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of Interest](#)[Websites of Interest](#)[CCMW Archives](#)

المجلس الكندي للنساء المسلمات

CANADIAN COUNCIL OF MUSLIM WOMEN
LE CONSEIL CANADIEN DES FEMMES MUSULMANES

IN THE NAME OF GOD

The Canadian Council of Muslim Women is a national non-profit organization established to assist Muslim women in participating effectively in Canadian Society and to promote mutual understanding between Canadian Muslim women and women of other faiths.



FROM THE EDITOR

Allah, the Almighty God, created humans as males and females and endowed them with the gifts of faith, reason and basic human rights. He commanded them to be responsible partners in life and to practice justice, mutual respect, compassion and modesty under all circumstances. He charged them to be actively concerned with the welfare, progress and peace of all humankind. Muslim Women of Canada believe in these divine commandments and want to participate fully in the Canadian society as responsible citizens to build a just social order. The Canadian Council of Muslim Women was established in 1982 to serve these objectives. Now I am honoured to bring to you the first issue of the Council's quarterly newsletter, THE CANADIAN MUSLIM WOMAN. Through this medium, the Canadian Council of Muslim Women will regularly share with you its goals, policies, plans and programs. We also sincerely invite your advice and cooperation to build bridges of understanding and goodwill within the family as well as across faith and cultural boundaries.

Muslims have lived and worked in Canada for more than one and a quarter of a century. Today we have mosques and community schools, sports teams and radio programs, businesses and Womens' auxiliaries across Canada. The Council of Muslim Communities of Canada keeps our many communities in touch with one another and acts as our voice and clearing house. However, Muslim Women have special concerns and interests which need a sharpened focus. As Muslim Women, we come from many ethno cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. We also belong to many schools of thought and political orientations. At times, we are also victims of stereotyped perceptions and discrimination. But we do share a living bond and heritage the faith of Islam which provides us with a spiritual framework and world view. It also defines the parameters of a responsible role for Muslim Women. The teachings of the Al-Quran and the life and sayings of the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) are our eternal guides. They demand from us to be united as one Community (Ummah), to reflect upon the challenges of our times and to seek answers through mutual consultation (shura). The Canadian Muslim Woman commits itself to follow these guidelines.

We have limited resources. Our task is formidable and immediate. We want to identify and collect data on the special needs, concerns, interests, talents, successes and frustrations of Canadian Muslim Women, we intend to sensitize Canadian Muslim men and women, young and old so that they may understand each other better and relate to one another more meaningfully and effectively. We want to inform and educate fellow Canadians about our Islamic heritage. We also plan to reach out to, and build coalitions with, other womens' groups who share and respect our ideals and concerns. Beyond Canada, we shall join hands with sister organizations in promoting human dignity and world peace. In these endeavours, we seek your cooperation and support. The Canadian Muslim Woman is your voice. Help us to make it a voice of reason and moderation.

Talat Muinuddin

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT ASSALAMU ALAIKUM

The foundation of our Council is the piety to Allah. Without it the Council will crumble to pieces (Quran: 1X-109). We thank Allah for the strength of those within our Council. We pray for His continued blessings. As we reflect upon our constitution & the objectives of our Council. We know the arduous work ahead for us. What we do for our Muslim sisters here or abroad, we do for our future generations. Let us be strong and undaunted as we work together in the cause of Islam.

Dr. Lila Fahlman

WORKSHOP ON VIOLENCE IN THE FAMILY WITH EMPHASIS ON THE NEEDS OF IMMIGRANT WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN WITHIN A MINORITY RELIGION AND ETHNIC COMMUNITY

St. Johns, N.B.

The workshop was held on Sunday, October 9th, 1983, in Saint John and focused mainly on violence in the family with particular reference to ethno cultural groups. These groups are different from the mainstream society in many visible ways and this often leads to greater discrimination and exploitation.

The theme speaker was Ms. Maude Barlow who was senior advisor on women's issues to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. Her presentation was thought provoking, comprehensive and well supported with statistics. She advanced the following hypotheses:

1. All women share common problems no matter what culture we come from. In general, women continue to be victims of sexism and violence of one kind or the other. Traditionally women have been regarded as weaker and less gifted than man. Similar myths are propagated and reinforced today by media and business which portray women as sexy and gorgeous things and sex objects. The present legal framework fails to ensure equal pay or equal status or effective protection against violence at home or discrimination at work.
2. The women's liberation has been misrepresented as promiscuity and the exploitation of women's bodies through pornography and prostitution. Pornography is a multibillion dollar industry in Canada and exploits women and young girls (and boys). Pornography thrives on sex and violence and leads to the degradation of the human person.

