



FREE SPEECH UNDER ATTACK (1)

5.12.2005:

Jamaat-e-Islami's Danish Friends

Jyllands-Posten's Muhammad cartoons were discussed at a meeting with Kashmiri extremists in Copenhagen in the beginning of October

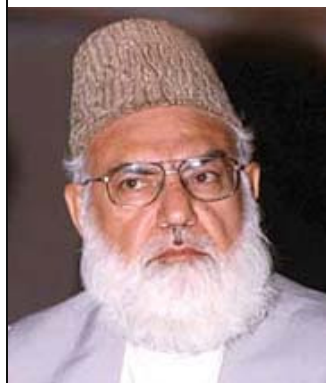
By Lars Hedegaard and Helle Merete Brix

Over the weekend (3-4 December) the press spokesman of The Islamic Community (*Det Islamiske Trossamfund*) in Denmark, Kasem Said Ahmad, attempted to calm down a frightened Danish public by claiming that the people behind the death threats against 12 Danish illustrators had no connection with nor any support among Islamic organisations in Denmark.

Sappho, however, has learned that there are close and long-lasting ties between the Pakistani party Jamaat-e-Islami, whose youth organisation Shabab-e-Milli has put a price on the illustrators' heads, and organised Pakistani circles in Copenhagen.

A dear guest

Jamaat-e-Islami's leader, Qazi Hussain Ahmed, has visited Copenhagen several times over the past few years. In 2000 he spoke at a mass meeting in Nørrebrohallen in Copenhagen to which he had been invited by the Danish branch of Jamaat-e-Islami's sister organisation Tanzeem-e-Islami. It is officially charged with managing the party's religious, cultural and social activities both in Pakistan and abroad, but in reality Tanzeem-e-Islami is a cover for the party.



In connection with his visit in 2000 Qazi Hussain Ahmed was presented with a large sum of money collected among local Pakistanis. He was also interviewed by the Danish national daily *Politiken* under the headline "A modern fundamentalist". It was intended as praise.

In 2004 Qazi Hussain Ahmed was a guest in the now defunct Al-Haq Mosque in Hvidovre, Copenhagen, whose imam, Farooq Sultan, had very close connections with Ahmed's extremist party. (The Al-Haq Mosque should not be confused with the Ahmadiyya mosque that is also located in Hvidovre and the oldest mosque in Denmark. The Danish Ahmadiyyas have issued a strongly worded protest against the death threats against the 12 illustrators who have depicted Muhammad.)

Sappho has learned that several Pakistanis in Denmark when speaking to other Pakistanis freely admit to being members of the Jamaat-e-Islami. The leading activist is Tariq Askari, who has been living in Denmark for more than 30 years and is described as very religious. But that has not prevented his family from running a music- cum bookstore called "*Sazz & Awaaz*", located at 110 Vesterbrogade in Copenhagen, whose musical selection according to *Sappho's* sources would hardly be appreciated by the strictly religious Jamaat-e-Islami.

Together with another local Pakistani, Farooq Rathore, who edits Tanzeem-e-Islami's Danish homepage www.tanzeem.dk, Tariq Askari has been leading a so-called "study circle" in Nørrebro, Copenhagen. Here it was possible to borrow practically all of Jamaat-e-Islami's publications.

Among Jamaat-e-Islami's other leaders in Denmark is the former journalist Mohamed Saddique, who was for many years a correspondent for the party's paper in Karachi, *Jasarat*. He has also

written for the Jamaat weekly *Takbeer*, which is also published in Karachi but has a certain readership in Copenhagen.

Meeting in Copenhagen

Tariq Askari was in charge of the accommodation when the leader of Jamaat-e-Islami in the Pakistani controlled part of Kashmir, Sardar Eijaz Afzal Khan, was in Copenhagen in the beginning of October 2005. Mr. Khan was accompanied by the editor of the extremist journal *Jihad-i-Kashmir*, Saghir Qamar. The journal regularly reports on so-called martyrs, i.e. Islamic warriors killed in struggle against the Indian authorities in Indian controlled Kashmir. These martyrs are often recruited by Jamaat-e-Islami's subsidiary Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, which has been on the EU's list of terror organisations for some time.

At a meeting in Copenhagen on 7 October - the day before the earthquake in Kashmir - Tariq Askari announced his intention to inform his honoured guest Sardar Eijaz Afzal Khan about the Muhammad cartoons published by *Jyllands-Posten* on 30 September. Mr. Askari's talk with party leader Khan was to take place that same day.

Tariq Askari made it clear that he was highly dissatisfied with *Jyllands-Posten's* action. According to sources in the Pakistani community in Denmark it is likely that the Kashmiri visitors may have brought copies of the cartoons back to their party leadership.

Jamaat-e-Islami has also been heavily involved in collecting money for the victims of the Kashmiri earthquake in Denmark. The monthly magazines *Sahil* and *Watan News*, which are printed in Pakistan but edited in Denmark, have printed ads in Urdu encouraging Pakistanis living in Denmark to send their earthquake contributions directly to Jamaat-e-Islami and its sister organisations in Pakistani controlled Kashmir. Photocopies of the ads have been distributed to Pakistani institutions and shops in Denmark. According to a Pakistani observer, who *Sappho* has spoken to, this means that "the money may be spent for any number of purposes before the earthquake victims see a penny of it."

What is Jamaat-e-Islami?

The party was founded in what is now Pakistan in 1941 by the theologian Sayyed ul-Ala Mawdudi, who remained its leader or "emir" until 1972. The movement is often labelled as the Pakistani version of The Moslem Brotherhood founded by Hasan al-Banna in Egypt in 1928, and throughout its history Jamaat has worked to establish a thoroughly Islamicised Pakistan based on the Koran and the Hadith. It has regularly engaged in political violence and threats against opponents or perceived unbelievers such as Pakistan's Ahmadiyya Muslims.

Jamaat-e-Islami is the strongest Islamic party in Pakistan as well as in India and Bangladesh. Its military branch, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, is active in Kashmir and is considered perhaps the region's worst terror organisation. Leaders of Jamaat have expressed their admiration for Osama bin Laden and the Taliban. In 1999 the Pakistani Jamaat-e-Islami protested against Iranian government statements that appeared to indicate that the regime would no longer actively seek the death of Salman Rushdie.

Among the party's European strongholds is the northern English town of Bradford, where its supporters organised the burning of Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses* in 1989.

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