

The right to ritual

Mosques in the Netherlands*

Between the two world wars Indonesian students in Holland had an Islamic society¹, in 1953 the Dutch government erected a mosque for Muslim Moluccans in Balk (Friesland)² and the Ahmadiyya Mission to the Netherlands opened the Mobarak Mosque in the Hague in 1956³. Yet it was not until the arrival of thousands of Turkish and Moroccan migrant workers in the Netherlands from 1963 onwards and again of thousands of Surinamese in the sixties and seventies that one could speak of a need for mosques in this country. The following lines simply aim to describe how Muslim ritual established itself in the Netherlands, with special attention being paid to the spread of simple prayer-rooms, larger prayer-halls and mosques. Other than the ritual aspects of Islam will be ignored here, but some attention will be paid to basic patterns of organization of prayer-halls. In view of the limited space allowed, many facts must remain unmentioned and we will refrain from offering an interpretation. The title itself, however, refers to the continuous thread running through this paper: that the old adage of religious freedom in the Netherlands was recast when Muslim immigrants made their plea for mosques. The recognition of the right to perform one's religious ritual duties meant in fact the establishment of Islam in the Low Countries.

* This paper is dedicated to Professor D. J. Hoens on his retirement as Professor of the History of Living Religions from the University of Utrecht (1.XI.1982), in appreciation of his open attitude to all people of faith. The present paper hints at the need for a more extensive study of the spread of Muslim prayer-halls and mosques in the Netherlands and the history of the organizations connected with them.

1 In 1932 an *Islamitisch-Indische Vereniging* had been founded in the Hague, but it was discontinued after World War II.

2 Two percent of the Moluccans (Ambonese) were Muslim. The leader of these Muslim Ambonese was Ahmad Tan, who founded an organization for them which was, however, disbanded after his death. The mosque in Balk was financed by the Dutch government from funds allocated to Ambonese migrants to the Netherlands on the analogy of governmental subsidies for the rebuilding of churches damaged or destroyed in wartime.

3 After the war the *Islamitisch Genootschap* in the Hague was instrumental in the project to build the Mobarak Mosque where the Ahmadiyya Mission to the Netherlands (from Qadian, later Rabwah) established itself. An important role in the foundation was played by Zafrullah Khan (judge in the International Court of Justice in the Hague) and Begum Liaquat Ali Khan (the widow of the first President of Pakistan) who was Ambassador of Pakistan to the Netherlands at the time.

*The first years: migrant men*⁴

Those who arrived from Turkey and Morocco in the sixties were mostly men, and practically all of them came from traditional Muslim societies in the countryside and the mountains of Turkey and Morocco. They constituted the frontier society of the first years, living mostly under incredibly harsh legal, economic and social conditions⁵. They had come here to work, to save money which they regularly sent home to their families to whom they would return later to resume a decent life. This was a fluid, unstable society of coming and going but, even so, religion played a role in it. We shall leave aside its popular forms, the various uses to which the Koran was put, and the life of piety. We shall also leave aside the morality of this frontier society with its norms and standards largely given by religion, where prostitution was considered too bad even to be hinted at. We shall confine ourselves to the ritual aspects of the religious life of these migrants⁶.

The elementary forms of Islamic ritual began to be observed as soon as the Turkish and Moroccan workers arrived. In most of the boarding houses where the workers were crowded there was one room in which often up to five times a day prayer (*salât*) could be and often was performed as worship due to the Lord under all circumstances. On Fridays, if the working hours allowed, people assembled to perform the prayer. On many occasions parts of the Koran were recited: at gatherings during the weekend, on special occasions in the individual's life, and in particular in the evenings of the month of Ramadan when the day's fasting was over. From the beginning, there was an incisive demand to observe the dietary rules. Porc was categorically refused by everyone and people asked for meat prepared by 'Islamic butchers', as they were called, who knew the ritually prescribed way of slaughtering animals. There was a general hesitation about alcoholic

4 The growing number of migrants from Turkey and Morocco is clear from the following figures of registered foreign residents on January 1 (in thousands):

	1965	1970	1976	1979	1982
Turkey	8,8	29,3	76,5	105,7	148,5
Morocco	4,5	21,0	42,2	63,3	93,5

It should be noted that migrants in the beginning stayed less than 5 years in Holland so that there was a large turnover. There were also many foreign residents who were not registered. For the number of Surinamese see Note 12.

