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AN EFFORT TO END THE MUDGLE OF THE CRESCENT

Al-Azhar moves in the right direction

Al-Azhar University in Cairo, the leading institution of Islamic learning in the Muslim world, is endeavouring to determine a uniform date for the commencement of the fast of Ramadhan and the festival of ‘Id al-Fitr. It is seeking to utilize modern scientific knowledge to fix a definite date on the Muslim calendar for the celebration of Muslim festivals, and thus end the muddle of conflicting dates followed in various parts of the Muslim world until now.

The Rector of al-Azhar, His Eminence al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Rahman Taj, like all other thinking Muslims, is unhappy at the present state of affairs in the matter of the date of the celebration of Muslim festivals, and particularly the date of the commencement of the fast of Ramadhan. Different Muslim countries have adopted different dates for these festivals, with the result that rarely have the Muslims as a whole in recent years celebrated their important festivals concurrently. The disagreement between them about the date of the Day of Arafat (the 9th Dhul-Hijja) has also been thought by the Rector of al-Azhar as an anachronism which he is seeking to put an end to. He has recently formed a committee of Muslim jurists and scientists, under the chairmanship of the Deputy Rector of al-Azhar, al-Shaikh al-Husaini Sultan, and charged it with the duty of making thorough juristic and scientific investigations in the matter of fixing a date for the commencement of the fast of Ramadhan and other Muslim festivals in all Muslim countries. He is expected to receive the report of this committee before long and to announce this uniform date soon thereafter.

The special significance of Ramadhan

In speaking of the need for this move, His Eminence al-Shaikh ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Taj says:

The fast of Ramadhan is a fardh (duty) on all Muslims. They await this fast with a sense of pleasant expectation. They have joy in celebrating it. They devote themselves assiduously to prayer throughout it. They apply themselves more to rewarding prayers. They also take part in sessions of devotion (tarawih) after ‘Isha prayers. All this is done by the Muslims in honour of the month of Ramadhan.

“The Muslims also take a greater part during the month of Ramadhan in prayers and charitable activities. Many of them regret sincerely the passing of this month.

“From this we can see which the month of Ramadhan holds in the hearts of the Muslims, then it is imperative that they adopt a uniform attitude at least towards its date. The Egyptian Muslim should not fast today, while the Saudis, the Iraqis, the Yemenis or the Sudanese fasts tomorrow or the day after. The result of this diversity in the recognition of the beginning of the fast of Ramadhan is that the Muslims have come to differ also in the date they fix for the festival of ‘Id al-Adha and the beginning of the pilgrimage period.

An anachronism

“Thus the Muslims have appeared to the outside world to disagree among themselves on matters relating to two of the five main pillars of Islam — fasting of Ramadhan and the pilgrimage. The confusion has become more confused every year; and this is a harmful thing indeed. It is true that this kind of confusion is no new thing in the Muslim world. It is true that the teachings of Islam originally imposed the duty of fasting during the month of Ramadhan only on those who saw the crescent. Those who did not see it were required to complete the thirty days of the month of Shabaan, and afterwards to start the first day of the month of Ramadhan. But this is how Islam makes its teachings easy for Muslims. The Muslims have through the centuries followed this way of ease because it was difficult to be quite sure of the appearance of the crescent and also because it was impossible at one time to correlate the attitude of the Muslims in the mid-stages of the world of Islam and adopt a uniform date as to the time of the appearance of the crescent.

“March with the times”

“Today, however, science has made such progress that it is possible to observe the crescent and to determine a long time ahead the exact time of its appearance. The matter has thus ceased to be one of speculation, or one in which informed people can have different opinions. Science has also made it possible to establish easy contact between one Muslim country and another, whatever be the distance separating them. Modern communications have made the wide parts of the world as near to each other as the members of one family were in ancient days.

“The Muslims should march with the times, and they should adopt a uniform attitude on the questions of faith, especially in matters which are as important and fundamental as the matters of the fast of Ramadhan and the pilgrimage to Mecca. And they cannot hope to achieve solidarity on these matters unless they base their attitude on modern scientific knowledge which is now available to all.

“It is true that the religion of Islam demands of its followers only that which is easy and practicable to fulfill. The Prophet Muhammad said: “Religion is easy”. But this does not mean that the Muslims should seek to escape their duty by muddling their way out of it. It is possible for the Muslims today — in the matters of the fast of Ramadhan and the pilgrimage to Mecca — to make sure of their duty by aid of modern scientific knowledge.

A symbol of unity and solidarity

“The world of Islam today is in the greatest need of unity and solidarity. If the Muslims of the whole world show solidarity in adopting a uniform date for the beginning of the fast of Ramadhan and the date of the pilgrimage to Mecca, and in joining together in celebrating the important Muslim festivals, they would be brought nearer together in other respects. It may not be long before this unity and solidarity in the spiritual sphere would mature into unity and solidarity in the material aspects of life.

“It is because I feel very strongly on this question that I have decided to form a committee of learned jurists and scientists to study this problem and make recommendations to me for its solution. I consider this problem an important one, and I feel that the lack of uniformity and agreement between the Muslims on the whole on this subject may, if not put an end to soon, precipitate far more serious and harmful results...”

1 See also “The Muddle of the Crescent Moon” in The Islamic Review for September 1953.
The meanings of simple things

If you stop to think about nature and its phenomena, and contemplate deeply over simple aspects of this subject, you will find for yourself new meanings in many ordinary things and arrive at new opinions about them. Often you will find after such deep consideration of simple matters that there are many aspects which you have never noticed before and discover for yourself many obvious secrets which never excited your curiosity. Such was the story of the great scientists in history, the products of whose genius has provided us with the blessings and comforts which we now call “modern civilization”. Take the great scientist Isaac Newton — he saw an apple fall from a tree and stopped to think deeply about the cause for this simple incident. His curiosity and deep thought led him to the discovery of the laws of gravity. Take another great man, James Watt — he saw the lid of the kettle move restlessly as the water inside the kettle was boiling, and he was curious enough to bother to contemplate over the reason for the simple happening. And it was his curiosity that led later to the invention of the steam engine. Many similar simple stories can be told about other great men of science, like Pasteur, Edison, Marconi and others, who have contributed in no small measure to the progress and material happiness of this world.

These scientists have succeeded in widening our knowledge of the physical aspects of life, thereby improving the lot of mankind from the physical and material aspects. But they have not improved the lot of mankind in the spiritual field, nor were they capable of doing that. They have left these matters to the people concerned themselves to seek salvation from misery and unhappiness and to devise the best methods that bring them contentment and spiritual satisfaction.

How to find happiness

How is mankind to find spiritual happiness? This is a question that has been posed over and over again, and the answer to it is by no means precise or definite. The scientists, as I have said, have not provided us with the formula of happiness. But philosophers, littérates, poets, and leaders of thought, have tried to give their views about this subject, and many of them have provided mankind with what can form a recipe of happiness. But the realm of spiritual contentment and bliss has throughout the years been found in religion and faith, and it is by knocking at the door of religion and faith that we can hope to find the spiritual happiness we need.

Collingwood, a famous English thinker of modern times, wrote a book entitled Religion and Philosophy. In this book he endeavoured to show that religion was in essence a form of knowledge. He denied the view, current among many thinkers, that religion is a kind of primitive naive feeling or a form of fear instilled in man’s heart by the awe-inspiring grandeur and complexity of the universe, its revolving planets and innumerable stars and its many demonstrations of mystery and might. In his view, religion is nothing but a personal experience.

Understanding the significance of Ramadhan

Such an approach can, in my opinion, enable us to understand the meaning and significance of the fast of Ramadhan, and also the meaning and significance of ‘Id al-Fitr (the festival of the Breaking of the Fast).
The fast is a personal experience which the Muslim voluntarily undergoes every year during the month of Ramadhan. During this fast, the Muslim controls the feelings of discomfort and pain which hunger and thirst cause to the human body. The Muslim — if he desires to fast properly — has also to control himself in other respects, for the mere act of abstinence from food and drink is not all that is involved in the proper fasting of Ramadhan.

If you stop to think about the reasons which prompt a good Muslim to keep the fast of Ramadhan you will at once come to the conclusion that the act of fasting is in fact a form of exercise and drill for the mind. And this form of spiritual exercise for the mind, like its counterpart the physical exercise for the body, leads to an increase in knowledge and also to an increase in strength and power. How this increased knowledge comes about, and in what aspects it demonstrates itself, cannot be answered objectively or in a general way. The method in which they happen, and the extent to which they are successful, are questions to be answered only by the person who undergoes the experience and exercise of the fast, and who is thus in a better position to compare the state in which he was before he underwent the experience, and the state in which he became after the experience was completed. No one can answer for another about that other's state of mind and soul. Each individual is the better knower of his own self and its potentialities and weaknesses. And when he discovers these facts about his self he is the more able to lead it into the path he desires and make it aspire to the heights he seeks.

The finding of new sympathies

There are, however, many thinkers who have succeeded in conveying to other people the results of experiences which they (the thinkers) have undergone, and who have endeavoured to offer to mankind the benefit of their trials and experiences. I should like to recall in this respect an article by the great Lebanese thinker, the late Ameen al-Raihani, entitled "Hunger" (al-Joou'). Al-Raihani wrote that he fasted for three consecutive days, and did this for no other reason save to discover the effect which hunger has on the mind of man, and the psychological changes that overtake him during it. By the end of this fact, al-Raihani said, he was more or less in a state of revolt against life. He became impatient with people, his conscience became more alive and vigilant, and he declared war against hunger wherever it be, because by that, he said, mankind would be saved from decline and civilization would be saved from destruction. These were the conclusions to which al-Raihani came after fasting for only three days. In my opinion these are the same conclusions at which any person can arrive if he were to undergo the experience of fasting willingly and with a purpose.

The awakening of the conscience

This is not all that is involved in the experience of fasting. There is an educational and training aspect which makes its imprint on the mind without being detected by the person undergoing the fast. The person who, as a result of the fast, changes his eating habits, invariably indulges during the time of the fast in silence, deep thinking and contemplation. During these contemplative moods, it is more than probable that the faster would think about the unfortunate members of the human race who because of hunger, sickness or persecution, are forced to experience suffering and unhappiness of a similar nature to what he has voluntarily undertaken. The man who fasts would thus find something in common between him, while in that state, and his unfortunate fellow human beings. And it is unlikely that he would not then feel sympathy with those unfortunate members of humanity. His conscience would be awakened, and the life of others would assume a new importance in his. He is unlikely to leave that experience without taking on a new attitude towards life, a new conscience, and a new frame of mind. And this, in fact, is what the Muslim should celebrate on 'Id al-Fitr — his joy at his having rejuvenated his soul and clothed it with a new outlook on life in general, and the joy of his having awakened his conscience and brushed up its sensitivity to what is around it.

The cause for celebration

These are the results which can, and should be, achieved by the Muslim after undergoing the Fast of Ramadhan. And when the Muslim succeeds in achieving these results he has every cause to celebrate, for success is always worthy of celebration. The day of 'Id al-Fitr should mark for every Muslim the day of the completion of the success of his experiment — the day when he can say to himself that he has mastered his pains and held the reins of its impulses; the day when his faith in his God and his self has been reaffirmed, and he has scored victory against doubt and suspicion; and the day when his will-power and organized effort has controlled his desires and failings.

Man cannot achieve this kind of success by seeking knowledge from books. Knowledge accumulated in this way cannot awaken a conscience that has gone into deep slumber, nor can it enable a man to understand the feelings of other people who are in misery. This is the prerogative of faith and belief, and of religious experience on the lines I have indicated. It is for this reason that we find that many men who believe only in pure science often lack humaneness and compassion, and are strangers to the feeling of satisfaction and pride which the faster experiences when he breaks his fast and counts the successes he has achieved during it.

The invincible strength

In conclusion I should like to say a few words about the moral strength which the Muslim would acquire as a result of keeping the fast, and which is one of the main prizes which give him joy when he celebrates 'Id al-Fitr. This strength consists in the ability he acquires to undergo hardships and to sacrifice his pleasures and comforts for the sake of an ideal. This strength is augmented as the days of Ramadhan roll by and as the bodily and physical hardships of the fast grow more onerous and discomforting on the faster. This kind of power, in my view, is the really invincible power which would stand any man well in any position and against any adversary.

And so, when 'Id al-Fitr comes, I hope I shall be among many of my fellow Muslims the world over who, when they come to take stock, will be celebrating heartily the new strength which they have gained by their will-power, the new knowledge which they have acquired as a result of their contemplation, and the new victories which they have scored by not giving way to their desires. I shall treasure these new acquisitions very dearly — and I shall thank the month of Ramadhan, and the Maker of the month of Ramadhan, for them.
TOLERANCE AND ISLAM

By the late Marmaduke Pickthall

\[\text{The late Marmaduke Pickthall, the first English Muslim translator of the Holy Qur'an into English}\]

"Let no Muslim, when looking on the ruins of the Muslim realm which was encompassed through the agency of those very peoples whom the Muslims had tolerated and protected through the centuries when Western Europe thought it a religious duty to exterminate or forcibly convert all peoples of another faith than theirs — let no Muslim, seeing this, imagine that toleration is a weakness in Islam. It is the greatest strength of Islam because it is the attitude of truth. God is not the God of the Jews or the Christians or the Muslims only, any more than the sun shines or the rain falls for Jews or Christians or Muslims only. Still, as of old, some people say: 'None enters Paradise except he be a Jew or a Christian.' A Muslim answers them in the words of the Qur'an: 'Nay, but whosoever surrendereith his purpose towards God, while doing good to men, surely his reward is with his Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they suffer grief.' (2:112)."

It is strange that Europe accuses Muslims of intolerance

There is a quality which one associates with a high degree of human culture, and that is tolerance. One of the commonest charges brought against Islam historically, and as a religion, by Western writers, is that it is intolerant. This is turning the tables with a vengeance when one remembers various facts — one remembers that not a Muslim is left alive in Spain or Sicily or Apulia. One remembers that not a Muslim was left alive and not a mosque left standing in Greece after the great rebellion in 1821. One remembers how the Muslims of the Balkan peninsula, once the majority, have been systematically reduced with the approval of the whole of Europe, how the Christians under Muslim rule have in recent times been urged on to rebel and massacre the Muslims, and how reprisals by the latter have been condemned as quite uncalled for. One remembers how the Jews were persecuted throughout Europe in the Middle Ages: what they suffered in Spain after the expulsion of the Moors; what they suffered in Czarist Russia and Poland even in our own day; while in the Muslim Empire Christians and Jews had liberty of conscience and full self-government in all internal affairs of their communities.

In Spain under the Ummayyad and in Baghdad under the Abbasid Caliphs, Christians and Jews, equally with Muslims, were admitted to the schools and universities — at the expense of the State. When the Moors were driven out of Spain, the Christian conquerors held a terrific persecution of the Jews. Those who were fortunate enough to escape fled, some of them to Morocco and many hundreds to the Turkish Empire, where their descendants still live in separate communities, and still speak among themselves an antiquated form of Spanish. The Muslim Empire was a refuge for all those who fled from persecution by the Inquisition: and though the position which the Jews and Christians occupied there was inferior to that of Muslims it was infinitely to be preferred to the fate of any Muslims, Jews or heretics — nay, even any really learned and enlightened man — in contemporary Europe.

Until the eighteenth century the West knew nothing about Islam

The Western Christians, till the arrival of the encyclopaedias in the eighteenth century, did not know, and did not care to know, what the Muslims believed, nor did the Western Christians seek to know the views of Eastern Christians with regard to them. The Christian Church was already split in two, and in the end, it came to such a pass that the Eastern Christians, as Gibbon shows, preferred Muslim rule, which allowed them to practise their own form of religion and adhere to their peculiar dogmas, to the rule of fellow Christians who would have made them Roman Catholics or wiped them out. The Western Christians called the Muslims pagans, paynims, even idolators; there are plenty of books in which they are described as worshipping
an idol called Mahomet or Mahound, and in the accounts of the conquest of Granada there are even descriptions of the monstrous idols which they were alleged to worship—whereas the Muslims knew what Christianity was, and in what respects it differed from Islam. If Europe had known, as much of Islam as Muslims knew of Christendom, in those days, those mad, adventurous, occasionally chivalrous and heroic, but utterly fanatical outbreaks known as the Crusades could not have taken place, for they were based on a complete misapprehension. To quote a learned French author:

"Every poet in Christendom considered a Mohammedan to be an infidel and his gods to be three; mentioned in order, they were Mahomet or Mahound or Mohammad, Opolane, and the third Tergomond. It was said that when in Spain the Christians overpowered the Mohammedans and drove them as far as the gates of the city of Saragossa, the Mohammedans went back and broke their idols. A Christian poet of the period says that Opolane, the 'god' of the Mohammedans, which was kept there in a den, was awfully belaboured and abused by the Mohammedans, who, binding him hand and foot, crucified it on a pillar, trampled it under their feet and broke it to pieces by beating it with sticks: that their second god Mahound they threw in a pit and caused to be torn to pieces by pigs and dogs, and that never were gods so ignominiously treated; but that afterwards the Mohammedans repented of their sins, and once more reinstated their gods for the accustomed worship, and that when the Emperor Charles entered the city of Saragossa he had every mosque in the city searched and had 'Muhammad' and all their gods broken with iron hammers."

