

The Story of Indo-Pakistani Muslim Community in Montreal, Quebec

By Mumtazul Haque Rehman

The writer, Mumtazul Haque Rehman is among the pioneers of the Muslim Community in Montreal. He arrived with his family in Canada in September 1954 from Pakistan. He graduated in Civil Engineering (B.Sc. Engineering) from the University of Panjab, Lahore in 1950 and was awarded the Master of Engineering (M.Eng.) degree from McGill University in 1961. He has been registered as a Professional Engineer (P.Eng.) in the Province of Ontario since 1955 and a member of the Order of Engineers (Engineer) in the Province of Quebec since 1961. He has been actively involved in the development of Muslim Community from inception (mid-nineteen fifties) and is one of the founding members of Islamic Centre of Quebec (ICQ).

His professional career has spanned over 30 years, mostly with the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority, where he rose from a young design engineer to the position of Chief Marine Structures Engineer. After retirement, he has been an engineering consultant to the Federal Department of Public Works. Some of his publications have been published in the Journals of American Society of Civil Engineers, notably "Mid-life Retrofit of Welland Canal (1986-91)".

He lives with his wife, Shamim in Kirkland, Québec. Their four sons, all university graduates, live in Toronto, Calgary and Ottawa. Presently he has 10 grand children and one great grand son.

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1.0 Introduction

The first Muslim family, from Lebanon, to settle in Canada arrived in Ottawa in 1903. In Montreal, however, the first influx of Arabs (Muslims and Christians), and perhaps some Jews from the Middle East occurred after the end of the First World War (1919-20). Most of these Arabs spoke French (as a second language) and thus found it easier to settle in Quebec. These Muslim Arabs generally assimilated into the Catholic milieu. If they practised Islam, it was probably in the privacy of their homes. It would be amiss if Mr. Masoud, who owned Masoud Realty Company, was not mentioned here. Mr. Masoud, who hailed from Lebanon, arrived in Montreal in the mid-twenties.

The beginnings of Muslim immigration from India and Pakistan could be traced to the mid-nineteen fifties. Habibullah Khan with his wife and five children arrived in Montreal in 1955. They took up residence in Verdun. There were also, at that time, a few Muslim students at McGill and University of Montreal (about four or five). Habibullah Khan, originally hailed from Patna, Bihar Province, India, and had migrated to Karachi, Pakistan. Khan would have been about fifty then and had children in teens. He was a Chartered Accountant from Britain. The Khans were very hospitable people and their home became a hub of social get-togethers. On the occasion of Eid or other religious holidays, Khan would invite Pakistani, Indian and other Muslims living in Montreal to his home for dinner. I moved with my family (wife and two infant children) to Montreal from Toronto in the fall of 1956. The move to Montreal from Toronto resulted from my acceptance of an engineering position with the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority, which had embarked on a major project-construction of a seaway into the heart of the continent, utilising the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes, lifting and lowering 40,000 ton ships some two hundred metres.

2.0 The First Muslim Associate and Islamic Centre

It was during those social evenings/afternoons, at the residence of Habibullah Khan that the idea of having a Muslim Association/Society took birth. After a number of informal discussions, it was decided to form a Muslim Association. The Islamic Centre of Montreal was thus born in 1958 with Habibullah Khan as its first President and I was asked to take over as Secretary of the Association. The Centre was thus incorporated in the Province of Quebec in 1958. The constitution and the bylaws were formulated. The main objective of the association was to preserve Islamic heritage and create an Islamic environment for the migrants and their growing children. The make-up and bylaws of the association followed the structure of a business corporation-a two-tier administration, a board of directors and an executive consisting of Officers (a President, a Secretary etc.) to run day to day affairs. This probably resulted from Mr. Khan's training as a professional accountant.

After the completion of the seaway project, I joined McGill University in September 1958 as a graduate student in the Department of Civil Engineering. I was a Teaching Assistant in the Department as well and went through my savings to support my family. I completed the course requirements in two semesters (fall 1958 and winter 1959). It was hard to find time for studies and spend time with my growing sons, Nadeem and Naeem. Somehow I managed. In May 1959 I started working again with a firm of consulting engineers engaged on the design of Place Ville Marie Project (the first skyscraper) in Montreal. I was responsible for the design of the structure against wind forces. In the evenings and on weekends, I would do the research portion of the course and the laboratory work. It was not easy juggling a full-time job, research work and finding time for my growing children. In the spring convocation 1961, I was awarded Master of Engineering (M.Eng.) degree.