In the census of 28 February 1971 the total number of Muslims was counted as 53.975 but there are doubts about the correctness of this figure. The total number of Muslim Turks, Morroccans, Tunisians, Pakistanis and Indonesians was about 146.600 on January 1, 1977, and about 207.000 on January 1, 1980 (CBS 1982, 1: 31). The total number of Muslims in the Netherlands, including Surinam Muslims, of course, was higher. It is estimated that there are at present about 300.000 Muslims living in the Netherlands. Islam has become the second religion here.

5 See for instance the report of the *Commissie Iustitia et Pax* (1974). Earlier eye-openers were Theunis (1968) and Halbertsma (1973) with further literature. A good survey of all the minorities in Holland, their history and present situation (with valuable data and bibliography) is Schumacher (1980).

6 Compare the interviews in depth which J. M. Theunis (1979: 191-347) held with some Morroccans in Utrecht in the early seventies. This book met with much criticism from specialists at the time but it becomes all the more valuable as time passes and nothing has been published which offers as many data and as clear a vision. Part Two, *Moslim arbeiders in Nederland* (Moslim workers in the Netherlands) (pp. 170-466) contains valuable information about the history of Islam as it was lived in the Netherlands until 1978. A full history has still to be written and it should be done soon, since the witnesses of the first years are becoming fewer.

drinks and spirits at least were hardly touched. Dutch coworkers were struck by the strict fasting which most Muslims observed during the daytime of the month of Ramadan, despite the great physical hardship this imposed on them on the job and the general lack of appreciation from the workers around. That was different, however, at the major feasts to which Dutch friends used to be invited too. Chief among them was the great feast of Abraham's sacrifice in the pilgrimage month when the Muslims wanted to sacrifice animals as they were accustomed to do at home and were surprised by police intervention on balconies and in bathrooms. Then there was the smaller feast at the end of the fast of Ramadān when gifts could be given to the poor, and of course the popular feast of the Prophet's birth which remained a festival even if there were no children to give little presents to. Such festivities required larger premises to be celebrated, and it was probably these celebrations which made the greatest impression on the various layers of Dutch society, traditional in their way, with which the Muslim migrants hardly interacted outside the factory.

Less visible to the outside world was the collecting of *zakāt* (alms) for the most needy of the community. Nor was there anything to distinguish those among the workers who took upon themselves the function of *imām* (prayer leader) of the local Turkish or Moroccan community, besides their full-time job. This involved, besides knowing something more of the Koran than the average worker and being literate to some extent (so many knew neither the Arabic nor the Latin script), leading the common prayers and giving moral support and religious encouragement to a community excluded from the prosperity of the Dutch and living under great emotional stress. In these first years, when only a few succeeded in speaking Dutch reasonably well, the Turkish and Moroccan Muslims had great difficulty in making their needs, in particular their religious needs, clear to the Dutch society in which they lived, where religion had very different functions if it functioned at all. There were, however, small groups of Dutch volunteers, mostly young people, who did not worry about theological abominations of Islam and even Allāh written by university professors⁷, but lent themselves to become spokesmen of these Turkish and Moroccan men who never complained, were always hospitable but nevertheless had material, moral and religious needs as foreigners in a Northern society where human interaction is icy.

The years of family-reunion in the seventies

With the prolonged stay of a great number of men and under parliamentary pressure, the government gave permission for wives and children to join their husbands and fathers after years of separation. The settlers' existence started to

⁷ Typical of a *delirium antimahometanum* are published writings of Hanna Kohlbrugge, sometime professor of Persian Language and Literature at the University of Utrecht (e.g., her book of 1980). An analytical study of Kohlbrugge's image of Islam, its theological assumptions and its ethical implications, not to speak of the motive forces behind it, is in place. The same holds true for the writings of some professional theologians and for articles in certain church periodicals.

take a more normal form now that family life could continue and new children be born. It slowly dawned upon the Dutch that these people would stay, that Holland had become a country of immigration, all official previous denials notwithstanding. The immigrants were a fact and would not go away, at least not as long as there was work for them or as long as they could benefit from the generous Dutch social security system guaranteed by law. By the end of the seventies a more coordinated government policy toward the ethnic minorities was to be formulated⁸.