That was the kind of "history" on which the populace of Western Europe used to be fed. Those were the ideas which inspired the rank and file of the Crusaders in their attacks on the most civilized peoples of those days. Christendom regarded the outside world as damned eternally, and Islam did not. There were good and tender-hearted men in Christendom who thought it sad that any people should be damned eternally, and wished to save them by the only way they knew—conversion to the Christian faith. The mission of St. Francis of Assisi to the Muslims, and its reception, vividly illustrates the difference of the two points of view. So does the history of the Crusade of St. Louis against Egypt, which also had conversion as its object. A very interesting illustration of this point is to be found among the records of the Society of Friends, commonly called the Quakers. It was the subject of an article by Mabel Brailsford in the Manchester Guardian in November 1912.

The experiences of a Quaker Englishwoman in Turkey

In Charles II's reign a young Englishwoman, who had been a servant-girl, became an active member of the Society of Friends and suffered persecution on that account. She was twice flogged in England for protesting against Church customs of the day. She, with two other Quakers, went to preach in New England, as the American colonies were then called. There they were thrown into prison on a charge of witchcraft and released only after many hardships. After her return to England she set out with five other Quakers to convert the Grand Signior, as the Sultan of Turkey was called. On the journey across Europe her companions fell into the hands of the Inquisition, and only one of them was ever heard of afterwards. He returned to England after many years, a gibbering madman. She, after much persecution and annoyance, pursued her journey quite alone. took ship at Venice, and was put ashore on the coast of Morea, far from the place she wished to go, in but Muslim territory. From thence she walked all the way to Adrianople, but she need not have gone on foot; for from the moment she set foot in the Muslim Empire persecution was at an end. Everybody showed her kindness; the Government officials helped her on her way, and when she reached Adrianople, where the Sultan Bayazid (1347-1403 C.E.) was then encamped, she asked for an audience with the emperor, saying that she brought a message to him from Almighty God. The Sultan received her in state, according her all the honours of an ambassador. The Sultan listened with grave courtesy to all she had to say, and when she finished speaking, he said it was the truth, which they also believed. The Sultan asked her to remain in his country as an honoured guest, or, at least, if she must depart, to accept an escort worthy of the dignity of one who carried a message of the Most High. But she refused, departing as she had come, on foot and alone, and so reached Constantinople, without the least hurt or hindrance, and there took passage on a vessel bound for England. It was not until the Western nations broke away from their religious law that they became more tolerant; and it was only when the Muslims fell away from their religious law that they declined in tolerance and other evidences of the highest culture. Therefore the difference evident in that anecdote is not of manners only but of religion. Of old, tolerance had existed here and there in the world, among enlightened individuals: but those individuals had always been against the prevalent religion. Tolerance was regarded as un-religious, if not irreligious. Before the coming of Islam it had never been preached as an essential part of religion.

To Muslims, Judaism, Christianity and Islam are but three forms of one religion

For the Muslims, Judaism, Christianity and Islam are but three forms of one religion, which, in its original purity, was the religion of Abraham—al-Islam, that perfect self-surrender to the will of God, which is the basis of the rule of God. The Jews, in their religion, after Moses, limited God's mercy to their chosen nation, and thought of His Kingdom as the dominion of their race.

Even Jesus Christ himself, as several of his sayings show—for instance, when he asked if it were meet to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs, and when he declared that he was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel—seemed to regard his mission as to the Hebrews only; and it was only after a special vision vouchsafed to St. Peter that his followers in after days considered themselves authorised to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles.

The Christians limited God's mercy to those who believed certain dogmas, and thought of His kingdom on earth as a group apart from the main stream of this world's life—the aggregate of devout Christians. Everyone who failed to hold the dogmas was an outcast or a miscreant, to be persecuted for his or her soul's good. In Islam only is manifest the real nature of the kingdom of God.

"Verily they who believe, and those who keep the Jew's religious rule, and Christians, and Sobzans—whosoever believeth in God and the Last Day, and doth right—there reward is with their Lord; and there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they suffer grief" (2 : 62).

"They say: none entereth Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian. Such are their own desires. Say: Bring your proof (of that which ye assert) if ye are truthful.

"Nay, but whosoever surrendareth his purpose to God while doing good (to men), surely his reward is with his Lord; and
there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they suffer
grief” (2 : 111-2).

And again:

“They say: Be Jews or Christians then will ye be rightly
guided. Say: Nay, but (ours is) the religion of Abraham, the
man by nature upright, and he was not of those who ascribe
partners (unto God).”

“Say: We believe in God and in that which is revealed
unto us, and that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael
and Isaac and the tribes, and that which was given to Moses
and Jesus and that which was given to the Prophets. We make
no difference between any of them, for we are those who have
surrendered (unto Him).

“And if they believe in the like of that which ye believe,
then are they already rightly guided; and if they are averse,
then they are in opposition. God will suffice thee (for defence)
against them. He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing” (2 : 135-137).

And yet again:

“God! There is none to be worshipped save Him, the
Alive, the Enduring. Age and slumber come not nigh Him; He is
all that is in the heavens and that is in the earth. Who is he
that intercedeth with Him save by His leave? He knoweth all
that is in front of them and all that is behind them, while they
encompass nothing of His knowledge save what He will. His
thrones extendeth beyond the Heavens and the Earth, and He is
never weary of preserving them. He is the Sublime, the
Tremendous.

“There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction
is henceforth distinct from error. And who so rejecteth vain
superstitions and believes in God hath grasped a firm handle
which will not give way. God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing” (2 : 254-6).

The two verses are supplementary. Where there is that
realization of the majesty and dominion of God there is no
compulsion in religion. Men choose their path — allegiance
or opposition — and it is sufficient punishment for those who
oppose that they draw further and further away from the
light of truth.

What Muslims do not generally consider is that this law
applies to our own community just as much as to the folk
outside, the laws of God being universal; and that
intolerance of Muslims for other men’s opinions and beliefs
is evidence that they themselves have, at the moment, for-
gotten the vision of the majesty and mercy of God which the
Qur’an presents to them.

The meaning of the Arabic word kāfir

But people will object that Muslims today are very
intolerant people, who call everybody who does not agree
with them a kāfir, an infidel. And many Muslims even will,
blas! seek to justify such abuse by saying that in the Qur’an
itself there are many references to the kāfirun as people
with whom the Muslims ought to have no dealings, people
upon whom they should wage war.

In the Qur’an I find two meanings, which become one
the moment we try to realize the divine standpoint. The
Kāfir, in the first place, is not the follower of any religion.
He is the opponent of God’s benevolent will and purpose
for mankind — therefore the disbeliever in the truth of all
religions, the disbeliever in all Scriptures as of divine revela-
tion, the disbeliever to the point of active opposition in all
the Prophets whom the Muslims are bidden to regard, with-
out distinction, as messengers of God. The first of the
Kāfirun was Iblis (Satan) — who through pride refused to
pay reverence to man when he was ordered to do so.

“And when We said unto the angels:
Prostrate yourselves before Adam,
they fell prostrate all except Iblis.
He refused through pride, and so
became of the disbelievers” (Kāfirun) (2 : 34).

The Qur’an repeatedly claims to be the confirmation
of the truth of all religions. The former Scriptures had become
obscure, corrupted; the former prophets appeared mythical,
so extravagant were the legends which were told concerning
them, so that people doubted whether there was any truth
in the old Scriptures, whether such people as the prophets had
ever really existed. Here, says the Qur’an, is a Scripture
whereof there is no doubt; here is a prophet actually living
among you and preaching to you. If it were not for this
Book and this Prophet, men might be excused for saying that
God’s guidance to mankind was all a fable. This Book and
this Prophet, therefore, confirm the truth of all that was
revealed before them, and those who disbelieve in them to
the point of opposing the existence of a prophet and a revela-
tion are really opposed to the idea of God’s guidance —
which is the truth of all revealed religion.

“Say: Who is an enemy to (the angel) Gabriel? For he
it is who hath revealed (this Scripture) to thy heart, confirming
all that was revealed before it, and for a guidance and glad
tidings to believers.

“Who is an enemy to God and to His angels and His
messengers and Gabriel and Michael? Verily God is an enemy
to disbelievers (in His guidance)” (2 : 97-8).

In those passages of the Qur’an which refer to warfare,
the term kāfir is applied to the actual fighting enemies
of Islam. It is not applicable to the non-Muslim as such, nor
even to the idolator as such, as is proved by a reference to
the famous Proclamation of Immunity from obligations
towards those faithless tribes of the idolators who, after
having made treaties with the Muslims, had repeatedly
broken the treaty and attacked them:

“(A statement of) immunity from God and His messenger
towards those of the idolators (Mushrikins, not Kāfirun) with
whom ye made a treaty (but they broke it).

“So travel freely in the land four months and know that
ye cannot weaken God, and that God will abuse the opponents
(Kāfirun).

“And a proclamation to the people on the day of the
greater pilgrimage that God and His messenger are free from
obligations towards the idolators (Mushrikins). So if ye repent
it will be best for you, but if ye turn away, then know that ye
cannot weaken God. Warn those who oppose hereafter
(O Muhammad!) of a painful punishment.

“Except those of the idolators (Mushrikins) with whom
you have a treaty, and who have not injured you in aught, nor
aided anyone against you. (As for them), fulfill their treaty
perfectly until the term thereof. Lo! God loveth those who
keep their duty (unto Him)” (9 : 1-4).

Here it is evident that a distinction is drawn between
mushrikun (idolators—literally, those who attribute partners
to God) in general, and the Kāfirun. The idolators who kept
faith with the Muslims were not Kāfirun. The Prophet
Muhammad himself said that the term kāfir was not to be
applied to anyone who said Salam (peace) to the Muslims.
The kāfirs, in the terms of the Qur’an, are the conscious evil-
doers of any race or creed or community.

I have made a long digression, but it seemed to me
necessary, for I find much confusion of ideas even among
Muslims on this subject, owing to defective study of the
Qur’an and the Prophet’s life. Many Muslims seem to forget
that our Prophet had allies among the idolators even after Islam had triumphed in Arabia, and that he “fulfilled his treaty with them perfectly until the term thereof”. The righteous conduct of the Muslims, not the sword, must be held responsible for the conversion of those idolators, since they embraced Islam before the expiration of their treaty.

So much for the idolators of Arabia, who had no real beliefs to oppose to the teaching of Islam, but only superstition. They invoked their local deities for help in war, and put their faith only in brute force. In this they were, to begin with, enormously superior to the Muslims. When the Muslims nevertheless won, they were dismayed; and all their arguments based on the superior power of their deities were for ever silenced. Their conversion followed naturally. It was only a question of time with the most obstinate of them.

The people of the Scripture of Islam

It was otherwise with the people who had a respectable religion of their own — the People of the Scripture (Ahl al-Kitab) as the Qur’an calls them — the people who had received the revelation of some former prophet: the Jews, the Christians and the Zoroastrians were these with whom the Muslims came at once in contact. To those our Prophet’s attitude was all of kindness. The Charter which he granted to the Christian monks of Sina’i is extant. If you read it you will see that it breathes not only goodwill but actual love. He gave to the Jews of Medina, so long as they were faithful to him, precisely the same treatment as to the Muslims. He was never aggressive against any man or class of men; he never penalised any man, or made war on any people, on the ground of belief, but only on the ground of conduct. The story of his reception of Christian and Zoroastrian visitors is on record. There is not a trace of religious intolerance in all this. And it should be remembered — Muslims are rather apt to forget it, and it is of great importance to our outlook — that our Prophet did not ask the People of the Scripture to become his followers. He asked them only to accept the Kingdom of God, to abolish priesthood and restore their own religions to their original purity. The question which, in effect, he put to everyone was this: “Are you for the Kingdom of God which includes all of us, or are you for your own community against the rest of mankind?” The one is obviously the way of peace and human progress, the other the way of strife, oppression and calamity. But the rulers of the world, to whom he sent his message, most of them treated it as the message of either an insolent upstart or a mad fanatic. His envoys were cruelly insulted, and even slain. One cannot help wondering what reception that same embassy would meet with from the rulers of mankind today, when all the thinking portion of mankind accept the Prophet’s premises, have thrown off the trammels of priesthood, and harbour some idea of human brotherhood.

Say: O people of the Scripture come to a proposal of arrangement between us and you: that we shall worship none but God, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that no one of us shall take another for Lord besides God. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him)” (3:63).

If the People of the Scripture, thus appealed to, had agreed to this proposal, they also would have been of those who have surrendered unto God (Muslimun). The Messenger of God was not to seek his own aggrandisement: his sole concern was to deliver his message to the nations. A Unitarian Christian community would have been, for him, a Muslim community; and a Jewish community which rejected the priesthood and superstition of the rabbis would have been the same.

Muhammad’s attitude towards the Jews and Christians remained tolerant despite their refusal of his message

But though the Christians and Jews and Zoroastrians refused his message, and their rulers heaped most cruel insults on his envoys, our Prophet never lost his benevolent attitude towards them as religious communities, as witness the Charter to the monks of Sina’i already mentioned. And though the Muslims of later days have fallen far short of the Prophet Muhammad’s tolerance, and have sometimes shown arrogance towards men of other faiths, they have always given special treatment to the Jews and Christians. Indeed, the laws for their special treatment form part of the Shari‘ah.

In Egypt the Copts were on terms of closest friendship with the Muslims in the first centuries of the Muslim conquest, and they are on terms of closest friendship with the Muslims at the present day. In Syria the various Christian communities lived on terms of closest friendship with the Muslims in the first centuries of the Muslim conquest, and they are on terms of closest friendship with the Muslims at the present day, openly preferring Muslim domination to a foreign yoke.

There were always flourishing Jewish communities in the Muslim realm, notably in Spain, North Africa, Syria, Iraq, and later on in Turkey. Jews fled from Christian persecution to Muslim countries for refuge. Whole communities of them voluntarily embraced Islam following a revered rabbi whom they regarded as the promised Messiah, but many more remained as Jews, and they were never persecuted as in Christendom.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other Christian Holy Places under Muslim rule

To return to the Christians, the story of the triumphal entry of the Caliph ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattab into Jerusalem has often been told, but I shall tell it once again, for it illustrates the proper Muslim attitude towards the People of the Scripture. The general who had taken Jerusalem asked the Caliph to come in person to receive the keys of the Holy City. The Caliph travelled from Medina very simply, with only a single camel and a single slave. Master and man used the camel alternately, ride and tie. The astonishment of the resplendent slave-officials of the Roman Empire when they saw the ruler of so great an empire coming in such humble guise may be imagined. None the less they paid him reverence and led him to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as the glory of their city. While ‘Umar was in the church the hour of ‘Asr prayer arrived. The Christian officials urged him to spread his carpet in the church itself, but he refused, saying that some of the ignorant Muslims after him might claim the church and convert it into a mosque because he had once prayed there. He had his carpet carried to the top of the steps outside the church, to the spot where the Mosque of ‘Umar now stands — the real Mosque of ‘Umar, for the splendid Qubbat al-Sakhrah, which tourists call the Mosque of ‘Umar, is not a mosque at all, but the temple of Jerusalem, a shrine within the precincts of the Masjid al-Aqsa, which is the second of the holy places of Islam.

From that day to this, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre has always been a Christian place of worship; the only thing the Muslims did in the way of interference with the
Christian's liberty of conscience in respect of it was to see that every sect of Christians had access to it, and that it was not monopolized by one sect to the exclusion of others. The same is true of the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, and of other buildings of special sanctity. Under the Khulafa al-Rashidun (the first four Caliphs) and the Ummayads, the true Islamic attitude was maintained, and it continued to a much later period under the Ummayad rule in Spain. In those days it was no uncommon thing for Muslims and Christians to use the same place of worship. I could point to a dozen buildings in Syria which tradition says were thus jointly used; and I have seen at Lydda (Lydya), in the plain of Sharon, a Church of St. George and a mosque under the same roof with only a partition wall between. The partition wall did not exist in early days. The words of the Caliph 'Umar proved true in other cases; not only half the church at Lydya, but the whole church in other places was claimed by ignorant Muslims of a later day on the mere ground that the early Muslims had prayed there. But there was absolute liberty of conscience for the Christians; they kept their most important churches and built new ones, though by a later edict their church bells were taken from them because the din annoyed the Muslims. It was said, only the big bell of the Holy Sepulchre remaining. They used to call to prayer by beating a naqis, a wooden gong, the same instrument which the Prophet Noah is said to have used to summon the chosen few into his ark. The equality of early days was later marred by social arrogance on the part of the Muslims, but that came only after the Crusades. The Christians were never persecuted, save for a short period when Southern Syria was conquered by the Fatemites of Egypt for a time. Then, under the mad ascetic Caliph, al-Hakim bi Amr Illah (d. 1021 C.E.) (whom the Duruz to this day worship as God incarnate), they suffered very cruel persecution. Hundreds of Christian hermits living in caves among the rocks of the Judaean wilderness were ordered to be abominably mutilated, and though they escaped through the intervention of the local Muslims, cruel persecution of the Christians did take place: their pilgrims were interfered with, and the services of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre were interrupted for a time. It was the news of that persecution, carried to Europe by returning pilgrims, which was the cause of the first Crusade. But by the time the Crusading army reached Syria, the Fatemites had been driven out and the condition of the Christians was again normal.

It was not the Christians of Syria who desired the Crusades, nor did the Crusaders care a jot for them, or their sentiments, regarding them as heretics and interlopers. The latter word sounds strange in this connection, but there is a reason for its use. The great Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid (d. 786 C.E.) had once sent the keys of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre among other presents to the Frankish Emperor, Charlemagne. Historically, it was a wrong to the Christians of Syria, who did not belong to the Western Church, and asked for no protection other than the Muslim Government. Politically it was a mistake, and proved the source of endless after trouble to the Muslim Empire. The keys sent, it is true, were only duplicate keys. The church was in daily use. It was not locked up until such time as Charlemagne, Emperor of the West, chose to lock it. The present of the keys was intended only as a compliment, as one would say, "You and your people can have free access to the church which is the centre of your faith, your goal of pilgrimage, whenever you may come to visit it." But the Frankish Christians took the present seriously in after times, regarding it as the title to a freehold, and looking on the Christians of the country as mere interlopers, as I said before, as well as heretics.

