 8-13 May 1980, where the above-mentioned International Association also came into being. The theme of the Congress will be: "The Quran in the 15th Century Hijra - Challenges and Responses". The Centre looks forward to participation in the Congress with hope and promise.

EPILOGUE

In the preceding pages, we have tried to put before you, as briefly as possible, our record of performance during the brief span of our existence. In humility, we bow to Allah for enabling us to accomplish it. But we are not content with this. We could have done better but for the limitations of space, staff, equipment and finances.

The space is unfortunately very restricted. About 7 staff members are packed together in the small library room. This is hardly any proper environment for research. This problem is hoped to be solved, to a great extent, after the Centre is able to take possession of the new building recently offered by the Turkish Government. The building however requires extensive restoration and repair work before we can move in and this is going to take some time and that too if sufficient funds are readily made available for the purpose.

The strength of researchers and technical staff is very limited. This is hardly a number

which can be welded together to undertake any meaningful programme, not to speak of any ambitious one. The Centre has however plans to enlarge this number through international recruitments. And this brings us to our pivotal problem i.e. the insufficiency of funds.

The Centre shall be handicapped vis-a-vis meaningful programme of action until the OIC member countries cooperate in paying their mandatory contributions unfailingly and regularly. The Centre notes with distress that many member countries have failed to pay their contributions despite our various reminders.

Last but not the least, the present issue of the newsletter being an inaugural one, we shall be looking forward to suggestions and comments from our well-wishers all around the world. This will help us in improving the form and the contents of our succeeding issues.

OBITUARY

We record with profound grief the sad demise of Mr. Hamid Al-Amidi (Aytaç), the great muslim Calligraphist about whom the Centre had been preparing a documentary film. (Likely to be screened during the Ramadan of 1402 A.H.) He breathed his last in Istanbul on Wednesday May 19, 1982. His death will be widely mourned throughout the Islamic world by scholars and lovers of the art of Calligraphy. May God's Mercy and compassion be on his soul, Ameen.

LATE NEWS:

As the newsletter was going to press, we received the happy news that the National Security Council of Turkey has ratified the agreement granting diplomatic status to the Centre. The ratification will be an added incentive to the already accelerated activities of the Centre. Istanbul Research Centre expresses its sincere thanks and appreciation to the Government of the Turkish Republic.