Religious life took a new turn now and this was quite visible in its ritual aspects. Instead of the boarding house rooms improvised for the daily and in particular the Friday prayers, a call could now be heard for special prayer-halls (Ar.: *musallā*) to be used exclusively for worship. Connected with this prayer-hall there should be an *imām* who might have an ordinary job besides. He would not only have his regular functions in leading the prayer and giving Koranic teaching but also have a considerable amount of responsibility for the moral and social welfare of the families of his community, trying to act as intermediary in the innumerable misunderstandings and conflicts among those who remained foreigners in their new country. The number of the members of the local community was recorded on the basis of the number of heads of families or households. But the real new ritual element was the giving of lessons in the Koran by the *imām* to children, supplemented by the teaching of the basic rules of the inner and outer way of life as it should be lived by adult Muslim men and women. Traditionally, worship and religious instruction – under the guidance of the *imām* because of his knowledge of Scripture – belong together. The sheer fact that this had not been so during the first years of settlement is evidence of the rudimentary nature of the Muslim community and of Islam in Holland during the first ten years or so of immigration. Now, however, with the presence of the families, the Islamic institution could take definite root. From this time onward, Muslims were able to articulate their needs in a clearer, and less ambiguous manner, and with the mosque and its worship and teaching a particular kind of social and cultural radiation developed which we shall discuss presently. The expressed need for prayer-halls for Turkish and Moroccan immigrant workers was such that in 1976 the Under-Secretary for Culture, Recreation and Social Affairs saw valid reason to introduce the possibility of investment subsidies for the renting or buying of prayer-halls by migrant

8 The *Nota Buitenlandse Werknemers* (Government paper on Foreign Workers) of 14 January 1970 was the first official statement on governmental policies with regard to foreign workers in the Netherlands. It stated clearly that the Netherlands is not a country of immigration and should not become one. In 1973/74 a debate took place in parliament in which a majority expressed the need for reunion of families (*familiehereniging*) of immigrant workers. The government accepted this policy in March 1974 in its *Memorie van Antwoord* (Government Reply). Since 1979 governmental policies with regard to ethnic minorities in the country have been coordinated officially and partly revised. In April 1981 a draft discussion document on minorities appeared (*Ontwerp-minderhedennota*, 336 p.) A definitive document, taking into account reactions to the draft document and reports submitted by Committees on several special issues, e.g. on religious facilities for ethnic minorities in Holland, is due to appear in 1983. Curiously enough, Indonesians, Chinese and Pakistanis are not considered officially as ethnic minorities but Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Moluccans are.

Mediterranean workers under certain conditions⁹. The ruling was slightly modified in 1979 and was renewed in 1981 with a number of changes, to run until December 31, 1983¹⁰.

*The arrival of the Surinamese*¹¹

The development of prayer-halls and other Islamic institutions has been reinforced by the wave of new immigrants from the former Dutch colony of Surinam in the sixties and seventies. Before independence in 1975, the Surinamese were *rijks-genoten* (fellow citizens) and possessed the Dutch nationality which included the possibility of moving to Holland and finding a job there or alternatively living on social security. By the end of the seventies there were about 20.000 Muslim Surinamese, mostly of Dutch nationality. They belong to the so-called Hindustani population of Surinam, people brought in from the old British India in the last decades of the 19th century of whom the majority were Hindus and a minority Muslims. Among the Surinamese migrants to Holland, the number of Hindus among this same Hindustani population was about three times as large as that of the Muslims.

The Surinamese immigrants received assistance from the Dutch government under particular programs of which one feature should be mentioned here since it touches on religion. A special kind of subsidy could be applied for in order to establish so-called Hindustani cultural centres in which particular cultural and social activities for Surinamese people could be organized¹². No special subsidies were made available to this group, however, for the establishment of Hindu temples or Muslim prayer-halls such as were given to the migrant workers from Turkey and Morocco. Most Muslims from Surinam, however, who kept to the traditional Muslim life-style, were not keen on participating in cultural centres, because they felt that this very life-style was trampled under foot there. So from

9 The *Globale regeling inzake subsidiëring gebedsruimten* (General Rules for the subsidizing of places of worship) for Turks and Moroccans was promulgated by the Under-Secretary of Culture, Recreation and Social Affairs by letter WB 46649 of 13 April 1976.

10 The *Tijdelijke regeling subsidiëring voor moslims* (Temporary Rules for subsidies with regard to Muslims) was promulgated by the Under-Secretary of Culture, Recreation and Social Affairs by letter WB-U-27439 of 21 December 1981. On 31 December 1982 a Committee ad hoc submitted its report *Religieuze voorzieningen voor etnische minderheden in Nederland* (Provisions for the worship of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands) with advice on governmental policy to the new Minister of Welfare, Health and Culture with recommendations for the period as from 1 January 1984 onwards.

11 The rise of the number of residents in the Netherlands born in Surinam is clear from the following figures: around 18.000 from Surinam and the Dutch West Indies combined in 1964; 30.000 from Surinam and the West Indies in 1968. Subsequently the number of residents from Surinam alone was 28.995 in 1970, 104.150 in 1975, and around 138.000 in 1979. There are now more than 200.000 Surinamese in Holland, including those born in the country.