The deterioration of relations between the Muslims and their Christian fellow subjects

That compliment from king to king was the foundation of all the extravagant claims of France in later centuries. Indirectly it was the foundation of Russia's even more extortionate claims, for Russia claimed to protect the Eastern Church against the encroachments of the Roman Catholics; and it was the cause of nearly all the ill-feeling which ever existed between the Muslims and their Christian Zimmis (non-Muslim subjects). When the Crusaders took Jerusalem they massacred the Eastern Christians with the Muslims indiscriminately, and while they ruled in Palestine the Eastern Christians, such of them as did not accompany the retreating Muslim army, were deprived of all the privileges which Islam secured to them and were treated as a sort of outcast. Many of them became Roman Catholics in order to secure a higher status; but after the reconquest, when the emigrants returned, the followers of the Eastern Church were again found to be in large majority over those who owed obedience to the Pope of Rome. The old order was re-established, and all the Zimmis once again enjoyed their privileges in accordance with the sacred law. But the effect of those fanatical inroads had been somewhat to embitter Muslim sentiments, and to tinge them with an intellectual contempt for Christians generally, which was bad for Muslims and Christians alike, since it made the former arrogant and oppressive to the latter socially, and the intellectual contempt, surviving the intellectual superiority, blinded the Muslims to the scientific advance of the West until too late. The arrogance hardened into custom, and when Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt occupied Syria in the third decade of the nineteenth century, a deputation of the Muslims of Damascus waited on him with a complaint that under his rule the Christians were beginning to ride on horseback. Ibrahim Pasha pretended to be greatly shocked at the news, and asked leave to think for a whole night on so disturbing an announcement. Next morning, he informed the deputation that since it was, of course, a shame for Christians to ride as high as Muslims, he gave permission to all Muslims thenceforth to ride on camels. That was probably the first time the Muslims of Damascus had ever been brought face to face with the absurdity of their pretensions.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century C.E. the Christians had, by custom, been made subject to certain social disabilities, but these were never, at the worst, so cruel or so galling as to which the Roman Catholic nobility of France at the same period subjected their own Roman Catholic peasantry, or as those which Protestants imposed on Roman Catholics in Ireland: and they weighed only on the wealthy portion of the community. The poor Muslims and poor Christians were on an equality, and were still good friends and neighbours. The Muslims never interfered with the religion of the subject Christians. There was never anything like the Inquisition or the fires of Smithfield. Nor did they interfere in the internal affairs of their communities. Thus a number of small Christian sects, called by the larger sects heretical, which would inevitably have been exterminated if left to the tender mercies of the larger sects whose power prevailed in Christendom, were protected and preserved until today by the power of Islam.
The monasteries and churches under Turkish rule

Innumerable monasteries, with a wealth of treasure of which the worth has been calculated at no less than £100,000,000 sterling, enjoyed the benefit of the Prophet Muhammad's charter to the monks of Sinai and were religiously respected by the Muslims. The various sects of Christians were represented in the Council of the Empire by their patriarchs, on the provincial and district councils by their bishops, in the village councils by their priests, whose word was always taken without question on things which were the sole concern of their community. With regard to the respect for monasteries, I have a curious instance of my own remembrance. In the year 1908 the Arab congregation of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, or Church of the Resurrection as it is called locally, rebelled against the tyranny of the monks of the adjoining convent of St. George. The convent was extremely rich, and a large part of its revenue was derived from lands which had been made over to it by the ancestors of the Arab congregation for security at a time when property was insecure, relying on the well-known Muslim reverence for religious foundations. The income was to be paid to the depositors and their descendants, after deducting something for the convent. No income had been paid to anybody by the monks for more than a century, and the congregation now demanded that at least a part of that ill-gotten wealth should be spent on education of the community. The patriarch sided with the congregation, but was captured by the monks, who kept him prisoner. The congregation tried to storm the convent, and the amiable monks poured vitriol down upon the face of the congregation. The congregation appealed to the Turkish Government, which secured the release of the patriarch and some concessions for the congregation, but could not make the monks disgorge any part of their wealth because of the immunities secured to monasteries by the sacred law. What made the congregation the more bitter was the fact that certain Christians who, in old days, had made their property over to the Masjid al-Aqsa — the great mosque of Jerusalem — for security, were receiving income yearly from it even then.

Here is another incident from my own memory. A sub-prior of the Monastery of St. George purloined a handful from the enormous treasure of the Holy Sepulchre — a handful of thousands pounds — and tried to get away with it to Europe. He was caught at Jaffa by the Turkish customs officers and brought back to Jerusalem. The poor man fell on his face before the Mutasarrif — the administrating officer — imploring him with tears to have him tried by Turkish law. The answer was, "We have no jurisdiction over monasteries," and the poor grovelling wretch was handed over to the tender mercies of his fellow-mocks.

The origin of "capitulation"

But the very evidences of their toleration, the concessions given to the subject people of another faith, were used against them in the end by their political opponents just as the concessions granted in their day of strength to foreigners came to be used against them in their day of weakness, as capitulations.

I can give you one curious instance of a "capitulation", typical of several others. Three hundred years ago, the Franciscan friars were the only Western European mission-aries to be found in the Muslim Empire. There was a terrible epidemic of plague, and those Franciscans worked devotedly, tending the sick and helping to bury the dead of all communities. In gratitude for this great service, the Turkish Government decreed that all property of the Franciscans should be free of customs duty for ever. In the Firman the actual words used were "Frankish (i.e. Western European missionaries)", and at a later time, when there were hundreds of missionaries from the West, most of them of other sects than the Roman Catholics, they all claimed that privilege and were allowed it by the Turkish Government because the terms of the original Firman included them. Not only that, but they claimed that concession as a right, as if it had been won for them by force of arms or international treaty instead of being, as it was, a free gift of the Sultan; and called upon their consuls and ambassadors to support them strongly if it was at all infringed.

The Christians were allowed to keep their own languages and customs, to start their own schools and to be visited by missionaries of their own faith from Christendom. Thus they formed patches of nationalism in a great mass of internationalism or universal brotherhood: for as I have already said, the tolerance within the body of Islam was, and is, something without parallel in history, class and race and colour ceasing altogether to be barriers.

In countries where nationality and language were the same, as in Syria, Egypt and Iraq, there was no clash of ideals, but in Turkey, where the Christians spoke quite different languages from the Muslims, the ideals were also different. So long as the nationalism was unaggressive, all went well; and it remained unaggressive — that is to say, the subject Christians were content with their position, so long as the Muslim Empire remained better governed, more enlightened and more prosperous than Christian countries. And that may be said to have been the case, in all human essentials, up to the beginning of the seventeenth century. Then for a period of about eighty years the Turkish Empire was badly governed, and the Christians suffered not from Islamic institutions but from the decay or neglect of Islamic institutions. Still, it took Russia more than a century of ceaseless secret propaganda work to stir up a spirit of aggressive nationalism in the subject Christians, and then only by appealing to their religious fanaticism.

After the eighty years of bad government came the era of conscious reform, when the Muslim Government turned its attention to the improvement of the status of all the peoples under it. But then it was too late to win back the Serbs, the Greeks, the Bulgars and the Rumanians. The poison of the Russian religious-political propaganda had done its work, and the prestige of Russian victories over the Turks had excited in the worst elements among the Christians of the Greek Church the hope of an early opportunity to slaughter and despoil the Muslims, strengthening the desire to do so which had been instilled in them by Russian secret envoyos, priests and monks.

A few instances from modern history, to throw into relief the meaning of Islamic tolerance

I do not wish to dwell upon this period of history, but I will only say that in the Greek War of Independence in 1821, three hundred thousand Muslims — men, women and children — the whole Muslim population of the Morea with-
out exception, as well as many thousands in the northern parts of Greece, were wiped out in circumstances of the most atrocious cruelty; that in European histories we seldom find the slightest mention of that massacre, though we hear much of the reprisals which the Turks took afterwards; that before every massacre of Christians by Muslims of which you read, there was a more wholesale massacre or attempted massacre of Muslims by Christians; that those Christians were old friends and neighbours of the Muslims — the Armenians were the favourites of the Turks till eighty years ago — and that most of them were really happy under Turkish rule, as has been shown again and again by their tendency to return to it after so-called liberation.

It was the Christians outside the Muslim Empire who systematically and continually roused their religious fanaticism: it was their priests who told them that to slaughter Muslims was a meritorious act. I doubt if anything so wicked can be found in history as that plot for the destruction of Turkey. When I say “wicked” I mean inimical to human progress and therefore against God’s guidance and His purpose for mankind. For it has made religious tolerance appear a weakness in the eyes of all the worldlings, because the multitudes of Christians who lived peacefully in Turkey are made to seem the cause of Turkey’s martyrdom and downfall: while on the other hand the method of persecution and extermination which has always prevailed in Christendom is made to seem comparatively strong and wise. Thus religious tolerance is made to seem a fault, politically. But it is not really so. The victims of injustice are always less to be pitied in reality than the perpetrators of injustice. From the expulsion of the Moriscoes dates the degradation and decline of Spain. San Fernando was really wiser and more patriotic in his tolerance to conquered Seville, Murcia and Toledo than was the later king who, under the guise of holy warfare, captured Granada and let the Inquisition work its will upon the Muslims and the Jews. And the modern Balkan States and Greece are born under a curse. It may even prove that the degradation and decline of European civilization will be dated from the day when so-called civilized statesmen agreed to the inhuman policy of Czarist Russia and gave their sanction to the crude fanaticism of the Russian Church. There is no doubt but that, in the eyes of history, religious toleration is the highest evidence of culture in a people. Let no Muslim, when looking on the ruins of the Muslim realm which was compassed through the agency of those very peoples whom the Muslims had tolerated and protected through the centuries when Western Europe thought it a religious duty to exterminate or forcibly convert all peoples of another faith than theirs—let no Muslim, seeing this, imagine that toleration is a weakness in Islam. It is the greatest strength of Islam because it is the attitude of truth. God is not the God of the Jews or the Christians or the Muslims only, any more than the sun shines or the rain falls for Jews or Christians or Muslims only. Still, as of old, some people say:

“None enters Paradise except he be a Jew or a Christian”

(2:111).

A Muslim answers them in the words of the Qur’an:

“Nay but whosoever surrendereth his purpose towards God, while doing good to men, surely his reward is with his Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they suffer grief” (2:112).
THE SYMBOLS USED
BY THE MAULANA
JALAL-UD-DIN RUMI

By Dr. Annemarie Schimmel

An imaginary representation of the great mystic, Jalal-ud-Din Rumi (d. 672 C.E. at the age of 66). He is buried at Konya, Turkey. Throughout Turkey he is spoken of by the honorific title of "The Maulana" (our master)

"There is no other mystic poet either in the East or in the West to equal Rumi in the usage of such rich and resplendent symbols"

Rudolph Otto draws an allusion between God and a mighty mountain the summit of which is invisible in eternal darkness. According to this great German theologian a very small part of this mountain is visible, and this appears as a promontory of good hope. We see this minute promontory through the haze and the smoke of this world and consider it as the final truth. Whenever we observe a Providential manifestation we endeavour to commit it to memory by words or allegories. However, every word we find or every symbol we use to commit the manifestation is in one sense untrue. Therefore, and in accordance with all religions, the proper description of the Divine Secret is silence. It is not possible to describe the secret of the Divine Being, which is entirely different from all creation. The human being who discovers this secret and the final truth must not reveal it. As Rumi asserted and reasserted, it is impossible to get near the sun. The light and fire of the sun will destroy instantly anyone who attempts to observe it without the veil. For these two reasons, the mystics who experience this observation in ecstasy use symbols for its description. They do this either to show an image of the final truth or to veil the merciless fire of this truth with a coloured curtain. The works of Rumi are, therefore, saturated with such symbols. There is no other mystic poet either in the East or in the West to equal Rumi in the usage of such rich and resplendent symbols.

The various symbols of the sun and Rumi

The most important symbol Rumi used was the sun. This is not extraordinary because his first and original beloved was Shams al-Din. He saw the reflections and the rays of the eternal sun, i.e., the face of the Beloved, everywhere. In the absence of this sun no roses will grow and no fruits ripen. The sun crowns the thorns of the bush with roses and turns the rough stones into red through a process which lasts centuries. In similar manner the Divine Beloved gives new life and eternal beauty to all lovers who love, suffer and wait longingly. But no one can enter this sun because His glorious magnificence burns all. The sun is a very nice and appropriate symbol to allude to the beauty and the majesty of God. However, one single symbol, no matter how deep and meaningful it may be, cannot be sufficient for the comprehension of the diverse aspects of the Divine Reality. Rumi always searched and found his symbols in nature. Orchards and gardens, birds and flowers, told the story of the lover and the beloved. The spirit was symbolized by a bird, which symbol was used from the time of the ancient Egyptians to the present day. The allegory of the rose and the nightingale, the duck which escapes into the sea, all allude to the central fact that the spirit desires to return to its original domain. The smallest thing, whether it be a butterfly or a drop of water, in the hands of Rumi gains transparency and reveals the light of the Divine Secret. Man must become lost within the immense ocean of God like a drop of water, because man is like a small wave or fleck of foam created on that ocean. The fortunes afforded by God ebb and flow on that ocean and meet the shores of human life. But according to the wise, the occurrences which take
place in our time and space are nothing but the reflections of the tides of fortune and misfortune which occur on that ocean which exists outside the realms of time and space. Whoever meets dissolution on that ocean immediately turns into the mother-of-pearl creating ocean. An absolute abandonment must create an absolute gain.

The nature of the symbols used by Rumi

One of the characteristics of Rumi is that the symbols he used had not only one meaning but were full of different meanings. These symbols can be taken as having a positive or a negative meaning. The fire, for instance, could be taken to mean the fire of hell, which can be extinguished either by the water of mercy or by the light of magnanimity; or it could also be taken to mean the fire of human passions; or it could be taken to mean the fire of misfortunes which are made to purify the hearts. Where misfortune is used as a symbol of Divine love, it must mean the Fire of Love.

Atish-i ’Ishaq ast kandar nayafutad.

In all religions, there are certain symbols to allude to the religious facts and to the relationship of God and His creatures. Most of these symbols allude to the ancient rites and primitive customs. One of the most celebrated examples of these symbols is wine. Rumi draws a comparison between the indescribable intoxication caused by ecstasy and the intoxication caused by wine. In eternity, in (Ruzi-alast) God, in the shape of a cup-bearer, will hand the wine of love to the crying man away from home longing for the scent of this cup, thereby indicating to His creature his original domain or the way to his Beloved. This world is like an empty cup — when the lover sees the cup he becomes intoxicated. Because if the beauty of the cup-bearer becomes manifest and if there is a chance for the lover to drink the love from the lips of the beloved, the lover will perish by the majesty of the beloved. The cup-bearer is also a music-maker. He plays the flute, the lute and the lyre. The melodies produced on these instruments are always nostalgic. Man is like a lyre in the hands of his beloved, playing the tunes of torment; or man is like a lute in the lips of his beloved, inquiring the everlasting longing. The flute, used as a symbol in many religions since ancient Babylonia, was a most favourite symbol with Rumi. According to him the roof and the doors of the house of love were made entirely of songs and poetry. The lover who can understand the voice of the flute responds to its tune and joins in the Sama’1 and flies resplendent around the perpetual light of the Divine beloved, like a planet or a star around the sun. In the Sama’ of Rumi and in all symbols relating to the Sama’ there is the deepest meaning. Because the mystic lover eternally flies resplendent around one centre only, he wants to get near to one goal only and attempts to introduce his secret by using new symbols. The mystic lover finally understands the futility of his poetic endeavours and resumes silence and in silent gratitude flies resplendent around the beauty and majesty of God like an atom around the sun. He listens to His communication, and he gets completely dissolved into a state where there is no Zikr,2 no speaker and no hearer. And the mystic lover flows into dissolution in the midst of all the symbols of different shades and colours and in the darkness of light.

1 Literally, to hear. By transition, to attend a musical conversazione.
2 Remembrance (of God).
The Truth About
The Union of Cyprus with Greece

By Mehmed Dana

History shows that the Greeks cannot be entrusted with the fate of the minorities under their rule.

I believe the readers of The Islamic Review will find it useful to acquaint themselves with the point of view of the 100,000 Cypriot-Turkish Muslims regarding the question of the "Union of Cyprus" with Greece, which came up at the United Nations Assembly for discussion about three months ago at the instance of the Greek Government, who had asked the Assembly to ask its present owner, the British Government, to hand over the island to Greece.

The reason given in support of this case was that the Greek-speaking population of the island, which formed the majority of its population, wanted "union" (Enosis) with Greece, and that the principles of democracy recognized for the majority a right over the administration of the country in which it lived. But those who advance this argument forget that the same principles recognize also for the minorities the right of living in their countries in peace and security. Thus a reconciliation of the rights of both sections demands that the right of majority must be restricted by the right of minority. In other words, the right of the majority should end where the security area of the minority begins. In the case of Cyprus the claim advanced for the so-called majority does definitely and directly affect the security of the minorities of this island.