At the same time, another development took place. It was the birth of the first association of Pakistanis in Montreal consisting of both the landed immigrants and the students (around 1957-58). It was named the "Pakistani Association of Montreal", and had Salahuddin Hyder as its President and Ishfaq Ahmed as Secretary. Salahuddin Hyder was the first immigrant from Pakistan to Canada and had arrived in Montreal in 1953. He had a B.Sc. (Eng.) degree from the Muslim University, Aligarh, in India. Ishfaq Ahmed arrived in Montreal in September 1954 under the Columbo Plan Fellowship Programme to pursue graduate studies in Nuclear Physics at the University of Montreal. Ishfaq Ahmed had a M.Sc. degree in Physics from the University of Panjab. I knew Ishfaq Ahmed since 1945 from Lyallpur, where I had met

him at the Government College. (For more details about Ishfaq Ahmed and Salahuddin Hyder, see the Appendix.)

The first celebration of Pakistan Independence Day, August 14 was held at the University of Montreal in 1958. There was a fashion show introducing Pakistani culture and the local university girls volunteered to be the models and a commentary in both French and English was provided by Shamim Mirza, a student at the University. It was a very successful event and introduced Pakistan to Canadians. More than one hundred persons participated in the celebrations. Refreshments and food were provided by the handful of Pakistani families in the city.

3.0 The Institute of Islamic Studies

The Institute of Islamic Studies, established in 1952 at McGill, attracted a number of Muslim students from various countries. Prof. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Director of the Institute, encouraged and offered fellowships for higher studies in Islam and Christianity. Kamali, an Indian Muslim was one of the pioneering students. Some of the early Eid gatherings for prayer and social gatherings took place at the Redpath Crescent (Institute of Islamic Studies) where the newly arrived Muslims congregated.

The Institute of Islamic Studies (McGill) was fortunate to attract scholars of the calibre of late Drs. Fazlur Rahman (Ph.D. Cambridge), Ismail R. Farooqi (Ph.D. Minnesota) and Dr. M. Rasjidi (Ph.D. from Indonesia) at that time. Their presence in Montreal gave a big boost to the Islamic Centre of Montreal. During his term as the President of the Centre (1960-61), Dr. Farooqi developed good relations with the United Church in the Town of Mount Royal and the Muslim community was welcomed to hold their functions in the church. Mrs. Farooqi organised children's classes, which were held in the basement of the church every Sunday.

About that time, there was an influx of medical graduates from Pakistan and India who arrived for training as specialists in various medical disciplines and to obtain F.R.C.S. (Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons or Physicians) designation. Some of the wives accompanied them. Also a number of commerce graduates from Pakistan and India started coming to get training as accountants to obtain C.A. (Chartered Accountant) designation. (For further details, see the Appendix.)

In the late 1962, the Islamic Centre of Montreal rented an office on Sherbrooke Street West, not far from McGill main gate in order to give legitimacy to the organisation. It was a two-room space and was paid by the members of Muslim community. The Islamic Centre, besides arranging and holding Eid ul Fitre and Eid ul Adha prayers, would arrange social gatherings and dinner on these occasions (catered by the Muslim families). One such festivity took place on St. Helen's Island, after Eid ul Adha prayer; Mr. Masoud made the ritual sacrifice of lambs, which was cooked on open fire (BBQ) and enjoyed by all present (more than 50 people).



Group photo after Eidul Fitr Prayer, 1962, in the United Canada Church, Town of Mount Royal

In addition, the Centre made efforts to arrange one meeting each month and invited local scholars to deliver talks on various aspects of Islam, followed by question and answer sessions and refreshments. In those early years, during the month of Ramadhan, an Iftar party followed by Traweeh prayer would be held on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings, in rotation, at the homes of Muslim families and all known Muslim students would be invited. In those days, Muslims of all sects (Sunnis, Shias and Ahmadis) congregated in one place together. Seeds of a split appeared when one of Ahmadis elders, Mian Ataullah arrived in Montreal around the mid-sixties, and insisted that he would come only if allowed to lead the Traweeh prayer. It was tolerated then for the sake of unity.