Since 1954 the people from Surinam and the Dutch West Indies have had the Dutch nationality. Since Surinam's independence on 25 November 1975 some thousands of Surinamese in the Netherlands possess Surinam nationality but the great majority has the Dutch one. As from 1 September 1980 Surinamese have had to have a visa to enter the Netherlands and immigration has fallen off sharply.

12 A number of mostly local *welzijnsstichtingen* (welfare foundations) for Surinamese are subsidized by the Ministry of Welfare, Health and Recreation. They are part of the *Stichting Landelijke Federatie van Welzijnsstichtingen voor Surinamers* founded in September 1971.

the early seventies onward, we find several of them taking initiatives to found mosques not only for worship and religious teaching but also as social and cultural centres, as Surinamese Muslims understood them, with a religious as well as a social and cultural radiation. In these centres Islam as a religion and the cultural background of the Surinamese Muslims were to be closely connected. Though there were a few larger Muslim organizations, there were quite a few local Muslim groups among the Surinamese scattered all over the country. Compared to Moroccans and Turks when seeking to establish prayer-halls, the Surinamese had the advantage of knowing the Dutch language and being able to present their needs to the Dutch authorities. They were also accustomed from colonial times onwards to the Dutch ways of organizing things including religion, and to the Dutch kind of bureaucracy. They were better placed to understand the Dutch rules with regard to the separation of state and church than their Moroccan and Turkish colleagues. At the time this meant in practice that the Dutch government not only would not interfere in the organization and doctrinal content of Muslim organizations in Holland but that it also was not in a position to subsidize any activities of Muslim religious groups, according to an interpretation which prevailed. The only exception was the investment subsidy given to some Turkish and Moroccan prayer-halls from 1976 on.

Ritual prescriptions and Dutch society

In a number of fields Muslims had difficulty in performing their ritual obligations in Dutch society, which put the Muslim communities under considerable stress. It may be useful to recapitulate the most important points of friction:

- a. the performance of prayer (*salāt*) takes place at least once during a normal work shift and the Friday prayer meeting around noon rarely coincides completely with the break for lunch;
- b. fasting in the month of Ramadān implies that workers, certainly in the afternoon, have not their usual strength and that some allowance must be made for the physical hardship under which they stand during the daytime;
- c. the special rules for food and drink mean that only animals slaughtered in the prescribed way should be eaten and that porc and (strong) alcoholic drinks are forbidden, so that Muslims cannot eat and drink freely with other people without further ado;
- d. on the two major religious feasts Muslims must request a free day; on the great feast, they need to be able to sacrifice an animal;
- e. the ceremonies of washing of the dead and of burial in the ritually prescribed way in an Islamic cemetery need to be performed;
- f. the upbringing of children needs to take place on Islamic principles and at school Muslim pupils should receive at least a minimum of religious instruction in Islam.

There are of course many more points of friction but they arise less out of the ritual prescriptions of Islam than out of religious law and doctrine or Muslim usage and custom: circumcision, the place and role of the Muslim woman, separate upbringing of boys and girls, the authority of the father and of men generally, and so on¹³.

The development of mosques

The most important point of orientation in the Muslim community, after the Koran, is the mosque, and the spread of Muslim prayer-halls throughout the Netherlands in the seventies is the most significant visible evidence of the presence of Islam in the country. Legally a prayer-hall is owned by an organization which may be a foundation (*stichting*) or an association (*vereniging*); in the latter case the executive is elected by the members of the association, and in the former case the executive appoints itself. Normally, the desire to establish a prayer-hall leads to the forming of a more or less spontaneous starting group (*initiatiefgroep*) which formulates the need for a prayer-hall and starts collecting money. When an appropriate place has been found, for legal reasons the starting group is transformed into a foundation or an association which may have collected sufficient funds either to rent or to buy the place and to arrange for its conversion into a prayer-hall. This has specific architectural features, for instance the *mihrāb* (prayer niche) indicating the direction of Mecca, according to which the prayers should be performed¹⁴. In Dutch legislation the institution of *waqf* or *haboes* (religious endowment) known in Muslim countries does not exist, so that mosque property is not inalienable in principle. For the establishment of a prayer-hall money is collected in the first place among the local Muslim community but among other Muslim communities as well. Considerable sums have been collected in this way but they hardly ever cover all the costs involved in buying and furnishing a particular building for use as a prayer-hall.