Let us now turn to history. The last half-century of Greek history is full of incidents which inspire no confidence in Greek administration. The instability of Government, gory struggles among the political parties and civil wars over ideological differences are the characters of the last sixty years of Greek history. The Greek people have proved themselves incapable of controlling their feelings, emotions and passions. They behave according to their feelings rather than their reason; they do not possess a tolerant mind, an indispensable minimum of life in modern society. Let me give you some historical facts in support of my contentions.

In 1912 the Provinces of Yania and Salonica were awarded to Greece with Bulgarian and Albanian minorities, that had lived for centuries under Turkish rule, preserving all their communal characters, but after forty years they have ceased to exist as communities under Greek rule! In the same year Western Thrace was made over to Greece with 140,000 Turks. After forty years this number, instead of increasing, has been reduced to 100,000! In 1896 in Crete there were 89,000 Turks. In 1925, when an exchange of population took place between Turkey and Greece, only about 30,000 Turks were found there! The Dodecanese in 1946 were ceded to Greece with 12,000 Turks; after eight years they have been reduced to 4,500!

When the United Nations Assembly decided that "the Cyprus question" should not be discussed by the Assembly, the Greek people organized demonstrations all over their country and in Cyprus and violated the diplomatic privilege of immunity of the Turkish. American and British Embassies and Consulates for the only reason that their respective governments had not supported the claim of Greece in respect of Cyprus at the United Nations Assembly. These facts and incidents show very clearly the intolerant mind of the Greek people, a state with which no administration can be entrusted with the lives and human rights of any community.

The Importance of Historical, Geographical and Strategical Factors in Determining the Future of a Country

The wish of the majority is not the only factor to determine the status of a country. The historical, geographical and strategical situations of a country are some other factors which should be kept in view when considering its future administration. The Aland Islands in the Baltic Sea are...
inhabited by the Swedish people, but their sovereignty belongs to Finland. Some years ago both the Swedish and Finnish Governments raised claim over them. The Swedish claim was based on the population factor, while the Finnish claim was on the geographical and strategical connections of the islands with Finland. The case was brought before the then League of Nations, which decided the case in favour of Finland. The Channel Islands between France and England are inhabited by French people, whereas their sovereignty belongs to Great Britain. The population of the Southern Tyrol is German with a great majority, whereas its sovereignty belongs to Italy. The islands of Imros and Tenedos, at the entrance of the Dardanelles, were left to Turkey for their geographical and strategical connections with her territory by the Treaty of Lausanne, of which Greece is one of the signatories.

Historical, geographical and strategical factors are against the claim to the annexation of Cyprus by Greece. Also the conflict with the population factor. Cyprus has never been part of Greece, but was under Turkish rule for 307 years. It lies a distance of 1,100 kilometres from Greece, whereas the distance between it and Turkey is only 60 kilometres. Cyprus has nothing to do with Greece from the strategical point of view, whereas it lies within the territorial waters of Turkey. So if a change were to take place in the sovereignty of the island, its natural ruler could be no other than Turkey because of historical, geographical and strategical reasons.

The Greek-speaking population of the island are not of Cyprus origin

The fact that the Greek-speaking people of the island have grown into a majority since 1890 weakens the force of the population factor upon which the Greek claim is based. In 1790 in the island there were 60,000 Turks, whereas there were no more than 20,000 Greek-speaking people. In 1896 the population of Cyprus was 209,291, one-third of which was Turkish and two-thirds non-Turkish, in which were included all non-Turkish minorities (vide, A Short History of Cyprus, by Philip Newman). It seems that the Greek-speaking people then formed about one-half of its population. It was after that time that emigrants belonging to the Orthodox Church came to the island from the surrounding countries, causing them to grow into the present number so quickly. Many Greek-speaking people in Cyprus are not of Cyprus origin. I believe it requires no stretch of imagination to understand that to live only sixty years, which is but a short period in terms of history, is not enough to create for the majority a right to change the sovereignty of the island in favour of Greece, of which it has never been a part.

Why the Communists support the “Union” of Cyprus with Greece

Also, it is not true to say that all Greek-speaking people of the island want “union” with Greece. The Communist Party, which constitutes 60 per cent of the Greek people, in reality, does not want this at all. Until three years ago it opposed the “union” very openly. But, presumably upon instructions from behind the Iron Curtain, the Communist Party changed its tactics and took up the case of the “union” with Greece. Having in mind the fact that the Communists are fanatics in their ideology, every sensible man will have to aver that the Communists of Cyprus are not sincere in supporting the “union” with Greece, where Communism is outlawed and the Communists are persecuted. It is evident that their object is merely to create trouble inside and outside of the island and cause friction among the States which have an interest in the island.

“The Cyprus question” has also another aspect which concerns the security of the surrounding countries. In the case of the “union”, the Greek administration, which is weak on the mainland, will naturally be still weaker on the island, and this situation will be exploited by the Communist agents to the detriment of the country and of those around it. The island then may sink into such a state as to endanger the security of the surrounding countries.

The annexation of Cyprus to Greece or self-determination for its people means annihilation of the Turkish minority

The annexation of the island to Greece may satisfy the imperialistic ambitions of the Greek nation and give satisfaction to some of the Greek-speaking people of the island. But on the other side it will bring about the destruction of the minorities, including the 100,000 Muslim Turks. I am sure that it will be conceded that even the considerations of expediency should not let the right of living in peace and security take precedence over the right of satisfaction, and that security and peace of the minorities must not be sacrificed.

Those who are anxious to get a true perspective of the “Cyprus question” must take into consideration its “union” with Greece in the light of the probable results it may produce. For instance, the “union” with Greece of Cyprus may well mean a total elimination of the Muslim Turkish community there with their hundreds of historical and religious institutions. This factor alone is enough to discredit the “Cyprus question”.

It should also be pointed out that it is not any intention to support colonization when we speak in favour of the status quo. Our main object at present is to ward off the Greek administration, which we believe is destructive for us, from the island; and the status quo, under the present conditions, is the only means to serve that object. Our final object is to get union with Turkey, the previous owner of the island, under the administration of which all non-Turkish peoples enjoyed complete tolerance for centuries while they increased in number and preserved their communal characteristics. But under present world conditions we are conscious of the fact that a claim to attain that object must wait for a more suitable time when it will be supported by the historical, geographical and strategical ties of the island with Turkey.

Cyprus must not be compared with some other countries such as India, Pakistan, Indonesia, the Philippines and Egypt, the populations of which are not only homogeneous but are also the possessors of those territories since time immemorial. The population of Cyprus is not homogeneous nor is the majority of its Greek-speaking people of Cyprus origin. The majority is composed of emigrants from the surrounding countries. Cyprus has never been part of Greece, to which some want the island to be annexed.

In view of the above-mentioned facts the Turks of Cyprus cannot bring themselves to support the arguments advanced in favour of the annexation of the island to Greece, nor self-determination for the people of Cyprus, which amounts to the same in application and consequence thereof. To add to this, we must also bear in mind the fact that in Spain, Western Greece and Crete thousands of mosques and sacred places, belonging to Muslim peoples who were forced to leave their homes, properties and countries under the intolerant administration of those countries, have been converted to churches and monasteries.

These figures have been taken from the report of M. de Vezein, the then English Consul in Cyprus, vide Cyprus, p. 368.
A PROFILE OF BANDUNG, INDONESIA

Bandung, the venue for the Asian-African Conference to be held from 18th to 24th April, lies seventy-five miles to the south-east of Djakarta, and is the capital of West Java. The name "Bandung" applies to the city and the regency in which it is situated. The regency of Bandung (covering an area of about 1,175 square miles) is sub-divided into ten districts, having a total population of nearly 1,250,000 in 1930 (last census). The city of Bandung now has a population of 768,000, a high proportion being European and Chinese.

The city is situated on a plateau with an average height of 2,000 feet above sea level, and is ringed by mountains. It was once the bed of a great lake and many of the mountains are over 3,400 feet. To the south, the volcanic peaks of the South Preanger Highlands reach 8,500 feet above sea level. The plateau is served by the largest river in West Java, the Tjitarum (the Sudanese word for indigo), which lies to the west of the city and whose tributaries flow into the Java Sea in the north. To the north is the Tangkubanprahu, a live volcano, which recently erupted, causing considerable concern.

Within its confines are a large railway workshop, canning factories, a rubber factory and a large quinine factory, but it is by no means merely an industrial or commercial centre. The best-equipped observatory in the southern hemisphere, the Bosscha Observatory, is to be found on the outskirts, while before the war Bandung was the chief radio transmitting and receiving centre, and it is still important in this connection.

The Faculty of Science situated there is well known for its high standard of attainment. The British Council has had an office since 1948; the Indonesian section of the Permanent International Association of Navigation Congress is quartered here, as is the Indonesian Committee of the International Commission on large dams of the World Power Conference. The shopping centres are modern and attractive, especially in the Braga and Pasar Baru areas. The shop windows of Braga have a fine array of Indonesian, Asian and European goods, and the restaurants in the vicinity serve excellent Indonesian, Chinese and European dishes. Nearby, in Djalan Naripan and Djalan Raya Timur, are millinery and furniture establishments. The market in Pasar Baru offers a wide variety of imported as well as Indonesian fruits and vegetables. There is also the exotic market of Pasar Kosambi, less expensive but no less favoured.

The women of Bandung have a marked flair for clothes. Batik is used extensively and they have a partiality for bright colours. Local craftsmen and artists are employed to produce new creations for fashion-conscious Indonesian women. Bandung women are easily distinguished from those from other parts of Indonesia by their particular style of hair-dressing, and their models stimulate interest in the latest fashions among Indonesian women generally by their regular fashion displays in the hotels of Bandung or in Djakarta.

Even in times of stress the people maintain their wit and humour, a characteristic that was especially in evidence during the struggle for Indonesian independence.

Need one doubt the wisdom of the choice of this wonderful city for the Asian-African Conference. With its wealth of natural beauty, its life and culture, Bandung promises to become the pulse of progress in the Republic of Indonesia in the second half of the twentieth century.

During this month, on 18th April 1955, opens the Asia-African Conference at Bandung, Indonesia, convened on the initiative of the Prime Ministers of Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Burma and Ceylon. On their behalf Indonesia has invited thirty countries. This Conference is an effort to settle the problems of Asia in Asia with the minimum of interference from outside.

Our picture shows the Savoy-Homann Hotel at Bandung, where the Conference is meeting.
(Above) — His Majesty the King of Jordan and the Prime
Minister of Egypt are inspecting the guard of honour upon
the arrival of the former at the military airport of al-Maza,
Cairo

(Below) — His Majesty King Husain and the Prime Minister
of Egypt, Lt.-Col. Jamal ‘Abd al-Nasir, are on their way to
al-Azhar Mosque for their Friday prayers. The streets of
Cairo are lined with people welcoming the royal visitor

A banquet was held at the Egyptian Cabinet, in honour of His Majesty the King of Jordan, in Cairo. The picture shows His Majesty King Husain the Prime Minister of Egypt. To the right of Jordan are seated the Prime Minister of the Cabinet, the Amir Saif al-Islam, and al-Baghdadi, the Minister of Social Affairs.
MAJESTY
KING OF JORDAN
EGYPT
(Feb. 1955)

JORDAN
Estimated population 1,250,000
of which 150,000 are displaced
Palestinians

(Above) — The Prime Minister of Egypt, Lt.-Col. Jamal ‘Abd al-Nasir, is receiving His Majesty King Husain of Jordan upon his arrival at al-Maza Military Airport, Cairo. Behind King Husain is standing the Minister of State in the Egyptian Cabinet, Mr. Fathi Radwan.

(Below) — The Prime Minister of Egypt, Lt.-Col. Jamal ‘Abd al-Nasir, is presenting to His Majesty the King of Jordan the highest Egyptian decoration, known as the “Wisam al-Jumhuriyya” during His Majesty’s visit to Egypt.
PAKISTAN

The pursuit of freedom and peace

The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Muhammad ‘Ali, in his “first-of-the-month” broadcast for March 1955, said that Pakistan had played a notable role in the cause of promoting world peace. Referring to the Council Meeting of the South-East Asia Collective Defence Treaty at Bangkok, he said: “All of us at the Conference were of one mind, namely, to preserve our freedom and our democratic way of life by providing an effective deterrent to outside aggression and internal subversion.” Pakistan, he said, envisaged a world in which all nations, big or small, powerful or weak, could live in peace and harmony, free from fear of aggression, economic exploitation and ideological domination. She became a party to the South-East Asia Collective Defence Treaty because of her peculiar geographical position of being located in two separate regions which necessitated their active collaboration in systems of collective defence designed to ensure the safety, security and to promote the progress of both the Middle East and South-East Asia. This was the reason of Pakistan entering into a friendly Co-operation Agreement with Turkey and a Mutual Defence Agreement with the United States.

The Prime Minister made it plain that the Agreements signed and the commitments that might follow from them were intended solely for the purpose of safeguarding their freedom and sovereignty and that Pakistan had no aggressive designs and was firmly opposed to aggression, military, economic or ideological. He stressed that they should strengthen themselves against any possible threat of aggression or exploitation. He said that he advocated the importance of helping to build the economic and spiritual strength of South Asian countries participating in the Treaty, side by side with the building up of military strength.

As regards the Middle East, Mr. Muhammad ‘Ali said that the Commonwealth Prime Ministers’ Conference in London reached a wide measure of agreement on questions relating to the security of that region, and that he was successful in impressing upon other Commonwealth nations that the economic stability of the Middle East was as important as mutual security. He concluded by saying that Pakistan was destined to play the role of an active political power. He emphasized that isolation or neutrality in the present context of world affairs was impossible and indeed invited aggression, so Pakistan was building up its strength in co-operation with friendly countries.

Village development scheme

About 770 village workers will have been trained, graduated and sent out to help the people in about 3,850 villages throughout Pakistan by the end of this year. This steady expansion of the Village-AID (Village Agricultural-Industrial-Development) Programme will be accelerated by a newly-signed United States Technical Assistance project agreement announced on 23rd February 1955. An additional 840 workers to serve another 4,200 villages will be in training by the end of this year in nine Village-AID Centres throughout the country, providing further striking evidence of the foundations for a truly mass programme of Village-AID.

Under the agreement the United States will contribute $816,000 to the Village-AID programme. The Government of Pakistan has allocated Rs. 4,734,000 ($1,434,000). The 1955 allocations thus represent a major milestone in the Village-AID programme, with the Government moving ahead to assume the bulk of the expense for a programme. In its initial years since 1952 the programme has been, inter alia, financed through United States assistance and the Ford Foundation, the latter having contributed Rs. 4,000,000 ($1,250,000).

Some of the major objectives of the Village-AID programme are: increasing agricultural production, improving health conditions, developing cottage industry employment and raising the standards of village literacy. An example from each point will demonstrate the nature of the work. In agriculture, the rice crop yield has been notably increased by the introduction for the first time on a broad scale of the Japanese method of rice sowing. In this method rice seed is planted first in a seed bed with only the good seedlings later transplanted to make systematic use of all available land, rather than merely scattering the rice seed at random on the fields. In health, 1,200 tubewells will be installed in East Pakistan and be a major safeguard against cholera and typhoid. The tubewells go down an average depth of 150 ft. to the pure water table. In cottage industry, the possibilities for development in the villages of the project areas in West Pakistan are being surveyed already. The possibilities in the project areas in East Pakistan will be studied this year, particularly in relation to the hand-loom industry. On literacy, the Government is studying several possible methods of mass adult education, including such methods as the noted Laubach system. In some villages the people have built their own schools, out of their own contributions of a few rupees each, under the guidance of the village workers.
EGYPT

Our picture shows His Royal Highness the Amir Faisal of Sa'udi Arabia (right) in conversation with the Minister of State in the Egyptian Cabinet, Mr. Anwar Sadat, during His Royal Highness's visit to Egypt in February 1955. Mr. Sadat is also the Secretary-General of the Islamic Conference.

The aims and methods of Zionist spying exposed

The closing chapter of the Zionist espionage case in Egypt was added with the execution on 31st January 1954 of the two Jews condemned to death by a special military court on charges of spying for Israel. The condemned men were two of the original group of thirteen accused of forming a spy organization for Israel in Egypt.

The hangings produced considerable reactions among Jewish communities abroad, and especially in Israel, where the Prime Minister promised, more or less openly, to avenge the blood of the Zionist "martyrs".1

To the criticism directed against it by Zionist sympathizers the world over, the Egyptian Government promptly replied with an official pamphlet in English, The Story of Zionist Espionage. The pamphlet gave a detailed account of the Zionist espionage case, and the gist (with facsimile extracts) of the confessions of the accused. It established beyond doubt that the Zionist spying organization to which the accused belonged was intent on destroying the Arab countries by seeking to cause confusion in Egypt, the heart of the Arab world. It showed how the Israeli authorities had sent to Egypt an officer of the Israeli army to form a gang of Jews living in Egypt to help achieve this aim. This gang placed incendiary bombs in public buildings in an attempt to destroy property and produce chaos. The Zionist spies also tried to harm Egypt's reputation in international circles by placing incendiary bombs in the premises of foreign embassies in Cairo at a time when the negotiations for the evacuation of the Suez Canal zone were progressing favourably. They also tried to supply secret information of a military and economic nature about Egypt for the benefit of Israel. The pamphlet also recalled acts of barbaric terrorism committed by the Zionists in Palestine against the Arabs, and stressed that Zionist activities in the Middle East as a whole were still mischievous.

No racial discrimination in Egypt

The trial of the Zionist spies was conducted in open court, and diplomatic representatives of foreign countries and members of the foreign Press were invited to attend. It is noteworthy that nearly all the comment appearing in the foreign Press about the trials was to the effect that they had been conducted in an exemplary manner, and according to the best methods of the administration of justice, with no undue influence or pressure of any kind inflicted upon the accused.