4.0 Construction of First Mosque

One of the prime objectives of the handful of Muslim brothers and sisters responsible for the initial formation and growth of the Islamic Centre was to construct a Mosque in Montreal. For this purpose a fund-raising campaign was therefore launched. Modest donations and proceeds from various functions such as Bazaars and Dinners helped in the accumulation of funds.

The two associations-Islamic Centre of Montreal and Pakistani Association of Montreal-continued to function side by side for a few years but as the same people were members in both, interest in the Pakistani Association started waning and by the late sixties, the Pakistani Association had died.

5.0 The Official Recognition of Muslims as a Minority

The Centre had acquired the services of a lawyer, Mr. James Robb with Stikeman and Elliot for its incorporation. In the Province of Quebec, all marriages and births had to be registered in the church, as there was no civil registry. The Muslim community faced this problem, as the Islamic Centre of Montreal was not authorised to perform these functions. Mr. Robb advised us that the problem could be solved if the Quebec Government would recognise Islam as a minority religion, which would require that a private bill be initiated by a member of the National Assembly and passed by the house. It was going to be expensive (lawyer's fees etc.). At the general body meeting, a resolution was passed, authorising the executive to proceed with this matter and seek the Government's recognition. The Liberal party was in power, with Hon. Jean Lesage as Premier of the Province. He had been a partner in the firm of Stikeman and Elliot before becoming Premier and was sympathetic to the idea. Mr. Robb arranged for a sponsor for the private bill (a sitting member of the Liberal Party). The name of the organisation was to be changed to the Islamic Centre of Quebec. This was done by a resolution at a meeting of the Islamic Centre of

Montreal. So the wheels were set in motion and an application for an Act to incorporate Islamic Centre of Quebec-El Markaz Islami was made on behalf of Habibullah Khan, Muhammed Barker, Mumtaz Rehman, Ahmed Mohiuddin Khan, Mushtaq Ahmed, Sultan Akhter, Aziz Naek, Fazal Khan, Muzaffar Eqbal Keen, Kalimullah Khan, Mateen Qureshi, Mubarak Hosein, Hakim Ullah Khan Ghauri, M. Hosein, Sherrif Yervich, and Iftikhar Sheikh.

On the day of the voting in the National Assembly, the following members of the association attended the session in Quebec City to answer any questions that might be raised: Habibullah Khan, Fazal Khan, Kalimullah Khan, A.M. Malik and Mumtaz Rehman. The Private Bill, Bill 194 was passed and received assent the 6th of August 1965. The Islamic Centre of Quebec (ICQ) was thus granted the rights of Civil Status. This was a momentous and historical step for the Muslim Community in and around Montreal. The recognition of Islam as a minority religion was a big milestone in the history and development of the Muslim community in Montreal. My youngest son, Kasim, happened to be the first whose birth was registered at the ICQ.



From left to right: Roohi Kurdi, Solicitor from Stikeman, Elliot, Mumtaz Rehman, Fazal Khan, Habibullah Khan, Kalimullah Khan, A. M. Malik in Quebec City to attend the National Assembly Session, August 1965 when Bill 194 was assented to.

6.0 The Bricks and Mortar—The Building of the Mosque

The desire to have a place where Muslims could congregate for prayers and hold other functions became a prime objective of the Islamic Centre of Quebec (ICQ). To this end, a Board of Trustees was created who would be legally responsible for the purchase of a property.

The Board of Trustees would consist of 5 members. The first board constituted of the following: Habibullah Khan, M. Masoud, Mumtaz Rehman, Mushtaq Ahmed, Wahid Khawja. The objective of the board was to locate a suitable and affordable property and purchase it for use as a mosque. The building at 2520 Laval Road, Ville St. Laurent, was purchased in the summer of 1967. It was an army barrack during World War II and, with renovations, it could serve as a mosque and community centre. The

purchase price of the building on 7,000 square feet of land was \$25,000. With the Blessings of Allah and a lot of elbow grease by a large number of dedicated volunteers in their spare time, the premises were ready for use by October 1967. Roohi Kurdy was the first Imam of the mosque and prayers in congregation commenced. There were no divisions amongst the Muslims then and Shias and Sunnis prayed side by side. It was not until mid-seventies that the Shia Community purchased a building in NDG and converted it into an Imambara.

A sum of \$10,000 was paid to the owner of the property and the balance of \$15,000 was to be paid later (within 1 year) without any interest. Mateen Qureshi, with the help of some friends, launched a fund raising campaign to pay the debt. Within one month, he raised enough funds by donations and Karde-Hasana to discharge the loan.