The general public relishes the gory details of sex assaults or ignores them. Rapes, child molestations and incests are on the increase. We must understand that pornography is a symptom of the deeper sickness which permeates our society, namely sexism. Sexism is also allied to racism. In traditional societies, including the Muslim society, women were protected from many forms of exploitation through religious injunctions and norms. However, such supportive mechanisms don't exist in modern capitalist democratic societies.

There was a general consensus that we need a vigorous, systematic and comprehensive program of stronger legislation as well as more effective implementation of the existing laws on the airwaves, on the streets and inside the homes. Ms. Barlow made specific references to the sexual victimization of native women and to the vulnerability of young girls who live with mothers who have a second husband or a boyfriend.

Another major area of concern involves women in the work place. It is estimated that women will soon make up 70% of all the work-force. Yet, in spite of it, injustice remains in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women. Immigrant women suffer more because of linguistic and cultural differences. Often, they are not unionized. There are few language classes or information on women's rights or daycare facilities at the work place to support the immigrant women and their children.

Ms. Barlow ended her presentation with the plea to organize and to establish coalitions with other women's groups. As she put it, "As long as we are not organized, we are powerless and remain at the mercy of others."

A heated discussion followed Ms. Barlow's presentation. There was a general agreement with her analysis of the situation. Discussion centered on identifying strategies to fight exploitation of all women and children. The following are some of the main recommendations of the workshop:

1. We must form coalitions and lobby groups against pornography. The Canadian Council of Muslim Women can play a major role in this struggle as Islam prohibits all forms of indecent behaviour or exposure. In particular, we must pressure CRTC to remove violence and pornography from Pay TV. and other television programming.
2. Parents, teachers and religious leaders must work together to develop and deliver programs of responsible sex education in the schools and at home. Many mothers have been very poor in educating their daughters on sex matters.
3. We must educate and help all women to develop positive self concepts and self perceptions. They must learn to say NO when it is warranted. Women must come forward to lay complaints against those who abuse women and to give evidence.
4. Muslim women, in particular, must stand up for their values, for the dignity of human person and for their rights. They must also share their values of human dignity, chastity, modesty and marital fidelity with others in the Canadian society.
5. The family is the place to start character education for self respect and self assertion. We should like to involve all children in mutual consultation and decision making early in life. We should avoid double standards in treating boys and girls. We should help youths in building bridges of understanding and friendship among the different sections of the Muslim Ummah and across faiths and cultural boundaries. Only through harmony at home, We can develop peace in the world.

**FALL CONFERENCE
OISE: TORONTO**

Saturday, October 6, 1984	
Family Violence in a Multicultural Society Available Resources for Women	
9:00 a.m.	Registration
	Welcome Talat Muinuddin, C.C.M.W
9:30 a.m.	Keynote Address - Dr. Mavis Burke, Chairperson, Ontario Advisory Council on Multiculturalism and Citizenship: Special problems of Minority Working Women in Canadian Society; Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence, Aging.
	FAMILY VIOLENCE
10:15-11:00 p.m.	Battered Women and Children in Society: Trudy Don - Coordinator Ontario Assoc. of Interval Transition House
	Sexual Assaults on Women and Children in Society: Ann Kurdiak - Coordinator, Sexual Assaults Clinic Dr. M. Mian - Director, Scan Program, Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto
	COFFEE BREAK
11:15-12:15 p.m.	Group Discussion
12:30 p.m.	Muslim Prayers
	LUNCH
	Luncheon Speaker: The Right Reverend Dr. Lois Wilson President, World Council of Churches
2:00-2:45 p.m.	Elderly Women in a Multicultural Society: needs, problems and suggested solutions - Valerie Mah, Mon Schong Foundation, Home for the Aged Prof. Milada Disman, University of Toronto
3:00-4:00 p.m.	Plenary Discussion; Reports and Reactions Stacey Michner K. Mustapha
7:00 p.m.	Social Evening Film - Tale of Two Mosques (30 Minutes) (A and S Khandwani) Hosted by Islam West Associates (Canada)
Sunday, October 7, 1984	
PORNOGRAPHY AND PROSTITUTION	
9:00 a.m.	Registration