The Egyptian pamphlet stressed the fact that Egypt had never been an enemy of a certain creed or a particular race as such, and that even during the Palestine war the civil rights of the Jews domiciled in Egypt were meticulously respected. A statement by the Chief Rabbi in Egypt, in which he categorically denied any persecution of Jews as such in Egypt, and asserted that the Jewish community was leading a happy and peaceful life there, was printed in this pamphlet. In it the Chief Rabbi says:

"By reason of my status as the spiritual head of the Jewish communities in Egypt, and in complete agreement with the members of those communities, who include well-known personalities engaged in the various intellectual, financial, industrial and commercial activities of the country, I consider it my duty to declare that, not only does racial discrimination not exist, but on the contrary, especially since the inauguration of the new régime, the authorities of the country have, on different occasions, manifested their sympathy with Egyptian Jewry.

"For their part, the Jews in Egypt, in their loyalty to the country, have constantly shared wholeheartedly in all manifestations of a national character — recently, on the occasion of the happy conclusion of the agreement of the Suez evacuation, and again, when there was the criminal and unsuccessful attack on the head of the Government.

"In conclusion, I should like to say that all our

1 Israel has now avenged the blood of its spies. On 28th February 1955 a large Israeli force crossed the armistice lines in the Gaza strip and surprised an Egyptian force, killing 39 men and wounding many others. Israel has been condemned for this barbaric action by the United Nations. She has been condemned for similar actions many times before. But she will never learn that way.—Ed., I.R.
cultural, educational, charitable and social institutions continue to function as in the past, enjoying the friendly support of the Government.

"Once again I would like to insist most emphatically that no discrimination exists among our communities, whose members go about their business in complete confidence.

"For their part, the authorities have on several occasions made a point of affirming the complete loyalty of our members to the country."

THE SUDAN

Progress towards self-determination

The progress of the Sudan towards self-government and self-determination continues to meet with new difficulties, mostly arising from the problems of the transfer of government to the Sudanese, coupled with uncertainty as to what definite shape the country’s future should take.

It is believed that a number of the country’s political parties were fast approaching agreement in their ideas on the Sudan’s future after self-determination. There remains, however, a great deal of indecision about certain matters of foreign policy. The emergence of a new political party — the Republican Independence Party, which was recently formed by three Ministers who left the Cabinet of Mr. Isma’il al-Azhari — is not expected to make things easier in this respect. This new party advocates independence for the Sudan.

In the Southern Sudan, the Southern opposition Members of Parliament held a meeting at which they discussed the partitioning of the country into North and South. They also discussed the establishment of a Federal Government comprising Egypt, Northern Sudan and Southern Sudan, and the election of a Federal Council with powers to deal with currency, foreign affairs, defence, customs, and the waters of the River Nile. On the other hand, the Prime Minister (who is the leader of the National Unionist Party) continued to advocate the policy of some kind of form of union with Egypt. He proposes a form of unity with Egypt which would preserve intact the independence and individuality of the Sudan. Among the leaders of the National Unionist Party there is a great deal of appreciation of the fact that Egypt has helped the Sudan a great deal to be in the position which she enjoys today.

The Sudanization Committee, which is preparing the Sudan for eventual self-determination, is expected to complete its work within a few months. But the problem of replacing outgoing British officials has not been an easy one for the Sudan. The Sudanese Government has had to seek the services of experts of various nationalities to succeed the British technicians whose posts have been "Sudanized", and those who have chosen to resign rather than maintain what they considered an uncertain career in the Sudan. Many Sudanese are being sent abroad for training.

The Sudan plans to have a bigger defence force by the time foreign troops evacuate the country. The Government proposes to increase the Sudan Defence Force to 20,000, and its budget to £10,000,000.

TURKEY

Economic progress

A survey of Turkey’s trade and economic development during 1954 has confirmed the satisfaction when most Turks look back on the past year. For the second successive year the budget was balanced, and the position has been brightened by the extent to which commercial enterprises and the country’s industrialists have co-operated with the Government in its policy encouraging private enterprise and the investment of foreign and domestic private capital.

A grim reminder of Turkey’s awareness of her strategic position is given by the fact that the allocation for defence in 1955 is £T725,000,000 — an increase of £T125,000,000 over 1954. There have also been increased allocations for economic recovery. The survey says that the policy of the mechanization of agriculture has made significant advances during 1954. The increase of land put under cultivation was so great that the Turkish Agricultural Bank raised its credits by £T147,000,000 to £T1,319,000,000. Land distribution also increased greatly. The year 1954 also saw continued efforts to re-settle refugees seeking sanctuary in Turkey, mainly from Bulgaria. Some 31,104 houses were built for these refugees by the end of the year. Turkey’s industry was also said to have had a bumper year, with its output up by 100 per cent.

1 £T8 = £1.

OIL OUTPUT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

A continuing rise

Output of petroleum oil in the Middle East increased by more than 12 per cent in 1954 to a record figure of 137,000,000 metric tons. This compares with a production of 122,000,000 tons in 1953. The leading producers were Kuwait (with just under 48,000,000 tons), Saudi Arabia (with 47,000,000 tons), and Iraq (with just over 30,000,000 tons).

Experts say that these three countries are likely to be leading the Middle East in oil production for the current year. Interest, however, will be focused on Iran, where a consortium of British and American oil companies is pledged to an output of about 15,000,000 tons. Last year Iran’s output was only 3,000,000 tons, owing to the fact that the new agreement between the Iranian Government and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company was not reached until the end of October last.

Elsewhere in the Middle East, Qatar, Egypt and Bahrain together supplied just over 8,000,000 tons, of which almost 5,000,000 tons came from Qatar. The neutral zone between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, which began commercial production at the end of 1953, produced about 750,000 tons last year. This output is likely to be improved in the current year.
THE MUSLIM PEOPLES OF SOVIET RUSSIA AND THE SOVIETS

By A. Bennigsen

“We have noted some of the innumerable examples of the survival of the “feudal” or “capitalistic” mentality of the conscience of the ordinary citizens such as the members of the Communist Party; for the authorities do not hesitate to proclaim that these survivals draw their origin more or less from the Muslim tradition. This factor would not alone justify the implacable hostility of the Communist Party. The essential reason should rather be sought in the “cosmopolitan” character of Islam, the universal religion whose spiritual centres are found outside the frontiers of the Soviet Union and consequently escape from the control of the Soviet central powers, as in the case of the Catholic Church, and inversely, from the control of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Gregorian Church of Armenia.”

The Soviet experience of the Muslim peoples of Central Asia, of Northern Caucasus and the Middle Volga has provoked and is continuing to provoke a heated controversy. Has it definitely been a success, in spite of its incontestably arbitrary character? Has it brought happiness, prosperity and national and cultural independence to the Muslim peoples, as is claimed by the supporters and defenders of the Soviet régime? Or does it represent nothing more or less than a new and subtle form of enslavement characterized by the loss of national independence and the brutal Russianization and the disappearance of the indigenous cultural traditions as is maintained by its adversaries?

We shall not attempt to answer this question, for it would undoubtedly be premature to draw up a complete table of Soviet policy; the objective information we have in our possession is fragmentary, we have no direct contact with the Soviet Muslims and the official documentation is either too scanty or else too suspect. Also this experiment is far from having run the end of its course.

We merely intend to bring to bear some elements in reply to the two essential questions which are more concerned with the reactions they produce amongst the Muslim peoples than the actual Soviet experience itself:

(1) What is the position of religion in the lives of the peoples who were considered before the October Revolution to be Muslims? Or, in other words, what are the results of the policy of de-Islamization which has been carried out by the Government and Communist Party, sometimes brutally and sometimes with the greatest subteness, with the purpose of breaking up the various social and cultural differences which separate the Muslim masses from the Russian population and in order to integrate them even more closely into the large family of Soviet peoples?

(2) What are the political and cultural tendencies of this new indigenous “intelligentsia” which has produced such a great reaction in the lives of the Muslim Republics and the creation of which has been justly proclaimed as one of the most spectacular successes of the Soviet régime?

What is the reaction of this new Marxist-trained élite which has been almost completely de-Islamized with regard to the traditional culture of Islam and the official policy of the Communist Party?

Can it be considered, at the present time, to be a reliable and faithful ally of the régime on which the Soviet theoreticians can rely in order to supply the popular native masses with the cadres of leaders and guide them along the road to Communism? Or, far from being of service to the Soviet Russian leaders of Moscow, do they represent an obstacle to the policy of unification and fusion of these people?

I

THE PLACE OF ISLAM IN THE U.S.S.R.

The official position of the Muslim peoples

The official position of the Muslim religion is fixed by virtue of Article 124 of the Soviet Constitution of 1936, which states that: “In order to assure freedom of conscience for all citizens, the Church in the Soviet Union is separated from the State and education from the Church. Freedom to practise the religious cults and freedom to indulge in antireligious propaganda are recognized for all citizens.”

As in the case of the believers in other religions, the Muslims have the right to set up religious institutions, to meet together in order to celebrate religious ceremonies and marriages and to eat or refrain from eating prescribed foodstuffs during a specified period. The religious associations enjoy a civil personal status and have the right to use freely the places of worship which are maintained by the believers at their own expense. The religious associations have the right to publish religious reviews and even, it appears, to publish the Qur’ān in Arabic, and, since 1948, to found madrasahs for the training of religious perceivers. But it is laid down that “the Church is entrusted solely with the celebrating of the (rites) of the cult and that all forms of activity, propaganda or education which exceed the limits of religious associations are strictly forbidden.” The religious authorities are forbidden from taking part in the political, economic, social and cultural affairs of the State. Thus Islam is tolerated, but clearly it no longer dominates the social life of the country and is reduced to the status of a

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1 Elementary schools where the Qur’ān is taught in Arabic.
2 G.E.S., pp. 1783 and 1788.

For abbreviations employed in this article see the List of Abbreviations at the end of the article.
The six Muslim Republics of the Soviet Union

The Religious Directorate of the R.S.F.S.R. (Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, i.e., Russia proper) at Ufa, the capital of the autonomous Republic of Bashkiria:

The Religious Directorate of the Sunni Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan at Tashkent, the capital of the Federated Republic of Uzbekistan;

The Religious Directorate of the Sunni Muslims of the Northern Caucasus at Bunaisk, in the autonomous

mere cult; it has become, to use the expression of a Soviet writer, "a private concern".3

It is impossible to determine the total number of mosques. It was stated in a Russian document published during the war that in 1942 in the whole of the Soviet Union there were 1,312 mosques, administered by 8,052 Mullahs.4 This is an absurd figure taking into consideration the fact that there were some 20,000,000 people belonging to groups which had been entirely Islamized before 1914.

By way of contrast, a Pakistani visitor who crossed Uzbekistan in 1952 claims that he discovered twenty cathedral mosques and "several hundred" smaller mosques, all of which were assiduously frequented by the believers, as well as a Qur'anic university and several hundred religious schools.5 If these somewhat optimistic figures correspond with the truth, they prove that a veritable renaissance of Islam has taken place in Central Asia; but they are not confirmed by any Soviet source of information.

The contacts with the outside by the Muslims of the Soviet Union are cut down to a minimum. The Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca), prohibited in 1920, was permitted in 1945, but the number of pilgrims to the holy places, besides having been first of all carefully vetted by the Soviet authorities, was very insignificant. In 1946, a group of Shi'ite pilgrims under the leadership of the Shaikh al-Islam of Baku went to the holy Shi'ite towns of Iran. But this pilgrimage has not been repeated since that date. Strictly speaking, there has been no movement in the opposite direction, and it appears that at the present only the small Isma'ili community of Pamir somehow secretly maintains some contact with the outside Muslim world, at least if one can give credence to the Soviet Press of Tajikistan, which pointed out in 1952 that the ill-guarded frontiers of Pamir had been crossed on several occasions by the Neo-Isma'ili dai's,7 who had come from India to collect the zakat from the Yaghchis of Gorno-Badakhshan for the Aga Khan.8

Administratively, Soviet Islam is divided into four denominations, three Sunni and one Shi'a; each of these has its own religious directorate, presided over by a Mufti. They are:

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4 S.W.N. for 16th June 1942.
5 By way of comparison let us state that there were 24,562 Muslim parishes in Russia before 1914, S.E.R., p. 79.
6 Mubarak Saghier, Pakistani Socialist leader, a member of the Pakistan delegation to the Economic Conference in Moscow: "Muslims in Russia enjoy complete religious freedom," in D. for 17th May 1952.
7 Literally a person who invites. By transference it means he who invites others to join the Isma'ili creed.
8 T.S. for 27th April 1952.
The Mufti Baba Ishan Khan 'Abd al-Majid is the head of the Religious Directorate of the Sunni Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan at Tashkent, Uzbekistan. 

Republic of Daghestan; and, 

The Religious Directorate of the Shi'ite Muslims of Transcaucasia at Baku, the capital of the Federated Republic of Azerbaijan. 

The activities of the highest religious authorities are very little known, for the Soviet Press very seldom refers to them. Brief pieces of news gleaned from the newspapers of Tashkent and Alma-Ata inform us that in November 1943 an Islamic Congress in which the two sections — the Sunni and the Shi'a — participated took place in the capital of Uzbekistan, and that following this conference, the Shi'a rite was officially recognized as the fifth orthodox rite. In December 1948, another congress was held at Tashkent by the religious authorities of the five Federated Republics of Central Asia. It dealt with the questions of opening madrasas (schools), the construction and restoration of the mosques, and the training of preachers. 

The loyalty of the Muslim religious authorities of Russia to the Soviet Union 

But on the other hand, the Soviet newspapers never fail to note the numerous noisy demonstrations of loyalty to the régime made by the Muslim "clergy". Since 1948 the Muslim representatives have taken a prominent place alongside their Russian-Christian or Armenian-Gregorian colleagues at nearly all the conferences for the purpose of defending peace or denouncing Anglo-American imperialism. The last of these congresses, namely, that of the Churches and religious associations of the Soviet Union, was convoked at Zagorsk on 9th May 1952 for the purpose of condemning American aggression in Korea, and illustrates this contention, for the Shakh al-Islam of Baku, the Mufti of the Northern Caucasus and the Vice-President of the Religious Directorate of the Muslims of Central Asia and of Kazakhstan were present. Finally, we find at least one member of the Muslim religious leaders amongst the members of the "Republican Committees of the Partisans of Peace" in each of the six Muslim Republics of the Soviet Union — Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kirghizia. 

The Soviet authorities have noted the loyal attitude of the Muslim religious authorities on numerous occasions, and are pleased to recognize that since the war "the relations between the State and the Muslim religious bodies have been normalized." 

Thus at the present a kind of modus vivendi seems to have been worked out. In exchange for the loyalty and help in the domain of foreign propaganda which the higher Muslim authorities bring to them, the Soviet leaders conserve towards them an attitude of cold correctness, similar to their behaviour towards high Christian Orthodox dignitaries. The attacks which appeared before the war directed against the Muslim clergy, which were so frequent and so violent, have disappeared from the pages of the newspapers and books which have appeared since 1914.\[9\] The infrequent articles which appear on the subject of the Muslim religious directorates are generally friendly and eulogistic. But all the same, the equilibrium between the State and Islam is precarious, and the position of the high Muslim dignitaries appears to be less stable than that of their Christian Orthodox colleagues, the representatives of a Russian "national" religion. In the eyes of the Communist Party, Islam is a "foreign" religion, a universal religion and therefore "cosmopolitan", with all the derogatory sense that this word implies in the Soviet Union. This is consequently dangerous, and as such must be violently combated, and its leaders, in spite of their loyalty, remain suspect. 

The survival of the religious sentiments and the customs of the past 

Are the Muslims of the Soviet Union still Muslims? Has the anti-religious policy of the Communist Party succeeded in de-Islamizing the young generations, apart from the masses? In order to answer this question one must discard the testimony of foreigners, which is "trimmed" and con-

10 This applies to the religious officials of the Sunni and the Shi'a. Imamate, but in contrast the Isma'ili leaders continue to be denounced as the "agents of Anglo-American imperialism". See inter alia: "A Dangerous Story," in K.T. for 30th March 1952. 
11 Amongst others the speech of Osman Yusupov, the first Secretary of the Central Committee of the Uzbek Communist Party, at the Seventh Congress of this party, in K.U. for 2nd March 1949; the speech of N. Niazov, the other Secretary of the Central Committee of the Uzbek Communist Party at the Eighth Plenum of the Central Committee of the above-mentioned party, in P.V. for 24th February 1952; the article by J. Shakhmatov, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Kazakh Communist Party, in P.J. No. 8. 1947; the Report of S. Babanov, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Kirghiz Komsomol at the Eighth Congress of the Komsonom of this Republic, in S.K. for 27th February 1952; the speech of N. Niazov presented at the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Turkmen Communist Party, in T.I. for 12th January 1952; the speech of Mr. M. Narzibekov, the First Secretary of the Tajik Komsonom at the Tenth Congress of the Komsonom of this Republic, in T.S. for 9th January 1952, etc.
tradiictory, and rely on the local Soviet Press for one's source.

At first sight, the reply to the first question is definitely in the affirmative. Not only has Islam survived the brutal pressure brought to bear on it before the war, but, profiting by the "normalization" of the relations between the Church and the State, it is experiencing an incontestable upsurge. This fact is attested to by innumerable articles in the Press and the declarations of the Soviet leaders denouncing the reappearance of religious sentiments not only among the "most backward" elements of the rural population but also among the young people. According to Soviet authors, this return to the beliefs of their ancestors is often favoured by the local leaders, whose tolerance, and even sympathy towards, Islam perceptibly surpassed immediately after the war the limits intended by the central authorities.