ICQ thus commenced functioning and in the beginning, the mosque was open for Friday congregation prayers as well as for Zuhar prayers on Saturday and Sunday. There was a class for Islamic teachings and reading of Holy Quran for children on Sunday morning, for about two hours before the Zuhar prayer. After the prayer, there was some socialising among the members and their families. It was sometime in 1968 that a group from *Tablighi Jamaat* from Pakistan, India or South Africa visited Montreal and as per their tradition, they stayed at the mosque and visited several Muslim families.

It is recorded for history that two rows of Muslims in congregation prayer was a happy occasion then. Now, thirty years later, Alhamdulillah, all mosques (more than 20) in Montreal are filled to capacity for the Friday congregation prayer and late comers cannot find a place to pray!

After the acquisition of the mosque in Ville St. Laurent, some Muslims started to live in the local neighbourhood, notable among them were Kalimullah Khan, Hakimullah Ghauri, Ahmed Shaikh, Abdurehman Sheikh, to name a few. With this development, the mosque was open for all five daily prayers soon after. As more and more Muslims arrived in Montreal from Middle East, Pakistan, India and other Muslim countries, ICQ became a hub of activities.

7.0 An Expanding Community

By 1971 the ever-increasing population of Muslims reached close to 5,000 and the facilities at 2520 Laval Road were stretched to its limits. Also the roof started to leak at some spots and the ceiling actually fell down in one of the two class rooms one Sunday morning. There was an urgent need for action.

There was a possibility that the facilities could be expanded because there was land available at the site. Mr. Fazal Khan, an architect by profession, was a regular visitor to the Mosque. He volunteered to prepare drawings for extension to the building. During negotiations with the City of St. Laurent to obtain a building permit for the construction, it came to light that the existing building violated the bylaws of the city as to the clearances. The building permit could be given for an extension project only if a completely new building were to be erected; the area permitted for construction would be greatly reduced. It was therefore decided to proceed with the extension project, coupled with the renovations, new bathrooms and new entrance. I happened to be the President that year (1972). We obtained approval of the general membership to go ahead with the renovation and extension project. While Fazal Khan worked on the drawings and specifications, a campaign for fund raising "Lay a Brick for the Mosque" was launched by the Executive. Fund raising dinners and bazaars were held. A team of brothers was organised to go door to door of Muslim households for the collection of funds. Some private sector corporations, such as Royal Bank of Canada and Steinbergs Ltd. made donations to the mosque fund. Names of the following individuals come to mind that campaigned vigorously for funds: Iftexhar Sheikh, Zahir Sheikh, Mateen Qureshi, Zafar Abbas, M. Ahmad Shaikh, S. Ali Husain, Kalim Ullah Khan, Khawja Wahid, Mushtaq Ahmed, Ata Malik and Bashir Hussain.

A Construction Committee was constituted consisting of the following: Fazal Khan, Architect; Sadaqat Lodhi, Structural Engineer; Mohammad Ahmed, Mechanical Engineer; Abdul Aziz Khan, Electrical Engineer; S. Ali Husain, C.A.; Bashir Hussain; Mumtaz Rehman, President and Chairman; Qasim Khattak, Treasurer.

In the summer of 1972, bids were called from three contractors for the project. The estimated cost of the project was \$50,000. S. Rosenti and Co's bid was the lowest (\$61,000.) Bashir Hussain knew the contractor as he used to help him in the preparation of financial reports. He negotiated the price down to the estimated amount. So the contract was awarded to S. Rosenti and Co.

To continue the programs of ICQ and prayers during the construction phase, facilities at a local school in St. Laurent were rented from the School Board. Although ICQ had only \$13,000 in the bank, a decision was made to start the construction. The work started one Friday morning in early August 1972 with an expected completion date of January 1973. As the construction proceeded, the collection of funds accelerated. It was a proud chapter in the history of ICQ to see the completion of the expanded facilities, all due to help from Allah and hard work of fund collection volunteers and the Construction Committee.

It would be a great omission if the contribution of women of the community were not mentioned here. The ladies arranged bazaars, dinners and other functions to raise funds for the project.