Since the early seventies attempts have been made to bring together a number of prayer-hall foundations and associations into one umbrella organization (*koepelorganisatie*)¹⁵. Those umbrella organizations which exist today are largely confined to members with a common country of origin: Turkey, Morocco,

13 The exhibition *Islam – een levenswijze*, opened in Rotterdam in September 1982, mentions six major points of friction for Muslims living in Holland: prayer-halls, times of prayer and religious feasts, instruction in religion for children, ritual slaughter, burial ceremonies and the place of the family. One could add marriage, conversion, and of course housing and work. It is to be estimated that more than 300 Muslims made the *hadjj* to Mecca directly from Holland in September 1982. A number of Muslims in the Netherlands prefers circumcision of boys to be performed in hospital.

14 Among the oldest prayer-halls in the Netherlands are those in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, 's-Hertogenbosch, Eindhoven, Schiedam, Zaandam, Waalwijk and Ridderkerk, where there are concentrations of foreign workers from Turkey and Morocco.

15 The most important umbrella organizations of Muslims in the Netherlands have been successively the *Stichting Islamitisch Centrum Nederland* (1972), the *Nederlandse Islamitische Sociëteit* (1973), the *Federatie van Moslimorganisaties in Nederland* (1975), the *Moslim Organisaties Nederland* (1981), and the *Stichting Turks-Islamitische Culturele Federatie* (1979).

Surinam, Pakistan, etc. Since the umbrella organizations can reinforce the local organizations and even stimulate the establishment of new prayer-halls with their local organizations, and since they are also in a much better position to express the legitimate demands of the Muslim community in Dutch society, they may be considered as a second and important step in the development and emancipation of the Muslim community they represent. The first step, of course, was the establishment of the local starting group which developed into a local organization with its own prayer-hall¹⁶.

As far as is known, there are at least two newly-built mosques in the Netherlands, apart from the Ahmadiyya Mosque in the Hague dating from 1956¹⁷. There are four large prayer-halls in the four major cities, which were formerly either churches or in one case a synagogue and were bought at a price of more than a million guilders to be converted into mosques¹⁸. There are altogether about fifty prayer-halls in the four major cities¹⁹, and about 160 prayer-halls in the whole country as of 1 January 1983²⁰.

In a few cases foreign countries like Saudi Arabia, Libya and Iraq, or an international Islamic organization like the Muslim World League (*Rābita al-ālam al-islāmī*) with its headquarters in Mecca have given subsidies so that appropriate buildings could be bought to be converted into mosques. In quite a few cases, however, an offer was made by an oil state but subsequent negotiations were not successful, sometimes because the Muslim organization concerned simply refused to comply with certain wishes of the country offering the money. As a rule, prayer-halls in the Netherlands at present are not foreign property or under foreign rulings. In some cases, however, they would become foreign property in case the Muslim foundation or association concerned ceased to exist.

Links with the country of origin

Establishing mosques is a requirement of the Islamic religion but the actual way in which it is done very much depends on the local situation. When prayer-halls are

¹⁶ Several organizations have practically disappeared, like the *Stichting ten behoeve van de Islam in Nederland* (founded in Amsterdam in 1970, with a branch in The Hague), the (Utrecht branch of the) *Moslim Associatie Nederland*, the *Vereniging tot bevordering van de belangen van de Islam in Nederland*, the *Hydayat-al-Islam (Stichting Islamitisch Cultureel Centrum Gelderland)* (founded June 1976).

¹⁷ The Turkish mosque in Almelo was opened in 1974, the mosque in Breda (with one hall for Turks and another for Moroccans) in 1981.

¹⁸ The four largest mosques are the Turkish mosque in the former church *De Zaaier* on the Rozengracht in Amsterdam, the Moroccan mosque in the former *Mathenesserkerk* in the Allard Piersonstraat in Rotterdam, the Turkish Aksa mosque in the former synagogue in the Wagenstraat in the Hague, and the Moroccan mosque in the former *Emmaüskerk* at the Winterboedireef in Utrecht-Overvecht. The Mobarak Mosque in the Oostduinlaan in the Hague was opened in 1956 and belongs to the Ahmadiyya movement from Rabwah (Pakistan).

¹⁹ At the end of 1982 there were 7 Turkish, 9 Moroccan and 3 Surinam prayer-halls in Amsterdam; 9 Turkish, 4 Moroccan and 2 Surinam prayer-halls in Rotterdam; 2 Turkish, 1 Moroccan and 5 Surinam prayer-halls in the Hague; and 2 Turkish, 2 Moroccan and 1 Surinam prayer-hall in Utrecht. There may be more but no other addresses are known.

