



in cooperation with
University of Manchester Centre for Jewish Studies

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New Neighbours, New Opportunities
The challenges of Multiculturalism and Social Responsibility

Monday, July 2, 2012

Workshop No. 7

Muslim Jewish Relations in an increasingly secular Europe

by Mohammed Amin and David Berkley

In Europe, Muslims and Jews face common pressures from majority populations that nominally profess Christianity but are increasingly secular, indeed anti-religious, in outlook. Recent examples include campaigns against shechita and halal slaughter and the growing number of voices attacking circumcision. Although Muslims and Jews can better resist such pressures by acting jointly, two factors have weakened collaboration on a collective response:

1. Some parts of the Muslim and Jewish communities are unwilling to cooperate across the religious divide due to the way they interpret their own religious texts.
2. Many Muslims and Jews have divergent views about Israel and Palestine, and allow that issue to determine their attitude to the Jewish and Muslim communities in their own European countries, precluding the possibility of collaboration to pursue common interests.

David Berkley and Mohammed Amin will discuss the thought processes that led them, along with others, to found the Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester in 2005 and briefly review what it has achieved. They will then proceed to discuss Muslim Jewish relations more widely in the UK and in the major countries of Europe.

Presentation slides

David and I presented together, instead of taking turns to make separate presentations, and we used a single [integrated slidepack](#). The slides are relatively self-explanatory, but the following comments may help when looking at the slides.

- Slide 6 - Both the Jewish and the Muslim communities have resources which they can bring when lobbying for their combined interests. The amount of each resource each community brings differs from country to country. However they will always be more effective when they lobby together.
- Slides 8 - 12 illustrate some texts which are "problematic." Such texts are often used within each community to justify not co-operating with the other, and many other such texts can be found. It is up to each individual Muslim and Jew to decide how he or she understands such texts. However both speakers believe they can be understood in ways that do not preclude co-operation between the two communities.
- Slide 13 - Differing attitudes to the Middle East have acted as a barrier to co-operation in the UK and Europe. That is unnecessary, and co-operating in Europe does not require Muslims and Jews to first agree their positions on the Middle East dispute.

Photograph from the workshop

The photograph below shows, from left to right, David Berkley, John S. Sanni (a workshop participant) and Mohammed Amin.