I served another term as President (1973) before handing the reins over to S. Ali Husain in 1974. Moeen Ghauri, a hafiz of Holy Quran was named Imam of the mosque and he served the community for a long time (more than 15 years)

Just as Montreal Muslim Community was growing in numbers, other cities-Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, and Halifax-were experiencing a boom in Muslim population as well. Local organisations were springing up and Muslims were getting organised. A need was felt to organise them under the umbrella of one Association. The Council of Muslim Communities of Canada (CMCC) was born. Leading Muslims from various cities-some of the names which come to mind are Dr. Faud Sahin from Niagara Falls, Ontario; the late Muinuddin from Toronto; Qasim Mahmud from Ottawa, Ontario-attended a meeting held in Montreal at the Islamic Centre of Quebec. I was the chairperson for this meeting. It was held in the summer of 1973 and Dr. Sahin, the late Muinuddin, Qasim Mahmud, S. Ali Husain and Bashir Hussain were authorised to compile the Constitution and Bylaws for the new CMCC with headquarters in Ottawa. S. Ali Husain and Bashir Hussain were from Montreal.

CMCC flourished for a few years and had an office in Ottawa with a Secretary. It published a quarterly magazine. It was mainly funded by Saudi Arabia. Membership fee for local organisations to join was \$25.00. CMCC was not a democratic organisation. The same people controlled and held on to the Executive from year to year, resulting in dissatisfaction. After 4 or 5 years, the funding dried up and the activities of the Association ceased. Today the Association exists only on paper without any activities.

Another development in 1972 was the revival of the Pakistani Association. Once the mosque in Ville St. Laurent started to function, a need was felt to revive the Indo-Pakistani culture. Pakistan Association of Quebec Incorporated (PAQ) was thus established and registered in 1972. The Pakistani Cricket Club, which had been operating during the summers in the previous years and had to their credit some city championships, merged with the Pakistan Association of Quebec Inc. I was persuaded in 1985 to head the PAQ with Mohammad Irshad as Vice-President and Izhar Mirza as General Secretary. The year 1985 is remembered as the best year in PAQ history. A bi-monthly magazine *Payamber* was started then through the efforts of Izhar Mirza. *Payamber* was mailed to all the members (membership then topped over 2500). *Payamber* continues to be published sporadically even today but is not mailed to the members.

8.0 The Muslim Cemetery

The need for a burial ground surfaced, as there were a few deaths in the community. A committee consisting of Zafar Abbas, Dr. M. Ishaque and Iftikhar Sheikh was authorised to look for land in neighbouring municipalities, which could be used as cemetery. It was discovered that the idea of having a Muslim Cemetery in their midst was not welcome. A strong resistance from the local municipal councils was present. In order to resolve an immediate problem, negotiations with an All-faith Cemetery, Rideau Memorial Gardens on Sources Boulevard were concluded in 1973. By virtue of the agreement, 50 burial

plots were reserved for the Muslims and families were encouraged to buy the plots. The plots were grabbed quickly.

A search for a cemetery within a 50-mile radius from Montreal continued on a sporadic basis, as the immediate problem had been resolved. In 1990, a piece of land in Laval reserved for a cemetery became available and negotiations to buy this piece of land were successfully concluded with the City of Laval. This would be a cemetery for all Muslims irrespective of their sect. At that time a new Imam, Syed Fida Bokhari had been appointed by Majlis-e-Shura on the recommendation of the Religious Committee consisting of Messrs Manzoor Khan, Moeen Ghauri and Hakimullah Ghauri. He was the first salaried Imam (the position had been a voluntary one previously). Fida Bokhari hailed from Pakistan and had his education and training at Madina University and leaned heavily towards the Wahabi school of thought. His command of English language was limited at best but he was very fluent in Arabic which won him support from the Arab community. In one of his earlier *khutbas*, he delivered a *Fatawa* saying that Shia Muslims should have a separate cemetery and some of the conservative Sunnis who followed Wahabism sided with him and a new split in the community ensued. After a lot of wrangling, it was decided to divide the cemetery land into two portions, one for Sunni Muslims and the other for Shia Muslims.

9.0 The Indigenous Muslims and External Pressures

The Muslim Students Association (MSA)

In the seventies there was a movement sweeping university campuses across North America, the MSA (Muslim Students Association), funded mainly by Saudi Arabia. With this came Wahabism, promoting and propagating intolerance and extremism, which is against the true spirit of Islam. Expansion of MSA was a good idea as long as it did not interfere in the working of local organisations. But it started to interfere with, and control the affairs of local organisations by imposing the policies of the fund donors. MSA had a good deal of success, but Montreal was one city where MSA was not permitted to succeed. This resulted from a strong stand ICQ took (particularly by S. Ali Husain, Bashir Hussain and myself).