²⁰ The listing of prayer-halls in Holland as published in *Qiblah* (6, 3, 1982:12-13) and the *Adressenlijst van islamitische organisaties in Nederland* as published in 1982 by the *Moslim Organisaties Nederland* are not complete and not always accurate.

founded by Muslim immigrant-groups in the Netherlands it is natural that they be constructed according to models existing in the countries of origin. There may also be, however, organizational links between Muslim associations here and the respective countries of origin.

The *Surinam* Muslims living in the Netherlands have a strong consciousness of their common Surinam cultural background as well as their common faith. It is no accident that some Surinam Muslim organizations have made intense efforts to establish mosques which would serve at the same time as socio-cultural centres, perhaps even on a national scale²¹. This would reflect not only a justified pride in the dignity, truth and universality of Islam but also represent an attempt to keep intact the social and cultural dimension of the Muslim community in particular, not only from Surinam, defending it against the disruptive forces of atomization of modern society. A recent development was a Surinam initiative for an all-embracing umbrella-organization of all Muslims in the Netherlands²². The ingenious and even grandiose proportions of such initiatives cannot be denied. The actual Surinam Muslim communities outside the Hague and Amsterdam have mostly been too small to allow them to acquire special prayer-halls and they have often had to content themselves with a room in an ordinary lodging, the so-called 'front room mosque' (*voorkamer-moskee*). The Surinam Ahmadiyya community succeeded in securing prayer-halls in the four major cities with a realistic view of what was possible and what not. In the Netherlands most of the *moulvis*, as *imāms* (prayer-leaders) in Surinam are called, are elderly and often live from social security (*bijstand*). They are expected to perform numerous social tasks besides their strictly religious ones. Sometimes *ulamā* (doctors of the law) from elsewhere (for instance Pakistan) are invited to give lectures and to stay with the community for a longer or shorter period. The traditional Surinam Sunni prayer-halls are part of the *Ahl-e Sunna wa-jamā'a* (people of the Tradition and the Community), the Ahmadi prayer-halls are part of the *Ahmadiyya Anjumān Ishā'at Islam* from the Ahmadiyya centred in Lahore.

Nearly all *Moroccan* workers were accustomed at home to small village mosques which could hardly be distinguished from ordinary houses and which had a local function only, with a local *imām* who had not necessarily pursued further religious education. In the Moroccan initiatives to establish prayer-halls in Holland the same idea has prevailed; there is a conspicuous absence of prestigious mosque projects and of hierarchical organization. The Berbers of the Southern Atlas and of the North Eastern Rif mountains as well as the Arabized Berbers of the

21 There have been large-scale projects for a mosque with a cultural centre attached in Utrecht in the late sixties, in Arnhem in the late seventies, and in the Bijlmermeer (Amsterdam) for a number of years until 1982.

22 The *Stichting al-madjiiesoel al-islamie fie Hollanda* under the inspiration of Mr. Waziralam Moeniralam drew up its draft statutes in 1982.

mountainous area in the North West, who are all represented in Holland, want to keep to their own regional traditions and it has proved to be exceedingly difficult to bring all or even most Moroccan prayer-hall in the Netherlands into one organization. The recruitment of *imāms* seems to proceed along the same lines. Those having a say in a local Moroccan mosque foundation or association in Holland tend to invite an *imām* from their own region and preferably from their own kin. The degree of learning and the particular capacities become more relevant in the choice of an *imām* by Muslim communities in the larger towns. In any case they are not recruited with a view to the social and cultural needs of the community where they are going to work in Holland. They are expected to know and to teach the Koran, to lead an exemplary Muslim life and to work for cohesion within the particular Moroccan community. Their more or less 'charismatic' position gives them authority in religious matters but not beyond, and they generally have hardly any knowledge of Dutch and little insight into the workings of modern society. The norms and values which they apply are largely derived from the traditional Moroccan society from which they came.

The Moroccan government explicitly tries to maintain links with those Moroccans working abroad. One of the aims is to help them preserve their religious and cultural identity during their stay, often as non-literates, in largely secularized societies such as France, Belgium and Holland, with a view to their possible later return to Morocco. The fact that the monarchy plays the role of protector of religion in Morocco is used to demand from Moroccans residing abroad an allegiance to Hassan II as a kind of spiritual leader of Islam. There is a clear attempt on the part of the Moroccan government, which is channelled through its embassies, to keep a hold on the Moroccan workers both through a network of Moroccan cultural associations called *Amicales* organized from Rabat, and by having as many pro-government persons as possible as members of the executive bodies of Moroccan mosque organizations abroad. Much stress is laid on the saying of prayers in all Moroccan mosques at home and abroad for the present Moroccan monarch as a spiritual leader of Islam, a protector of religion, and the head of the Moroccan Muslim community. This implies political allegiance to the present Moroccan regime even among Moroccans abroad. In Holland both the activities of the *Amicales* and the stress on prayers for Hassan II, with its political implications – for instance when Moroccans return home – have given rise to disunity and distrust within the Moroccan community which is utterly regrettable²³.