Thus a Kirghiz author states that "the leaders of the Communist Party protect the anti-social activities of the mullahs," and "Osman Yussupov, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Uzbek Communist Party, declares in his report to the Tenth Congress of the Party of his Republic: "The Kolkhoz (collective farms) leaders and the members of the Communist Party tolerate manifestations of the former religious mentality under the pretext that the Muslim religion is the mother of the Uzbek people." However, the Soviet Press begrudges giving details, and it is difficult to say in what this "rennaissance" of the religious mentality consists. In the first place one can see that the Muslim religious officials, who were not mentioned during the years before the war, are once more beginning to play a definite role in the life of the country and that the Mullahs have even succeeded in infiltrating into some organizations of the Communist Party. The Soviet Press admits that Islam is a serious obstacle to the building of Communism in the Muslim Republics.

Also, it is certain that in the rural districts the Muslim religious festivals give rise to great popular rejoicing, and that on these occasions the believers proceed secretly to kill cattle, in spite of the strict laws to the contrary. The fast of Ramadhan appears to be strictly observed, at least in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, if one judges by the number of editorialists of the local papers of Tashkent and Stalinabad (Kizil Uzbekistan and Tajikistan-Surkh) which appear during Ramadhan, devoted to the "reactionary" character and the harmful nature of the fast (six editorialists on an average per paper per month).

Finally, in spite of the hostility of the authorities, the pilgrimage to the tombs of the local saints is still kept up. Thus the director of the anti-religious section of the region of Pavlodar revealed during a congress devoted to the study of ideological problems of Kazakhstan that the tomb of Mas'ouh Yussupov, which is universally venerated in the district of Baian-Aou, was visited regularly by pilgrims, including certain members of the Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan. Obviously in the absence of sufficient documentation it is impossible to judge the whole question, but one can safely assert that the anti-religious propaganda systematically pursued up to the eve of the war has not resulted in the total de-Islamization of the rural masses of the regions of the sedentary population of long standing, or to use the phraseology of the Soviet Press, the religious sentiment remains strong, even among the members of the Communist Party.

Things are very different in the former nomadic regions (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kirghizia) and the highly industrialized and Russianized districts (Baku, Ashkhabad), where the youth appear to be more or less ignorant of things relating to Islam. Thus a Muslim observer, the President of the Pakistan Delegation to the Economic Conference in Moscow, Mr. Altay Husain, who took part in a religious ceremony in the mosque in the Soviet capital, tells us that 90 per cent of the congregation were fifty-five years of age or over and that he saw no young people.

The Soviet authorities linked up the reappearance of customs which they qualified as "clerical" with this "renaisance of religious sentiment, but which, in reality, represented rather the application to the new Soviet society of the old social traditions of the feudal epoch. The Soviet Press furnished abundant details on this phenomena, considered as a serious obstacle to the building of Communism in the Muslim Republics.

Some examples to show that the feudal traditions associated with Islam, e.g., polygamy, etc., are still practised by the leaders of Communism in Central Russia.

The "feudal" traditions concern the reverting to the customary law (adah) in place of the Soviet legislation, the survival of the clan spirit in the former nomadic regions, and above all, in the "anti-social" attitude towards women (polygamy, the wearing of the veil and the shutting up of women, katri; the kidnapping of the fiancée and her repurchase; the marriage of minor girls). All the Soviet writers dealing with this problem recognize that the gravity of these phenomena does not emanate from the fact that the "backward" strata of the rural population have remained very much attached to Islam, but from the new governing class, the intellectuals, the bureaucrats and the members of the Communist Party, who are partially or completely de-Islamized. It is necessary to give several examples in order to illustrate this situation, which, on first thoughts, appears to be curious:

Comrade Shaiakhmatov, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Kazakh Communist Party, in denouncing the survival of the tribal mentality within the ranks of the Communist Party, cites the case of the Committee of the Party in the district of Naryn-Kol (the region of Alma-Ata) in which all the key posts are found to be in the hands of the "Alban" clan, all of whom are members of the Party but at the same time representatives of the former nomadic aristocracy. With regard to polygamy (which is strictly forbidden by law), all the newspapers state in common that far from being a phenomenon of the past this custom shows a new burst of life. Thus at the Tenth Congress of the Tajik Komsomol, Comrade Narzibekov, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of this organization, dis-
closed that cases of polygamy are frequent among the young Communists.\textsuperscript{20} In Kirghizia, the local daily, Sovetskaia Kirghizia, recognizes the fact that polygamy reigns not only in the distant mountainous regions but even a few kilometres from Funze, and it mentions the case of two kolkhozes of the region of Talas, the "Lenin" and "Kirov", whose directors are polygamists, although they are at the same time members of the Communist Party.\textsuperscript{21} In Uzbekistan the newspaper Kizil Usbekistan states that polygamy is practised on a large scale, and above all in the regions of Samarkand and Surkhon Daria. It cites as an example the case of the Secretary of the Party Committee of the kolkhoz Lenin of the district of Baghdad, a polygamist whose every marriage gives rise to popular rejoicing.\textsuperscript{22} In Kazakhstan the local papers abound in examples of cases of polygamy which have been officially registered with the civil state bureau,\textsuperscript{23} and it notes that the proportion of bigamists and polygamists is chiefly notable amongst the Presidents of the kolkhoz. The authorities are still more disturbed by the shutting up of women and the wearing of the \textit{parandja} than by polygamy, chiefly because these "harmful customs of the past" are above all rampant amongst the members of the ruling class. Here are some typical examples of this:

In the region of Tschekimbet (Soviet Socialist Republic of Kazakhstan) the Secretary of the Regional Communist Party, a very important post in the Party hierarchy, confines his wife to a harem (the \textit{Ichhak}).\textsuperscript{24} In the district of Alty Aryk (the region of Ferghana, in the Soviet Socialist Republic of Uzbekistan) two young women participated in the Presidential of the Soviet of the village, and the other the head of a Consumers' Co-operative, live in harems since their marriage and only go out wearing the black veil of Muslim women. In the district of Kassam-Sai, in the same region of Ferghana (the most prosperous and emancipated economically of Central Asia and at the same time the most "conservative" from the standpoint of customs), it is common to see the Presidents of the kolkhoz and the rural Soviets confining their women, although these are active members of the Party.\textsuperscript{25}

\textbf{The Moscow Press and the local Press on the resistance of the autochthonous population and the emancipation of women}

Several articles have also appeared in the local Press and the Moscow Press from which we learn that women wearing the \textit{parandja} are always to be met with in the streets of the big towns of Central Asia, notably Samarkand, Stalinabad and, particularly, Tashkent. Finally, the central and local Soviet Press recognize the tremendous strength of the resistance with which the autochthonous population opposes the policy of emancipation of women, which is one of the vital points of the policy directed at the setting up of Communism in the Muslim lands. The wearing of the veil, the submission of the wife to the husband, are only the secondary aspects of this resistance. Otherwise the systematic refusal of the native women themselves to free themselves from their "inferior" position appears to be still more serious. The desertion of the schools by the young Muslim women and the small numbers of those in the higher classes of the secondary schools and the institutions of higher education illustrate this attitude: in Kirghizia, the native women represented in 1951 only 9.5 per cent of the total number of pupils in the ninth and tenth classes of the secondary schools.\textsuperscript{27} In the village of Osh (Southern Kirghizia, a region of the old sedentary life) the secondary school in 1950 gave diplomas to 99 girls, all of whom were Russian, while of the 153 girls who had finished the course at the primary school only 19 were Kirghiz girls.\textsuperscript{28} During the past eleven years the various pedagogical institutes of the Republic gave only given diplomas for completed studies to 83 young native girls.\textsuperscript{29}

In Kazakhstan, the Kazakh girls, who form 50 per cent of the total number of pupils in the primary schools, only represent 9.5 per cent of the tenth class of the secondary schools, for they generally leave school at the age of fifteen in order to get married. In the region of Talas, out of 9,500 native girls who each year start their cycle of studies at the primary school, eight or nine years later there only remain 350, of whom only a few finish the secondary school. Further examples are: in 1951 in the districts of Karatai and Gueorguievisk (the region of Southern Kazakhstan) there were no native girls in the tenth class of the secondary school. In 1952 the tenth class of the only secondary school of Talgar; the chief place of the district of Ili, contained only two Kazakh girls; in the district of Kok-Terek (the region of Jamboul) not a single native girl has completed the secondary school during the last five years.\textsuperscript{30}

In Uzbekistan a local newspaper revealed that in 1947 and 1952 only 172 young Uzbek girls finished their studies in the six higher educational institutes at Samarkand, while the technical agricultural schools of the district only contained in 1952 eight native girl students.\textsuperscript{31}

The same phenomenon is seen in Azerbaijan,\textsuperscript{32} in Karakalpakistan,\textsuperscript{33} and in Turkmenistan.\textsuperscript{34} In this last-mentioned Republic, which is one of the most highly-industrialized and, therefore, one of the most Russianized of Central Asia, the deserting of the schools by the native girls takes place not only in the country districts but also in the big urban centres, and even in the families of the supreme leaders of the Communist Party. At the sixth session of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Turkmen Communist Party in December 1950 at Ashkhabad, the Secretary of the Regional Committee of Merv disclosed that even the daughter of the head of the section of light industry in the Central Committee of the Turkmen Communist Party deserted the school and was illiterate.

\textbf{20 K.T. for 16th March 1952.}
\textbf{21 S.K. for 10th April 1952.}
\textbf{22 K.U. for 8th June 1952.}
\textbf{23 Inter alia K.P. for 21st January 1952 and 12th March 1952.}
\textbf{24 K.P. for 21st January 1952 and 12th March 1952.}
\textbf{25 P.V. for 25th August 1950.}
\textbf{27 The report of S. Barchev, the Secretary of the Central Communists of the Kirghiz Komsomol, which was presented to the Eighth Congress of this organization in February 1952. S.K. for 27th February 1952.}
\textbf{28 Report by M. Fischchenko, the Secretary of the Committee of the Communist Party of Osh, at a Republican Conference devoted to the question of education, held in June 1951 at Frunze, in S.K. for 18th June 1951.}
\textbf{29 Report by Madame Ummetlieva, the Deputy Minister of Education of Kirghizia, at the same conference, in S.K. for 18th June 1951.}
\textbf{30 K.T. for 21st January, 18th February and 12th March 1952.}
\textbf{31 P.V. for 30th March 1952.}
\textbf{32 B.R. for 12th September 1950.}
\textbf{33 The declaration of Japakov, the President of the Council of Ministers of the Autonomous Republic of Karakalpakistan at the Seventh Session of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Uzbek Communist Party, in P.V. for 19th May 1952.}
\textbf{34 The proceedings of the session of the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Turkmen Communist Party, in T.I. for 12th January 1951.}
The attitude of the Soviet authorities towards Islam

The “normalization” of the relationship between the Church and the State has put an end to the direct pressure exercised against the religious leaders and the Muslim believers, but all the Soviet theoreticians insist on the fact that the struggle against religion must continue as “the attitude of the Church towards the Soviet powers is one thing and the Soviet essence of religion, which has been, and always will be, anti-scientific and profoundly hostile to the Marxist-Leninist ideology, is another.” In fact, this campaign should be intensified, for as a member of the Central Committee of the Uzbek Communist Party puts it, “The victory of Socialism in our country in no way signifies that religious survival will disappear of their own accord: it is high time to restart the anti-religious campaign and to preach atheism.”

In the eyes of the leaders, “science and religion, Marx-Leninism and religious ideology are incompatible and irreconcilable. The party cannot remain indifferent and neutral towards religion, it should fight it and defeat it.” But by way of contrast with the pre-war period, the struggle should be carried out on the purely ideological plane and should not come within the scope of the administration or police.

How the Soviets combat Islam

The authorities should invoke two series of arguments in order to combat Islam. Some of these which are applicable to all regions are too well known to be analysed in detail. Let us merely recall that Islam, like all other religions, is “the opium of the people”, representing “a reactionary and anti-scientific ideology, giving a “fantastic and false notion of nature and of society” “insinuating into mankind the spirit of resignation and humility, breathing into him a blind faith in divine foresight and turning him away from revolutionary reforms.” Like other religions, Islam is “an instrument in the hands of the exploiting classes so that they may enslave the minds of the workers with it and consolidate the oppression of the classes.”

Other arguments are specifically directed against the religion of the Prophet Muhammad. Islam is presented as a “primitive and fanatical” religion, “a chaotic mixture of Christian, Judaic and pagan doctrines” founded by a “representative of the feudal merchant class of Mecca in order to give a religious pretext to the expeditions carried out for the purpose of pillage by the Arab aristocrats.” It is also a “foreign religion” imposed on the peoples of Central Asia and the Transcaucassus by the fire and sword of the “Arab barbarians” who have destroyed the ancient and flourishing autochthonous civilizations, those of Shirwan in Transcaucasia and Khwarezm in Turkestan. During the centuries this doctrine has remained at the service of all imperialists and all invaders, Arabs, Persians, Turks, and now the English and the Ademianes.” At present, Islam remains a dangerous weapon in the hands of the enemies of the Soviet Union, who use the Muslim religious authorities in order to provoke diversionary movements in the interior of the Soviet Union.”

In the social and cultural domain, Islam is “one of the most conservative religions in the world” which “has retarded all reforms and evolution in Turkestan for centuries past” by preaching “unconditional submission of the believer to his destiny and to his oppressors” (see footnote 38).

One could repeat indefinitely the examples showing the intractable hostility of the Communist Party to the Muslim religion. Thus the Qur'an is taxed with having “codified injustice and inequality” (vide footnote 35) and of having “given its blessing to the submission of women.” The Sharia'ah is presented as “a collection of some of the most ignoble and unjust laws which exist in the world” (see footnote 46): the dogma of the holy war “sanctifying murder and pillage...” is listed as representing “a perversion implying the crushing of the personality and the development of sadistic fanaticism, the enslavement of thought and of conscience, the transformation of man into a blind instrument in the hands of the parasitical classes...” (see footnote 40).

Finally, and this appears to be the decisive argument, the polemists of the Communist Party do not forgive the Muslims for having been the most violent opponents of the new regime. The Basmachis episode is not forgotten, and the Soviet writers do not fail to recall the religious character of this movement.

How the Anti-Religious Organization in the Soviet Union works

Convinced “that it is impossible to build up Communism without having in the first place destroyed Islam,” the authorities of the Communist Party undertook from 1946-47 the task of giving new vigour to anti-religious propaganda.

Theoretically, the task of preaching atheism falls on all the organizations of the Communist Party, the Komsomol and the workers’ trade unions, but in practice, anti-Islamic propaganda is directed by the Association for the Propagation of Political and Scientific Knowledge, founded directly after the war with attributions and a mission which appear to be analogous to those of the former Association of Atheists, which was placed in cold storage about 1938-39.

The new organization is directly attached to the Communist Party. It has its centre in Moscow and possesses in each of the Federated Republics branches which, in their turn control the activities of the regional and district organizations. The latter run the “seminaries” for the formation of anti-religious propagandists, who after undergoing a period of training of several months are sent out all over the country to give lectures arranged by their superiors. Besides, the organization of exhibitions and anti-religious museums falls within the scope of the activities of the Association.

36 Report of Niazhov to the Tenth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Uzbek Communist Party, in P.V. for 24th February 1952.
37 Against Superstitions and Prejudices,” in K.O.P., for 25th April 1951.
41 Gafurov Ghulam, in L.G., for 19th April 1950.
44 Baghirov, ibid., for 18th July 1950; G. Gafurov, “In Support of a Marxist Interpretation of the History of the Tajik People,” in K.T., for 25th and 26th August 1951.
45 A. Zhibitov, Professor of Philosophy at the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, “The Passed History of the Uzbek People and Marx-Leninist Culture,” in K.U., for 29th May 1949.
46 Alexiev, an article quoted in K.T. for 12th July 1951.

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

The vast number of lectures against Islam  

The effort made by the Communist Party to combat Islam "scientifically" appears to be impressive when one refers to the figures given in the local Press. For in Kazakhstan, the Association for the Propagation of Political Knowledge and the Sciences possesses 15 regional branches and 209 urban and district branches; it also controls the activities of 815 propaganda bureaux. In the course of the three years 1946, 1947 and 1948, it organized 30,528 public lectures, of which 23,000 were devoted to entirely anti-religious subjects. In Uzbekistan, the Association organized in 1951 10,000 anti-religious lectures, including 4,272 in the regions of Namangan and Ferghana, which appear to be the veritable home of "obscenarism". Of this number, 288 lectures were devoted to the "dangerous and harmful" character of the fast. In Kirghizia, in the region of Tien-Chan, the local Komzomol organized nearly 3,000 anti-religious lectures in the course of the first three months of 1951 in collaboration with the local branch of the Association.  

And yet the Soviet writers state that this effort is still insufficient, for "atheism is not increasing and the masses are openly continuing to practise religion" (see footnote 50), and they explain the failure of the anti-religious campaign sometimes by the incapacity of the propagandists, who are ill-prepared for their task, sometimes by the refusal of the intellectuals, teachers and men of learning to co-operate with the Association, and sometimes by the "treason" of certain "specialists" in atheism. Thus the local paper of Frunze, the Sovietskaja Kirghizia, in criticising the Jellalabad branch of the Kirghiz Association of the Propagation of Political Knowledge and the Sciences, tells us how a propagandist entrusted with the task of dealing with the origin of the Reactionary essence of Islam omitted to speak of its "reactionary essence."  