Tablighi Jamaat

This organisation originated in Pakistan, with headquarters in Raiwind, about 40 kilometres from Lahore. The constitution of this organisation requires the revival and propagation of Islam (Daawa) and it has been successful in attracting large number of people from the civil and military service (some of high rank). They have been successful in the revival of Islam but as far as propagation, the Jamaat members do not preach to non-Muslims. They have a book, called *Tablighi Jamaat Nisab*, containing a selection of "Ahadees" or sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and rewards (*fazails*) for certain supplications. At their gatherings, they stress the importance and punctuality of five daily prayers and read from their "Nisab". They have adopted Pakistani dress (Kameez, Shalwar) as Islamic dress. In Raiwind, they have an annual meeting, which attracts hundreds of thousand followers from all over the world. One of the requirements of membership in the Jamaat is to travel in the path of Allah every weekend, once a year for forty days and once in lifetime for four months.

The mid and late seventies saw further increase in the numbers of Muslim Community in and around Montreal and visits by the *Tablighi Jamaat* from various parts of the world increased. There was hardly a weekend when a Jamaat from one city or another was not present at ICQ, using the mosque facilities to sleep, eat and worship. Sometimes the number of people sleeping was over reached twenty-five. On Sunday mornings, when the children came for attending classes, the Jamaat people could be found sleeping in the mosque or just waking up. It was a very unpleasant atmosphere as the mosque hall smelled. This was brought to the attention of the local Jamaat Amir but to no effect. Even alternative sleeping arrangements for the visiting Jamaat were turned down. ICQ had no problem with the visits of *Tablighi Jamaat*, as their worship and Daawa program contributed to uplifting of the community, but sleeping in the mosque hall was something else. When all efforts failed, the Executive under Yuksel Oran, President in 1978, passed a resolution forbidding any body to sleep in the mosque. This resolution did not sit well with the members of the *Tablighi Jamaat*. Because their numbers had soared, there was a big uproar. Members of the *Tablighi Jamaat* never cared to become regular paid members of ICQ as they thought it was unnecessary. Now with the passage of this resolution, their Chief (Amir) organised the

Jamaat and called upon the members to get the membership of ICQ, so that they could have a voice in the running of the ICQ. Some 80 new members were admitted to ICQ.

10.0 Split between Moderates and the Conservatives

At a Special General Meeting of ICQ held in the fall of 1978, a no-confidence motion against the Executive of Yuksel Oran was passed by the membership present. The moderates lost the vote as some disgruntled members sided with the *Tablighi Jamaat*. Oran was ousted as President and a new Executive elected.

This was an important moment in the history of the Muslim Community in Montreal as it divided the community. In the past difference of opinions were amicably resolved, using the principles of Islamic Shura. The split in the membership caused by the above vote encouraged other Muslim Associations to be formed. Another significant development was that the new ICQ Executive declared the bylaws of the ICQ un-Islamic, although the bylaws, though amended a few times, had served the organisation well for over 15 years and were based on the Sunnah of the prophet. The proposed new bylaws, which were adopted in 1978, had a two-tier management, Majlis-e-Shura and the Executive Council; the President and the Secretary had to be the members of the Shura. Members of the Shura were generally appointed by the Bylaw Committee to serve for a period of three years and ratified at the Annual General Meeting. The Bylaw Committee thus became very powerful.

The Muslim Community of Quebec (MCQ) was thus founded by moderate members of ICQ who were against the no-confidence vote. Dr. Mohammed Amin became the first President of MCQ; I was approached to join MCQ but I declined, being one of the founding members of ICQ. My loyalties were with ICQ despite my disagreement with the decision taken by ICQ membership. Many Arabs and other North African Muslim Arabs joined the MCQ.

While nothing was happening at ICQ, MCQ was flourishing. Dr. Amin, a dedicated Muslim embarked on a very ambitious project and launched a school for Muslim children, from Kindergarten to elementary level. The school was recognised by the Ministry of Education and has grown to high school level. It has a very good record of student achievements in the Province.