9:00-11:00 a.m.	A comparative analysis a. Islamic law re pornography and prostitution Dr. Lila Fahlman, President, C.C.M.W. b. Canadian law re pornography and prostitution Ceta Ramkhalawan Singh, Ontario Council for status of women; consultant, Equal Opportunity / City of Toronto c. Discussion
11:00-11:15 a.m.	Coffee break
11:15-12:15 p.m.	Critical view of pornography and prostitution, Joanna Fairheart, Chairman, United Church Task Force on Pornography and Deborah Marshall. Chairperson: Prof. Hadia Shakeel, University of Toronto.
12:15-2:00 p.m.	Muslim prayers Lunch
2:00-3:00 p.m.	Group discussions
3:00-3:45 p.m.	Final plenary session Conference recommendations: Ayesha Khan Fari Methani Helen Sethna Concluding remarks: Dr. Laila Fahlman, C.C.M.W
Monday, October 8, 1984	
9.30am	Annual General Meeting of C.C.M.W. Evaluation of conference/workshop Projections 84/85 Local National (Members only)

Conference Planning Committee

Raffina Ali, C.C.M.W. (Toronto)

Dr. Lila Fahlman, C.C.M.W. (Edmonton)

Talat Muinuddin, C.C.M.W. (Toronto)

Nighat Mustafa (Toronto)

Bev Salmon, Commissioner, Ontario Human Rights Commission (Race relations)

Acknowledgement

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Dr. Lila Ameen Fahlman Founding President CCMW

Dr. Lila Fahlman is a Canadian born ;Muslim. Her roots go back to the Ganam family, the Al:Ruadri, and according to family scroll in Damascus, to the Prophet (P.B.U.H). Lila follows the belief to "seek knowledge to the grave". This is exemplified in her career as a teacher & as a counsellor. She (lift post-graduate work in psychology and obtained her Ph.D. She works with teenager problems & family problem situations as well as personal & career counseling.

Lila has always been very active in community, both Muslim & Non-Muslim. She founded the Society for the Preservation of Historical 'domes in an effort to save the home of the first Premier of Alberta & the first Chancellor of the University of Alberta from demolition. Today Rutherford House stands & is a major tourist attraction.

Lila's doctoral thesis "Towards on Understanding of the Lived-World of Lebanese Muslim Students & Their Teachers", an ethnographical study, revealed findings which provided Lila with the desire & reason to found the Canadian Islamic Educational & Cultural Foundation & to begin the first government sponsored Arabic language Kindergarten. The following year Lila presented a proposal to the Edmonton Public School Board. This fall (1984) there are 3 levels Kindergarten & Grades 1 & 2.

As coordinator of women for C.M.C.C., Lila traveled across Canada and discussed the issues with concerned Muslim women. This led to the Founding Conference at Winnipeg in 1982, when the Canadian Council of Muslim Women was born, with Lila as its first president.

Two years ago, The Alberta Minister of culture appointed Lila to the Alberta Culture Heritage Council, Lila was immediately elected to the executive & is also Chairperson of the Cultural affairs Committee. Lila is one of two delegates from the Heritage Council to attend the Multicultural Education Conference in Toronto in November.

CHAPTER NEWS

Edmonton Chapter C.C.M.W. and Alberta Culture co-sponsored the Alberta premiere of the film, A Tale of two Mosques at the museum. This film, produced by Sudha & Abdullah Khandwani, devoted Muslim Artists of Toronto, is a history of the early Muslim settlers in Alberta.

A handful of dedicated, believing Muslim women, Hilwe Hamdon, Maimounie Darwish, Mary Sadie & Miriam Teha, pioneered the construction of the first Mosque in North America. The film highlighted a sense of past, present & future. The new Al Rachid Mosque and Canadian Islamic Center have provided a new dimension of fulfilling the need of second & third generations youth in our Multicultural Mosaic. A reception by the C.C.M.W. chapter followed.

CONGRATULATIONS to KAUSAR CHAUDHRY & her family on their Pilgrimage to Mecca.
THANK YOU EDMONTON WOMEN for your support, participation and hospitality at our Spring Conference.

At our fall conference, St. John, N.B. women supported , participated and provided warm hospitality.
THANK YOU.

Several Muslims concerned with the Muslim refugee problem, met at the home of Solmaz Sahin, to form the International Refugee & Relief Committee. The C.C.M.W. heartily endorses the intent of this committee. His Excellency Abdi Nur Yusuf, the Dean of Muslim Ambassadors in Ottawa, pledged full cooperation in promoting this worthy cause.