In comparing the local papers of the Muslim Republics with the Press of the other Republics of the Soviet Union, one is struck by the profound differences which separate them in the matter of the treatment of the religious problem. In the Moscow, Kiev, Tbilissi, Erevan or Minsk papers, the religious question is seldom raised, and when it is raised (this happens by chance) the matter is dealt with by a journal specializing in anti-religious problems, such as the Komzomolskaja Pravda of Moscow, the organ of the young Communists which devotes an article to this subject, written in a very moderate tone, obviously to keep it within the domain of "scientific". By way of contrast, in Central Asia and Azerbaijan, as in Lithuania (the only Republic of the Union with a Catholic population), the Press publishes a large number of articles, and these are couched in extremely violent terms.  

The reason why the Soviets are so hostile to Islam  

One can ask, for what reason is Islam the religion most attacked by the doctrinaires of the Communist Party (if one excepts the Catholic religion, which is not represented in the Soviet Union, save by a small number of believers)? The reason for this cannot lie in the hostility of the supreme religious authorities, who appear to be as loyal as their Orthodox and Armenian colleagues. Perhaps the reason must be sought in the "social" character of Islam, which penetrates more profoundly the customs and habits of the believers than in the case of the Christian Orthodox Church.  

We have noted some of the innumerable examples of the survival of the "feudal" or "capitalistic" mentality of the conscience of the ordinary citizens such as the members of the Communist Party: for the authorities do not hesitate to proclaim that all these survivals draw their origin more or less from the Muslim tradition. This factor would not alone justify the implacable hostility of the Communist Party. The essential reason should rather be sought in the "cosmopolitan" character of Islam, the universal religion whose spiritual centres are found outside the frontiers of the Soviet Union and consequently escape from the control of the Soviet central powers, as in the case of the Catholic Church, and inversely, from the control of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Gregorian Church of Armenia.  

We shall have occasion to revert to this problem in greater detail in the second part of our analysis; the second article will be devoted to the study of the so-called "cosmopolitan" movements (Pan-Turkist, Pan-Islamic and Pan-Iranian) which agitate the modern intelligentsia of the Muslim Republics of the Soviet Union, and which in the eyes of the Soviet leaders are still more dangerous than the survival, or even the renaissance, which is more or less a transitory stage, of religious sentiments.  

TO BE CONTINUED

48 Themes dealt with in the meetings organized by the propagandists of the region of Sver-Dariia (Uzbekistan) in the Kolkhozes and the stations for mechanized tractors, or proposals made at the Anti-Religious Seminary of Karakalpak, in P.V. for 28th June 1951.  

The word Uraza is the distorted form of the Persian word Roz, meaning fasting.  

49 The proceedings of the activities of the Kirovabad (Tajikistan) Branch of the Association for the Propagation of Political Knowledge and Sciences, in K.T. for 28th May 1952.  

50 These themes were dealt with in the courses held at the Anti-Religious Seminaries of Tashkent in May 1952, in R.V. for 15th May 1952.  

51 K.P. for 1st March 1952.  

52 K.U. for 18th March 1952.  


54 Criticisms formulated by Comrade A. A. Russi-Zaide, the President of the Bureau of the Tajik branch of the Association for the Propagation of Political Knowledge and Sciences, made at the Eighth Plenum of the Presidium of this Association, in K.T. for 2nd July 1952.  

55 K.S. for 21st July 1951.  

56 For example, the Uzbek national writer, Aikb, states: "We hope that the revolutionary storm of the popular masses will sweep away the Muslim religion from the face of the earth"; "Beyond Hindu-Kush," an article on Pakistan in P.V. for 15th October 1950.  

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS  

B.R.  

Babinski Rabotchi, Russian language daily, Baku.  

D.  

Down, Karachi, Pakistan.  

G.E.S.  

Great Soviet Encyclopedia, Moscow, 1948.  

L.G.  

Literaturaia Gazeta, Moscow.  

K.P.  

Kirgizstanskaia Pravda, Russian language daily published at Alma-Ata.  

K.T.  

Komnunist Tadjikistana, Russian language daily, Stalinabad.  

K.U.  

Kicil Uzbekistan, Uzbek language daily, Tashkent.  

Ko.P.  

Komzomolskaja Pravda, Moscow.  

P.V.  

Partinina Ilyuz, the organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.  

P.V.  

Pravda Vostoka, Russian language daily, Tashkent.  

S.E.R.  

Stalinisticheskii Ezhegodnik Rossii, Saint-Petersburg, 1914.  

S.K.  

Sovetskaia Kirghizia, Russian language daily, Frunze.  

S.W.N.  

Soviet War News.  

T.I.  

Turkmeniskaia Iskra, Russian language daily, Ashkabad.  

T.S.  

Tadzikistan-Surkh, Tajik language daily, Stalinabad.
THE RE-OPENING OF THE HEDJAZ RAILWAY

With the active interest of King Sa'ud of Sa'udi Arabia, complete agreement is expected soon on repairing and re-opening the complete stretch of the Hedjaz Railway which runs from Damascus, in Syria, through Jordan, to Medina in Sa'udi Arabia. Representatives of the three Governments concerned have had a number of meetings and are reported to have agreed on a plan for submission to their Governments. The whole scheme for the repair of the damaged track and the renewal of rolling stock is expected to cost about £5,000,000. Preliminary work will cost each of the Governments over £100,000.

The Hedjaz Railway is the pilgrim line which once took thousands of Muslims to the holy cities of Arabia each year. The narrow-gauge line, 1,310 kilometres in length, was started in 1900 during the régime of Sultan 'Abdul Hamid, but was not completed until 1908. It was built primarily for the benefit of the pilgrims to Mecca and Medina. It was regarded as a Wākīf (religious trust property) and its cost was covered by contributions from all countries of the Muslim world.

During the First World War the line had a considerable military value, and it was subjected to a number of raids by Lawrence and his Arab troops in the Arab revolt led by the late King Husain. Most of the damage was done to a stretch of 700 kilometres south in Ma'an in Southern Jordan. Temporary repairs were financed by the late King Husain at the end of the first world war, and for a while trains ran again to Medina, but only with difficulty.

Discussions on the complete repair of the line took place later between the mandatory authorities in Syria and Jordan on the one side and Sa'udi Arabia on the other, but they failed because no agreement could be reached on the Sa'udi Government's proposal that the line should be considered as a Wākīf. After the end of the Syrian mandate, and the formation of the Arab League, discussions were resumed on the recommendation of the League and the three countries agreed to treat the line as Sa'udi Arabia suggested, considering it as a whole unit and allotting its revenue to the Wākīf. It was agreed, too, to set up a committee to consider the liabilities and assets of the railway, to survey the damaged parts and to prepare an estimate of the amount needed for the repairs.

The Palestine war interrupted the discussions, and it was not until King Sa'ud came to the throne in November 1953 that they were revived. King Sa'ud appreciated that the repair of the line would be a boon to the Muslim pilgrims coming to Arabia, and would also have a great importance in promoting general trade and traffic with the Arabian peninsula.

A conference in Riyadh, capital of Sa'udi Arabia, in January last year was attended by representatives of Syria, Jordan and Sa'udi Arabia, who recommended the repair of the line and set up an executive committee to decide on a system of financing and running the railway. A technical committee which was set up to survey the line put its total value at over £20,000,000, and estimated that repairs and replacements would cost about £5,000,000 and would take two years to complete.

Since then the representatives of the three countries, meeting in Damascus as an executive committee, decided that each country should guarantee about £100,000 to enable work to be started, and that the total sum needed might be raised through the World Bank as a loan guaranteed by the three Governments. No decision has yet been taken on the proportion of the total cost to be paid by each country.

It is proposed that the operating of the line should be taken over by a special committee, which should have complete independence. When the loans have been repaid, the future revenue of the line would go to the three Governments concerned.

In the last war the British military authorities built a 57-kilometre stretch linking Ma'an with Nakb Ashtar. Trains now take pilgrims from Damascus to Nakb Ashtar, a distance of 550 kilometres. From this point they travel by road to 'Aqaba, and thence by ship to Sa'udi Arabia.
“We Arabs, though of different localities and places, are brothers, and today therefore I call my brothers, near and far, without exception. The Arab nation today as a whole is passing through a test in the defence of its most important cause. The Arab League, our united hope and our way to our ultimate aim, the great Arab unity for which we all work, this Arab League is today on the verge of death, and its pillars standing on the Arab people’s will are almost crumbling, and if this happens — God forbid! — the hopes and aspirations of the Arab people will crumble too. These hopes and aspirations, for which blood was shed in the whole of the Arab world, and the difficulty we are experiencing in this momentous hour, necessitate my being frank with you and telling you of the things I had hoped I would never be compelled to mention. Some of you have forsaken the will of the majority of the Arab nation. We have failed to convince those who have left us of their mistake and the dangers in the steps they are taking. They have ventured alone without the rest of the Arab countries. Because of this they will be responsible to the Arab people and history for putting us all in danger and exposing us to the interests of colonialism. I, with my Government and my people, stand together with all the Arab people represented by their different Governments which are united in the Arab League representing your will and sincere aspirations in all conditions. My Government stands together with those sister Arab Governments that have proved their goodwill and keep to the right path. Now we all stand united and my Government and my people stand with the Arab League. We and our brethren, the leaders of the Arab nation, are resolved to be faithful to our promises and sincere to our aspirations and ready to fight for the rights of the Arabs and their unity. Whatever other obstacles may come in the way of our hopes, we beseech you to beware of what is being done to you. Be careful of the result from which the Arabs will gain nothing — they will expose the Arab countries to a destructive war, to an end dark and unknown, and from which nothing can be gained but the defending of others. Instead, we should make ourselves ready to meet Israel and her armies and revenge our defeat and restore our dignity.

“Will the Arab people accept to be slaves when they are not slaves? Will you accept your country and ours to be the scene of a war destructive to our existence and our independence? The victor will be other than ourselves; we will be the fuel to be burned by a fire started by others to achieve their ends; and we shall pay its price from our sovereignty and freedom, and our blood and honour! Will you accept to meet the Zionists on the side of “the comradeship of arms” and thus bring on yourself dishonour, for which your enemies are working by forcing you to sign a peace treaty? Your enemies have failed till now to force you on such a peace treaty. Now they have tried to turn on you some of your own to persuade you against the advice of the sincere. Therefore I reiterate my call to every honourable Arab to speak his mind and express aloud his belief, and join the great majority against this treacherous affair. Recognition of a wrong, and silence about what is wrong, are tantamount to acquiescing in it and helping the one who is in the wrong. Now we stand at the parting of the ways and find ourselves in a very unhappy relationship with some of the countries. But I and my Government are in complete understanding and are determined, with the help of God, to resist all entanglements that are of no help to the Arabs in any way and to protect our independence and sovereignty, and are ready to do this with our blood and our resources, whatever be the sacrifice. We shall remain in complete agreement with our sister Arab Governments that have the same aims as those of the united Arabs. And every Arab today should regard himself a soldier ready, wherever he may be in the Arab countries, to defend his aims and ideals with all his strength, be unafraid of threats, and remain with the faithful and sincere.”

Sa‘ud Riyadh, 17th Jumad al-thaniya.
The Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking

The office of the Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, entails duties which, besides the conducting of religious services, the delivering of lectures, the giving of interviews to friends interested in Islam, comprises social engagements which he has to attend in London. On Friday 4th February a reception was held by the High Commissioners of the British Commonwealth of Nations at the Guildhall in honour of their Prime Ministers. This distinguished and select gathering consisted of about 1,000 persons. The Imam, who was invited to attend it, had the opportunity of meeting, besides other Muslim personalities, the Honourable Mr. Muhammad 'Ali, the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Meetings in London

Saturday discussion meetings were held in the form of questions and answers throughout the month of February at the London office of the Woking Muslim Mission, 18 Eccleston Square, London, S.W.1. These meetings are very helpful and valuable, for they afford an opportunity for the clarification of many vexed problems which face the Muslim world, especially the Muslims living in the United Kingdom. They also enable Muslims to make new friends and renew old friendships.

Lectures

Mr. 'Abd al-Majid, M.A., Editor, The Islamic Review, spoke at the Conway Discussion Circle organized by the South Place Ethical Society, London, W.C.1, on 1st February on “The Essence of Islam in Relation to Modern Times”. The lecture, as usual, was followed by an intelligent discussion in which a speaker paid a glowing tribute to the political genius of the Prophet Muhammad. This, as Mr. Majid told us afterwards, was the first time that, during his lifelong connection with the Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, covering a period of thirty-two years, such a spontaneous public appreciation of the great services of Muhammad to mankind was made. Any Muslim present at the meeting would have felt not only proud of his religion but seen in those remarks an outline of the future of Islam in the world.

On the 12th February Mr. 'Abd al-Majid spoke at a meeting organized by the Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust on “The Muslim World in 1954”. The learned speaker, in dealing with the various developments, pointed out that the one thing that characterized the Muslim world was that by the side of a flush of optimism noticeable in all Muslim countries, there was the fearful mental disintegration in the Muslim youth, that was torn into two by the opposing pulls of Islamic traditionalism and Western dialectical materialism. His talk was both informative and thought-provoking. Mr. In'amullah Khan, the Secretary-General of the Muslim Youth Assembly held at Karachi early this year, who was present in the audience, took the chair. The meeting was opened by a recitation from the Qur'an by a Yugoslav Muslim, Mr. Hazim Sataric. The Chairman in his concluding remarks gave a short report of the work of the International Assembly of Muslim Youth, which was held in Karachi in January 1955.

On Sunday 27th February Mr. 'Abd al-Majid, M.A., addressed a gathering of Christian Spiritualists at the Sanctuary of St. Francis, St. Margaret's-on-Thames, a town on the outskirts of London, on “Islam Today”. The speaker was able to remove some of the misconceptions. He also made the audience realize something of the importance of the world of Islam today. He also went to Oxford on 9th March to talk at a meeting of the Islamic Union, which meets every Wednesday at the premises of the British Council, Oxford. The subject of the talk was “Islam in Relation to the Problems of the World Today”. A Sudanese student, Mr. al-Nahdi, was in the chair.

On Tuesday 15th February, Mr. Bashir Ahmad, a young Pakistani Muslim who had resided at the Shah Jehan Mosque Woking, for six years, was invited by the Woking Branch of the Young Conservatives to give a talk on “His Impressions of England”, prior to his return to his motherland.

Mr. Ahmad started his talk by giving a brief account of the history of Pakistan, the country’s achievements in her short life and the difficulties she had to face. The speaker then turned to his impressions of England by saying that of the many things, four stood out in his mind, and they were the British political system, the Press, the Englishman, and the food. Regarding the British political system, Mr. Ahmad said the thing that struck him most was the lack of bitterness and fanaticism in politics. He said that the British people were very lucky in that they had such a stable form of government, unlike many other countries. As to the Press, he said that he thought it a pity that some British newspapers did not pay more attention to news items of international importance, and too often they depended upon “sensationalism”.

The Muslim Society in Great Britain, London

The Annual General Meeting of the Islamic Society in Great Britain was held on 19th February 1955 at Regent’s Lodge, London, N.W.8. The following were elected as members of the Executive Committee:

Lt.-Col. Abdullah Binte Hewitt (President); Major Faruq Farmer (Chairman); Dr. S. M. 'Abdullah (Treasurer); Mr. Iqbal Ahmad (Secretary); Mr. A. M. al-Aggan, Mr. S. M. Iqbal, Miss B. A. Muhammad, Miss J. E. Scott, Mr. I. Z. Abaza, Mr. M. A. Wahhab, Mr. R. A. Philipps, Khwaja M. Ghose, Mr. Munawar 'Ali Syed, Mr. A. R. Sany, and Mr. 'Abd al-Majid.

The Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey (Dr. S. M. 'Abdullah, Ph.D., M.Sc., left), assisted by Mr. Asghar Ali, a member of the staff of the Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, officiated at the Islamic marriage ceremony of Lt. Moin ud-Din Ahmad, Pakistan Army, and Miss Breda Convey, at Loughborough, England, on 22nd January 1955. Miss Convey embraced the religion of Islam before the solemnization of the marriage tie.

Dr. Josef Korbel has written a most comprehensive and impartial study of a problem which has plagued the relations of India and Pakistan since independence. Dr. Korbel first came in touch with the problem in 1948 as a member of the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan which worked laboriously to bring about the cease-fire in Kashmir. He came to know the problem at this early stage and has, therefore, been able to throw fresh light on a situation which has become complex after seven years of reciprocation and counter-reciprocation.

Dr. Korbel gives a brief survey of the early history of Kashmir and shows how it passed into the hands of the Maharaja Gulab Singh by the Treaty of Amritsar (1846). For the next hundred years the author shows how the majority of the Muslim population suffered under the rule of the Maharaja till Indian independence was won in 1947. This, however, was not the end of the road for Kashmir aspirations and the conflict in Kashmir which followed is lucidly put forward in the rest of the book.

Dr. Korbel has placed the Kashmir problem in its true perspective by fitting it into the struggle between the Muslim League and the Congress Party, the conflict which later took on the form of a conflict between so-called secular Indian and a Muslim Pakistan. Dr. Korbel quite rightly points out that Kashmir for Mr. Nehru resurrects again the issue of the one nation or two nation theory. To quote Mr. Nehru “...it is not Kashmir, therefore, but rather a much deeper conflict that comes...”. The author has done much towards the understanding of the Kashmir problem by bringing this aspect to light.