The *Turkish* prayer-halls in Holland were in the beginning very similar to those used by the Moroccans; local communities chose as their *imāms* those workers who were more qualified than others because of their knowledge of the Koran, their piety and age. In the early seventies, however, certain organizational patterns

23 For an anti-Amicale publication in Dutch, cf. Marokko Komitee 1978.

developed among the Turks which reflected different links to the country of origin, and evidenced a sense of hierarchy and discipline. Turkish groups were apt to become part of larger structures with their center in Turkey. The first of these to be noticed was a ring of 'Islamic Centres' the first of which was established in Utrecht in 1972. They were linked to a Turkish organization promoting the teaching of the Koran and religious instruction generally apart from the official religious instruction in Turkish governmental schools²⁴. In fact, this organization was opposed to the official policies of the Turkish government with regard to Islam, including the official interpretation given to the religion and the official schooling of religious teachers and scholars. A second ring to be noticed was that of particular right-wing non-governmental activist groups in Turkey which favored a fascist type of state. These groups used Islamic ideology as a means to promote their political ends and succeeded in exercising considerable influence among Turks in Germany. In Holland too, the so-called 'Grey Wolves' had for some time a terrorizing connotation²⁵.

A new and more official link between Turkish mosque organizations in Holland and the country of origin developed in the late seventies when the official Turkish Presidium of Religious Affairs in Ankara took the responsibility for sending *imāms* to mosque groups set up by Turkish workers in Western Europe, including the Netherlands. The said Presidium of Religious Affairs is a non-political body attached to the Prime Minister's office. It is responsible for the religious education, the upkeep of mosques in Turkey and the appointment of *hoğğas* (Turkish prayer leaders) or *imāms* at these mosques as officials with a civil service status and their own hierarchy²⁶. The quality of the *imāms* who are sent abroad officially by the Presidium is much higher than that of the *imāms* who are recruited by local Turkish mosque groups abroad directly from Turkey. Most of the official *imāms* have had their schooling at one of the higher Islamic institutes in Turkey which were integrated into the universities in 1982. Plans have been made to provide the official *imāms* with extra training so that they be engaged in the teaching of Islam and possibly other subjects to Turkish pupils in primary or secondary schools in Western Europe including the Netherlands. Another plan provides for Dutch language courses for those *imāms* to be sent to Holland.

At the same time as the offer was made by the Turkish government to send official *imāms* to the Netherlands, an umbrella organization of Turkish mosque

24 The name of the organization is: *Türkiye kuran kurslari ve tahsil cagindaki, talebere yardım dernekleri federasyonu*. It is established in Istanbul.

25 For an anti-Grey Wolf publication in Dutch, cf. Landelijk Aktiekomitee Anti-fascisme 1980.

26 The Turkish name is *Diyanet işleri başkanlığı* and it is responsible for religious education and religious services in Turkey. See *Türkiye'de din eğitimi ve din hizmetleri*; *The religious education and the religious services in Turkey*; *Al-tarbiya al-diniya wa-khidamātuhā fi Turkiyā* (August 1980). The Presidium of Religious Affairs pays the about 44350 *imāms* who are organized in it with the status of civil servants and it subsidizes the mosques in Turkey, in particular their upkeep. There are now 330 'official' *imāms* of the Presidium working abroad among Turkish workers, of whom 52 are in the Netherlands according to the *Bulletin* of the Federation (no. 8, December 1982: 12-14).

foundations and associations in the Netherlands (*Stichting Turks-Islamitische Culturele Federatie*) was set up officially in January 1979, and since then a number of new local Turkish mosque associations have been founded which have become members of the Federation²⁷. Not all Turkish mosque organizations are members of the Federations; the total number of Turkish mosque associations which are Federation members is nearly 80 at present. Apart for its chairman who receives a remuneration, the work of the Turkish Federation is done on a voluntary basis. In the few years of its existence the Federation has proved to be not just an umbrella on paper like some other Muslim umbrella organizations in the Netherlands. It is actively involved in stimulating the religious, educational, social and cultural activities of the member associations and defending their interests before the Dutch government. It is relevant in this context that the Federation guarantees a link between the local Turkish mosque associations which are members and the Turkish embassy in the Hague which, through its attaché for social affairs, mediates in the decision by the Presidium for Religious Affairs in Ankara to send official *imāms* to particular mosque associations in the Netherlands. In other words, the Federation is instrumental in the sending of official *imāms* by a Turkish governmental agency to the Netherlands.