In the nineteen-eighties and nineties, other Muslim organisations and mosques started functioning in different areas of Greater Montreal. The following names come to mind:

1. *Islamic Centre of Quebec (ICQ)*, 2520 Laval Road, Ville St. Laurent;
2. *Muslim Community of Quebec (MCQ)*, 7445 Chester Avenue, NDG;
3. *Canadian Islamic Center, Al-Jamieh*, 241 Anselme Lavigne, DDO;
4. *Islamic Centre of South Shore*, 1885 Neilson, St. Hubert;
5. *Islam Ahmadiyya Movement*, 9015 Bellerive, Montreal;
6. *Shiane Haidery International Association Inc. (SHIA)*, 2174 Belgrave, NDG;
7. *Masjid Makkah Al Mukarramah*, 11900 Gouin Blvd West, Pierrefonds;
8. *Abou Bakr Asseddiq*, 7044 St. Urbain, Montreal;
9. *Fatimah Mosque*, 2012 St. Dominique, Montreal;
10. *Al-Ummah Islamiah*, 1245 St. Dominique, Montreal;
11. *Noor Al-Islam*, 4675 Amiens, Montreal Nord;
12. *Yunus Mosque (Turk)*, 3783 Villeray, St. Michel;
13. *Al Sunnah Al Nabawiah*, 7220 Hutchison;
14. *Al Qods Mosque*, 2465 Belanger East, Montreal;
15. *Al Rahmah Mosque*, 3630 Jean Talon East, Montreal;
16. *Badr Islamic Center*, 6955 Lacordaire Blvd, Montreal;
17. *Bilal Mosque*, 5775 Victoria Avenue Suite # 107, Montreal;
18. *Centre Islamique Ach-choura*, 5436 Henri Bourassa Est, Montreal Nord;
19. *Dar Al-Arqam*, 3661 Jean Talon Est, Montreal;
20. *Islamic Center of West Island*, 3943 St. Jean Blvd, DDO
21. *Jamia Islamia*, 2144 St. Helene, Longueuil;

22. *Khadijah Mosque*, 2361 Centre Street, Montreal;
23. *Khaled Ben-el-Walid*, 1330 Antonio, Laval;
24. *Madani Mosque*, 12080 Blvd Laurentien, Montreal;
25. *Masjid Al Bait-Ulmu-karama*, 4225 Decourtraï, Montreal;
26. *Masjid Al Tawheed*, 6130 Jean Talon Est, St. Leonard;
27. *Masjid Umar*, 9023 Airlie, Lasalle;
28. *Message of Islam Foundation*, 10555 St. Laurent, Montreal.

Due to the increasing population of Muslims in Montreal, all mosques in Montreal were experiencing overcrowding on Fridays. Unrest in Lebanon contributed significantly to Arab migration to Montreal. During the 1980s, ICQ doubled in size by acquiring adjacent vacant land and building an extension to the existing facilities. Some land was used for parking. I agreed to be the Chairman of the Construction Committee during this phase. S. Ali Husain, Arif Husain, A. Aziz Khan, Siddique Khan and some members from the Executive Council formed the Construction Committee and helped in the execution of the expansion project. J. Cohen, an Engineer from my office helped with the structural design of the extension.

The new facilities included an expanded place for *Wudu* (ablution), more washrooms for both men and women, a place for bathing of the dead bodies and freezer for the storage of bodies before their burial. There were provisions for a large meeting room, a kitchen, an office, a library, and classrooms. A separate entrance for women was also provided.

During 1990-92, I was appointed to the Majlis-e-Shura and was Amir in 1991 and President of ICQ in 1992, a position I resigned due to differences with the policies of the Imam.

Expansion of the Muslim Community in and around Montreal continues; other mosques and *Massallas* continue to be added. It is estimated that there are some hundred thousand Muslims living in Greater Montreal. At present (2004), a two-storey expansion of the Islamic Centre of Quebec is in the construction phase and nearing completion. In the South Shore, construction of a new mosque and community centre is going in full swing. The Canadian Islamic Center Al-Jamieh purchased a large property (formerly a Synagogue) on Anselm Lavigne Street in Dollard des Ormeaux, which is now the largest and the best mosque in Montreal.

Appendix

The first generation of Muslims from Pakistan and India who arrived in Montreal in the mid to late fifties included the following:

Salahuddin Hyder B.Sc. (Eng.), from Aligarh Muslim University, India arrived in Montreal in 1953. He was the first landed immigrant from Pakistan to Canada. He was admitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, McGill University in Mechanical Engineering in September 1958 and received a Ph.D. degree in Servo-mechanism in 1963. He had an illustrious career, teaching at the University of Montreal and other universities in USA and developed innovations in computer engineering (information technology).