Please contact the Chairman Dr. A.F. Sahin. SHOW YOU CARE!

Special THANKS to the Winnipeg Chapter who hosted our President Dr. Lila Fahlman when she presented a paper "PSYCHOLOGY IN ISLAM" to the C.M.C.C. annual conference.
Dr. Lila Fahlman delivered a paper to C.M.C.C. Conference in Winnipeg. Lila spoke of the effects of ideology & attitude of culture of those who work in the field of Psychology, & of "Neutral" religions stance which many take. Lila told that today's psychology is a psychology without a soul studying man without a soul. She said that this objective view must give way to more subjectivity. Dr. Fahlman laid much of the blame on Freud & his theory of drives & instincts. Dr. Fahlman emphasized the advantage of Muslims who by submission to Allah encounter spiritual meaning. Fitra makes us responsible for what we do with our lives. She urged Muslim Psychologists to approach clients from an Islamic perspective.

REPORT ON PREVIOUS ACTIVITIES ST. JOHN N.B. FALL CONFERENCE

The Annual General Meeting was held from October 7-10, 1983. One of the highlights of the meeting was a seminar organized by the host community. The topic was " Bridging the Generation Gap."

The problems were discussed from children's and parent's point of view. Dr. Ahmed, a leading psychiatrist and one of the panelists, emphasized the importance of flexibility with a sense of responsibility. He said that tolerance, understanding, trust, sharing concerns and rational thinking are needed to keep an equilibrium in the family.

There should be defined roles for each individual. Children should be encouraged to participate actively in the decision making process and accept responsibility.

Rifat Zaidi said that we should compare their lives with ours. Making our children understand our values is difficult due to cultural differences. She emphasized that there should be a definite discipline policy in the family and children should respect their elders . She said Islamic teaching must not be changed. Parenting is a joyful duty with a lot of responsibility. Let them decide what they want to be in life. Guide them but do not force them. Suggest instead of getting mad at them and try to make them understand and realize your point of view. Be rational. Parents also need education to face the challenges in their family life. Flexibility and understanding is important. Be friendly, spend time, play games, talk and make them feel that they are important, they are wanted. Show them that you are interested in them.

According to Ahmad, a young, bright university student of New Brunswick, generation gap is strictly a communication problem between parents and children. It is a problem and responsibility of both parties to

communicate. Parents do not know how to come down to children's level and children are afraid of their parents. Empathy is important on both parties' part.

Huma emphasized that there are differences between now and 20-25 years ago. This is a difference of time, technology and availability of abundance of literature and information. She says generation gap is a universal problem. It is a lack of communication between children and parents.

At the end of the session, a number of recommendations were adopted. Some of those recommendations are given below:

1. As generation gap is largely caused by a lack of communication, it is the duty of individuals and families to prevent crises before they occur, wherever possible, and also, to deal with existing problems.
2. We should encourage our Muslim communities to hold such group discussions for the benefit of all concerned.
3. We should invite our youth to have increased participation in our youth camps.
4. Parents should meet regularly in order to exchange information and share experiences.
5. We should continue to keep channels of communication open between the youths and the elderly.
6. We should give sympathetic hearing to our youths' point of view and include them in the decision making in the family.
7. We should work towards strengthening family structure in our community.
8. We should be actively engaged in organizations which are working for the strengthening of family ties in our society.
9. Parental behaviour should be in keeping with our Islamic traditions, so as to set a good example for our children.

Canadian Council of Muslim Women
Le Conseil Canadien des Femmes Musulmanes

On April 24, 1982 Muslim women came from across Canada to a Founding Conference, in Winnipeg, Manitoba of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women. The Council presently has twenty Chapters in operation or in process of formation, extending across Canada, from Vancouver, British Columbia to St. John's Newfoundland.

OBJECTIVES

To coordinate the activities of organizations of Muslim Women across Canada and to present the Islamic way of life, as defined by the Quran and Sunnah.

To stimulate a direction of thinking among Muslim Women across Canada which is characterized by acknowledgement of the multicultural differences, of the harmony in such diversity of cultures, and by an awareness of their rights, responsibilities and roles in a multicultural society.

To foster Islamic education for and among Muslim women and stimulate Islamic thought among them.

To communicate with women throughout the Muslim World.

Canadian Council of Muslim Women
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