The official *imāms* working in Holland receive their normal salary in Turkish lire for their families, which generally stay at home. Their expenses in Holland are covered by the local Turkish Muslim associations where they work. As civil servants they cannot extend their stay abroad beyond four years. An important development is that the Federation has started to organize seminars for the 'officially' sent Turkish *imāms* working in Holland, so that the problems which they meet in their work with the local communities can be discussed²⁸. In this way the official Turkish *imāms* are not only better educated but also more familiar with Dutch society than other *imāms* working here. They are also part of a larger organizational structure with political overtones since they represent the Presidium of Religious Affairs abroad and are expected to report back to it. In this way the Turkish mosque associations which are members of the Federation have official

27 The official name is *Stichting Turks-Islamitische Culturele Federatie, Türk İslâm Kültür Dernekleri Federasyonu*. The declared aims of the Federation are to promote the integration of Turkish and Islamic culture in the Netherlands, to further cooperation and unity between the member organizations, to assist in all Turkish cultural, religious and social problems and to help further the interests of the member organizations. There are at present 78 member organizations of which 73 are active. Besides its numerous activities the Federation publishes Bulletins. A summary of the activities of the Federation, and statistical information, may be found in nos. 8 and 9 (Dec. 1982).

It is stated in *Bulletin* no. 8 that there are now 78 (Turkish member) prayer-halls and 52 'official' *imāms* (from the Presidium) with an official Turkish certificate in Holland; 46 of them have teaching credentials. It is also stated that the prayer-halls adhering to the Federation spend together about Gld 250.000 a month; this sum is collected through (monthly) contributions by Turkish Muslims (pp. 4, 13).

28 From August 1981 until now four such seminars have been held at the *Volkshogeschool 't Oude Hof*, in Bergen (N.H.). The subjects were: Unity and equality in faith; The place of the *imām* and the mosque in the Turkish Islamic community; Organization of the Ramadan services in the Netherlands; Religious activities and the educational programs for Turks in the Netherlands. Dutch guests were invited.

links with the government of the country of origin which neither the Surinam, the Moroccan nor the other Turkish mosque organizations have. The said Presidium has a firm hold on the life of those Turkish communities in Holland to which an official *imām* has been sent.

Recently, on 10 December 1982, an *Islamitische Stichting Nederland (Hollanda Diyanet Vakfi)* was founded, one of its tasks being to acquire prayer-halls in the Netherlands. This foundation is closely connected with the Turkish Presidium of Religious Affairs in Ankara on the one hand and the Federation of Turkish mosque organizations in the Netherlands on the other hand. This is in the line of the official Turkish mosque policy which has become visible since 1979.

Conclusion

Although the ritual duties of the different Muslim groups living in the Netherlands are in the main the same (if minor divergences of the Hanafi and Maliki schools of law are disregarded), there are considerable differences in the way in which in particular the prayer-halls are organized. At present these differences are not so much due to an opposition between reformist and traditionalist orientations, since the intellectual level of these groups is quite low, but rather to the different languages and cultural backgrounds which heavily condition the life-style of the members²⁹. They are also due to the different links which exist between the prayer-halls and the country of origin, in particular the responsibility claimed by the latter for the Muslim life of its citizens in the Netherlands. Both the claim of the Moroccan monarch to be the spiritual head of the Moroccan Muslims in Holland and the claim of the Turkish Presidium of Religious Affairs to provide qualified religious leaders and teachers for the Turkish Muslim communities in Holland organized in an efficient organization are significant. Within the Moroccan and Turkish communities in Holland these claims have led to different reactions which have both religious and political aspects.

29 Leaving aside here political divergences. Among both Turks and Moroccans numerous voices can be heard calling for no politics in the mosque, or for an 'independent' mosque, i.e. independent from political interference. Only a few publications discuss the religious life of Muslims in the Netherlands. Besides the titles quoted, see Idrissi, Paluch and Scheuter (1980), Joemman and Lokhorst (1977), Metze (1982), Peters (1982), Waardenburg (1974, 1982) and the report *Religieuze voorzieningen . . .* of the Ministerie van Welzijn, Volksgezondheid en Cultuur (1983).

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