Ishfaq Ahmed M.Sc. (Physics), from Panjab University, arrived in Montreal in September 1954 on a Columbo Plan Fellowship to pursue graduate studies in nuclear physics at the University of Montreal. He completed the Ph.D. in 1959 (writing his thesis in French) and reluctantly returned to Pakistan under the terms of Columbo Plan contract. He joined the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission as Senior Scientific Officer in 1960. (Dr. Usmani was the Chairman of the Commission then). Ishfaq got married but remained unhappy with his life in Pakistan. Dr. Usmani afforded him an opportunity to return to Montreal in 1963 for post-doctorate research at the University of Montreal. Ishfaq stayed in Montreal for two more years. He was on the verge of resigning from Pakistan service when Dr. Usmani, during one of his North American tours convinced Ishfaq's wife that they should return to Pakistan. He promised Ishfaq that he would make his return worthwhile. The rest is history. Ishfaq Ahmed retired as the Chairman of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission and is presently Scientific Advisor to the President of Pakistan.

Muhammad Abdur Rahman Barker (Phil Barker), an American, who had converted to Islam while studying in India, arrived at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, sometime in 1958-59. Trained as a linguist, Rahman Barker was from Washington State. Barker became very active in the Muslim community and his command of Urdu language was amazing. At McGill Islamic Institute, he started a project of developing instruction materials for Urdu language for English speaking students in western universities. Some students from Pakistan, notably Jahangir Hamdani were part of the Urdu project team. He married Ambreen, younger daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Habibullah Khan. Barker went to Lahore in 1960 for 2 years and was attached to Panjab University. This was in connection with the Urdu Project. His pioneering text book, *A Course in Urdu* (3 volumes) was published by McGill- Queens University Press in 1967. Dr. M.A.R. Barker resigned his position at McGill University in 1972 and moved to the University of Minnesota as Director of the Department of South Asian Studies. He is retired now and lives with Ambreen in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Saeed Mirza arrived in Montreal in 1960 as a graduate student at McGill in the Department of Civil Engineering and in the second year, contrary to all traditions, became President of McGill Student Union. He completed his Ph.D. in Structural Engineering in 1964 and joined the Faculty of Civil Engineering and remains a Professor of Structural Engineering there.

Habibullah Khan and his family, Mumtaz Rehman and his family, Dr. Akhter and Fatimah Rashid, Mr. and Mrs. Salahud Din Keen, Aziz Naek, Javed Shaukat, Qasim Gandhi, Sultan Akhter, Mr. and Mrs Syed Iftekhhar Ahmed, Ashraf Jaffry, Dr. Jalal Shamsi, Husein Sadooghi, Ahmed Mohiuddin Khan and Kalim Ullah Khan, all arrived in the mid to late nineteen fifties.

Salahud Din Keen developed into a successful business man, moved to USA in mid-sixties and became a flourishing industrialist in Georgia. Javed Shaukat, Qasim Gandhi, Sultan Akhter, Ahmed Mohiuddin Khan became Chartered Accountants. Except for Sultan Akhter, the other three returned to Pakistan and have had prominent careers there.

The early sixties witnessed a big increase in immigration and Muslims from Indo-Pakistan started to arrive in large numbers. Also the number of students arriving every year increased. Notable names that come to mind are Mateen Qureshi, Izhar Mirza, Iftekhhar and Zahir Sheikh, Bashir Hussain, Syed Ali Husain, Zafar Abbas, Syed Naseer, Hakimullah Ghauri, Mohammad Ahmed Sheikh, Saleh Mohammad, Moeen Ghauri, Mr. and Mrs. Fazal Khan, M.A. Malik, Dr. Saeed Chughtai, Mr. and Mrs. Waseem Faruqi, Roohi Kurdi, Hicham Bedran, Noori Turpan, Farooque Rehman, Mushtaq Ahmed, Fazal Karim Butt, Ahsan Mahmud Zaki, Daud Ahmed, Mr. and Mrs. Lateef Choudhary, Mr. and Mrs. A. Wahid Khawja, Afzal Mehdi and Abdul Aziz Khan.

It is impossible to list all the Muslims who arrived in Montreal during the period 1960-65. The number could be anywhere from 50 to 100.