Dr. Korbel sketches the history of the negotiations between India and Pakistan after the cease-fire. He supplies a number of United Nations documents which are of value to students interested in the detailed negotiations. He points out clearly how India after accepting the Security Council resolution of 1948 — which brought about a cease-fire and guaranteed a free and impartial plebiscite to decide the future of Kashmir — has continued ever since to obstruct the holding of such a plebiscite. The MacNaughton plan, the Menzies plan, and the work of the mediators, Sir Owen Dixon and Dr. Graham, have foundered on Indian objections. What next? The author’s answer is that the question of Kashmir should be removed from the Agenda of the Security Council and brought before the General Assembly of the United Nations. The General Assembly, while taking action on it, could also ask for an advisory opinion from the International Court on the legal aspects of the question. This is an interesting suggestion but it suffers from the same weakness as the other plans of the United Nations: who is to implement the decisions taken by these bodies? Until there is an answer to this question the Kashmir problem will not be solved through the United Nations.

In discussing the internal aspect of the problem the author weighs carefully the benefits to the Kashmiri under Shaikh ‘Abdullah’s regime. The land reforms and the first steps towards a welfare state are applauded, but with this is also shown the methods of a “police state” which are too familiar to need description. The fate of Shaikh ‘Abdullah — due to a realization by the “Lion of Kashmir” that India is not as secular as he first thought her to be — has brought to office Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, a puppet in the hands of India.

Dr. Korbel devotes a part of the book to a second danger which he sees in Kashmir. This danger he considers is the machination of the Communist International. He shows that the key positions in the present Kashmir Government are in the hands of members of the Communist Party and “fellow travellers”. If this observation is correct — and Dr. Korbel puts forward some convincing evidence — then the situation in Kashmir is more dangerous than the world has yet realized. The continued uncertain future of Kashmir has left it open to Communist infiltration, it is — so the author believes — only if a just solution is found to this problem that this infiltration can be effectively combated.

The book as a whole is a very profound and clear study of a difficult problem. Dr. Korbel has done both a service to scholarship and also to the Kashmiri people by putting forward again their claim for self-determination, a claim which the world tends to forget.


During the years 1918-1921 the Georgian Mensheviks set up a government in Tiflis which they claimed represented 80 per cent of the people. The Mensheviks, or moderate Socialists, were stronger than the Bolsheviks in Georgia, except perhaps in the oil town of Baku, which is not mentioned in this book.

Mr. Kandelaki gives an able and impressive exposé of the Georgian people to maintain and to win back their independence once their country was occupied by the Bolsheviks in 1921. He maintains that the Bolsheviks were imperialists, like any other Russian government, and shows that legally the 1783 Treaty between the Empress, or Czarina Catherine the Great, of Russia, and the King of Georgia, Irakly II, and the 7th of May Treaty between the Soviet Union and the Democratic Republic of Georgia were tantamount to the acceptance of Georgian independence by the respective Russian governments in power at the time of the signing of these treaties. They were both violated by the invading Bolshevik army. It is interesting to note that one of the first serious disputes between Stalin and Trotsky broke out over the policy of the Georgian Bolshevik party and its leader, Mdivani. Stalin, himself a Georgian, was most ruthless in carrying out the repression of his own country, while Trotsky wrote a book justifying the policy of occupying

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Georgia. The author ignores this dispute and concentrates on a detailed documentation of the diplomatic moves abroad of the Georgian government in exile.

He states that the Turkish government, after occupying Ardaahan and Artvin while the Bolsheviks invaded from the north, proposed that as its territorial demands were fulfilled by it, it should help Georgia in its defence against the Bolsheviks. Unfortunately fighting broke out in Batum and the author, who seems to write entirely from a non-Muslim standpoint, blames the Turks, claiming that they wished to disarm the Georgians. He does, however, quote the extremely liberal Georgian constitution of 22nd February 1921, in which it is stated inter alia that the Georgia Muslim district of Batum was to enjoy autonomy in the administration of its affairs. Also the constitution lays down that no religion is to be favoured at the expense of other religions, or in other words that the Muslims and Christians are to be treated equally, which was a great advance on the Orthodox Church policy of the Tsarist regime.

Mr. Kandelaki supposes that the Georgians were originally a Mediterranean race similar to the ancient Greeks. They became Christians in the fourth century C.E. She “reached the height of her political and cultural and national development” in the eleventh and twelfth centuries C.E. under King David the Restorer and Queen Tamar, when national unity, a central power and a regular army were created.

The population is given as 3,542,500 (1939 census figures), of which 61.4 per cent were Georgians, 11.7 per cent Armenians, 8.7 per cent Russians, 5.3 per cent Turko-Azeri and 12.9 per cent are placed under the category of “miscellaneous”. 30.1 per cent are listed as forming the urban population and 69.9 per cent the rural population. Most of the land is high lying and the crops are chiefly cereals, tobacco, tea, fruit, grapes and silk coconuts.

Had Georgia maintained better relations with Turkey and had it not been a pawn in the machinations of the countries which were seeking to destroy Bolshevik Russia, it is possible that it might have remained an independent State today.


The book, which covers 288 pages of octavo size, is partly an autobiography but mostly deals with the Egyptian Revolution as depicted by the General himself and reflects on the problems and future of Egypt and the Near East.

While reading the book which is written in a simple and impressive manner, one gets the impression that here is a man of faith, a man of conviction, a man of determination and national aspiration, a man full of energy and vigour. From his very childhood he seems to have been infused with faith and belief in God and his way of thinking was that of a true Muslim. Once having been dangerously wounded during the Palestinian war and seeing no hope of his survival he dictated a message to his young children which gives an insight into his faith and belief in God. The great peril to his life can be seen from the following description: “One of the two bullets had cracked two of my right ribs. The other had perforated my left lung, grazed my heart, and emerged through my third left rib”. At this juncture he dictated the following message: “Remember that your father died honourably and that his last desire was that you should avenge our defeat in Palestine and work for the unity and independence of the Nile Valley”. While commenting on this message the General writes: “I must here ask Western readers to forgive me if my words seem quaint. We Moslems live with God, the same God as yours, and when we die it is our custom to leave our children an inspiring thought to remember as part of their family heritage. My wife still retains the message I sent to our children, although it was God's will that I should be spared to lead the Egyptian Revolution”. He had a great love and respect for the Qur’an, the holy book of the Muslims, and he used to read and study this sacred book regularly. He received great inspiration from it. Let me quote his own words. He writes: “My education had begun with a thorough study of the Koran, which has never failed to give me strength in my hours of need. The Koran affects different people in different ways. Its chief effect on me has usually been to convert my pessimism into optimism, which I consider the prerequisite to success. In Palestine I read the Koran for half an hour every day. As a boy I used to read it in preparing for my examinations. It helped me to obtain high marks if only because it filled me with self-confidence. Unlike some people, I have never read the Koran merely in the hope that it would bring me luck. I have read it, instead, in order to increase my command of the Arabic language and also to exalt my spirit. Luck, I have found, usually abandons those whose spirits are low; by the same token, it usually accompanies those whose spirits are high”.

After the autobiography which occupies about a third of the book one reads of his version of the coup d'état and his conflict and disagreement with Colonel ‘Abd al-Nasir, the present premier of Egypt, to whom he pays a fairly high tribute in the following words: “‘Abd el Nasser, for whom I have always had the greatest admiration and respect, is a young man of remarkable ability”.

The book was completed after the crisis of February, 1954, which led to his loss of premiership and the above-quoted words show that General Najib, in spite of his differences with Colonel A. Nasir, had no ill-will or hatred against him. His differences were more a matter of tactics rather than the aim of the Revolution. Again on page 216 he writes: “I believed, with all the prudence of a man of fifty-three, that we would need as much popular support as we could possibly retain. I further believe that it would be better to sacrifice, or at least delay, the attainment of some of our objectives in order to ensure the attainment of others. I believed, in short, that half a loaf was better than none. Abd el Nasser believed in taking greater risks than I thought were wise in an effort to obtain the whole loaf. It remains for the course of history to determine which of us was right. If I am proved wrong, and I am still alive, I shall be the first to congratulate Gamal on his superior judgment”. Discussing the question of dictatorship and that of democracy he writes: “My differences with my junior colleagues were differences of tactics rather than of strategy. My experience as a Prime Minister had reinforced my conviction as a General that the efficiency of every organization, civilian or military, depends on a logical chain of command. Committee government, as I have already remarked, has certain strength as well as weaknesses. Efficiency is not among them. The larger the committee the less efficient it is likely to be. A double committee is less efficient than a single committee, and a triple committee is less efficient still”.

General Najib is accused of acting under the inspiration of Muslim Brotherhood but when one reads the book under review one is convinced of the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood never found favour with General Najib or military junta. He writes: “Next to the Wafd, the most powerful
political organization in Egypt before the revolution was the Moslem Brotherhood. Although the Moslem Brothers had never taken part in an election, they exercised a disproportionate influence on Egyptian policy by inflaming the religious emotions of the man of the street”. While writing on the subject of making Egypt a Republic and not a theocratic state, the General says: “Moslem Brotherhood wanted us to go back to the days of the Sultan Salah ed Din, when Egypt was a theocratic state... but there is nothing in the Koran that calls for the theocratic government; on the contrary the Prophet was in favour of parliamentary rule... The injunctions of the Koran have as much meaning and application today as they ever did, provided they are interpreted with due regard for the great changes that have occurred in human society since the Prophet preached his message”.

The last chapter of the book is devoted to the important subject of “Egypt and the West” dealing with the problem of the Nile Valley and the Sudan question, etc., and giving an account of the long occupation and exploitation of the Egyptian soil by the British. General Najib as a nationalist does not approve of the attitude of the British Government and strongly criticizes the stand taken by Sir Winston Churchill and his colleagues.

Students of contemporary history will find the book useful and of absorbing interest.

THE MUSLIMS OF EAST PAKISTAN
H.M.S. “Collingwood”,
Fareham,
Hants, England.
20th February 1955.

Dear Sir,

Assalamu ‘alaikum!

I read Mr. Sunil Kumar Mukhopadhyay’s article in the February issue of The Islamic Review with great interest. I am a Muslim from East Bengal myself. Mr. Sunil Kumar’s suggestion that the East Bengalis live in Islam and think in Islam is not quite correct, although it is true that they dream in Islam.

The principle of equality is not greatly practised outside the mosque. The rich man does not care whether his poor neighbour has any food or not. He keeps his money locked up at home rather than put it in a bank, where it could be of some benefit to all the people. The number of cases daily in a law court would show how selfish and mean people are. The majority of the people would not encourage female education even if they could afford it. In my opinion the people have not yet grasped the essence of Islam.

Yours sincerely,

NERUM NABI (Fisher Section).

"ISLAM IS HARDEST TO UNDERSTAND"

Street and Smith Publications, Inc.,
304 East Forty-Fifth Street,
New York 17, N.Y.
31st January 1955.

Dear Sir,

I am naturally glad that you found my editorial “Relatively Absolute” of interest. We would be entirely agreeable to your republishing the editorial in The Islamic Review if you will simply acknowledge the original source.

For your information, it is astonishingly difficult to get information regarding the cultural concepts and traditions of Islam during the period of its greatest, most dynamic growth. The curious thing is that two of the greatest American universities — Harvard and Columbia — have no courses covering the Islamic Empire — yet that was the greatest empire, geographically and demographically, in the entire history of the world!

I have been most interested in seeking the cause of the failures of the world’s greatest empires — for in those factors must lie, somewhere, the forces that could break up the world we know today. And of them all, Islam is hardest to understand.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN W. CAMPBELL, Jr.,
Editor, Astounding Science Fiction.

TRANSLATIONS OF THE QUR’AN INTO OTHER LANGUAGES

Kadamkuan,
Patna 3,
Bihar, India.
11th February 1955.

Dear Sir,

I read with interest the letter of Mr. R. U. Austin in The Islamic Review for October 1954. His idea that the Holy Qur’ân be translated into as many languages as possible is worthy of notice of all those who are interested in the future of the world of Islam. This will definitely give an opportunity to millions all over the world to read and understand the book of God in their own language, rousing in them a feeling of consciousness, and waking them up from their age-long torpor to the realities of the Islamic ways of life. The
Muslims in different parts of the globe, divided and disintegrated among themselves into different ranks and nationalities, can be once more brought to one platform and prove to the world that they are a power when united and an indivisible integrated whole. I need not emphasize the corollary that this will result in the revival and renaissance of Islam and the lost glory and splendour will be restored once more.

Yours sincerely,

HAMID ALI KHAN.
SA'UD.

ISLAM, COMMUNISM AND MATERIALISM
Carriere Murphy,
Glenariffe,
Co. Antrim,
N. Ireland.
13th March 1955.

Dear Sir,

... My own private view of the world at the moment is that the Middle East is emerging again to retake its position as the centre of the world. In my opinion the Christian religion does not stand a chance in Africa, and the present age is a wonderful time for Islam to permeate the whole continent and so save it from anarchy by means of its powerful yet simple faith and its ideas of brotherly help and concord. We fight today not only Communism but the equally powerful poison which is within us, materialism. This materialism the Christians are unable to combat, since they themselves are supported and contaminated by it. I have a wonderful vision of Africa dotted with mosques from which every day the great truth of the One True God is proclaimed and from whence will go out healing streams of faith and fraternal affection to clear away the mass of strife, bigotry, industrial differences and paganism. I have tried to dissociate myself from the mad rush for material possessions per se. That was one of the reasons why I came here and took this humble work, but I am afraid that this country, along with the rest of Europe, is mortally sick. This is why the Muslim faith, together with what I saw of the ordinary people in Libya, is so refreshing to me. ...

Yours very sincerely,

P. F. J. COLLINS.

THE CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND MUSLIMS
9, Ologun Street,
Lagos,
Federation of Nigeria.
22nd February 1955.

Dear Sir,


I watch the activities of my brother Muslims in the Middle East with deep interest and great concern. Like other Muslims I deplore the political crisis confronting the Muslim States in the Middle East. The fall of the Government of General Muhammad Najib, the dissolution of the Muslim Brotherhood and the disappearance of Dr. Musaddiq have set Muslims thinking hard over their future. Their governments in the Middle East might be justified in putting a quick and immediate end to treason and extravagant ambitions; nevertheless, we Muslims must not forget the truth. Yesterday the names of these Muslim leaders were being echoed from every corner of the world; today they seem to have vanished like the forgotten idols of humanity. Let Muslims not judge these unfortunate people by their political careers; rather should we keep them in our memories as great Muslims for their services to their country.

Here I am reminded of an editorial in one of the British dailies published during the early stages of these political crises and the serious tension between Egypt and Israel. This editorial, after commenting on the disagreements between the Muslim States of the Middle East, stressed that the Muslims claimed the religion of Islam is a religion which cemented unity between peoples, nations and neighbours. The writer then asked whether the Muslims of the States concerned had lost faith in their religion. I must say that I received a rude shock from this direct challenge. I began to wonder if this challenge was not well deserved by us Muslims.

May I appeal to you to help the Muslim world through the medium of your journal by preaching the gospel of unity and leniency to all the governments of the Muslim States in the Middle East in their dealings with their opponents. I wholeheartedly join you in advocating for leniency from these governments towards these unfortunate leaders of one time. I also hold the same views as you that those who do not see eye to eye with their governments should for the sake of Islam not resort to assassination, plots and treason. As a Muslim political student, may I advise them to pursue the valuable democratic procedure.

Your Muslim Brother,
N. OLAYIMIKA IDRIS.

ISLAM IN CANADA
The Institute of Islamic Studies,
McGill University,
Montreal, Canada.

by Miss Inga M. Artl

Started in 1952 with the aid of a five years' Rockefeller grant, the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University in Montreal is the first and only one of its kind on the North American continent. Differing from similar institutes in other non-Muslim countries by its emphasis on the contemporary aspects of Islam, the Institute works with a small, selected group of post-graduate students from the Muslim and the Western world.

The Institute was founded by its present director, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, a Christian with an exemplary knowledge of Islam and the conviction that, in striving for "a synthesis between a disciplined, scientific knowledge of Islam, its institutions, formulations and history and a sympathetic understanding of its meaning, one has to let Muslims speak for themselves".

Professor W. C. Smith studied at the Universities of Grenoble, Madrid, and the American University in Cairo before graduating with a B.A. Hons. in Oriental Languages from the University of Toronto in 1938. From 1938 to 1940 he attended Cambridge University as a Vincent Massey Fellow and St. John's College as a Hutchinson Research Student. At the University of the Punjab in Lahore, Professor Smith lectured on Indian and Islamic History from 1941-45. Then Princeton called him as instructor in Near Eastern Politics and later sent him as Travelling Fellow on an extensive study tour of the Near East, Pakistan and India (1948-49). His studies of the movements culminating in the creation of Pakistan are summarized in Modern Islam in India. London, 1946. From 1940-49 Professor Smith also represented the Canadian Overseas Missions Council among Muslims in India.

As Professor of Comparative Religion, W. C. Smith has successfully launched the first major research project of the
Institute — "Islam in the Modern World" — an endeavour to appreciate Islam as a living force whose ethics inter-relate with social, intellectual and political factors in the Muslim communities of today. This research project covers the period from 1932 to 1957.

Seminars on the heritage of classical Islam with consideration of modes of expression of the faith used in the past and readings of the classical Arabic philosophers provide the students with the necessary link to the past.

Basic courses on Islam are designed to acquaint students with Western interpretations and methods. Instruction in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Urdu stresses the importance of competence in the main languages of Islam.

In two short years the Institute has already made its place in the intellectual link between East and West and a lively exchange with the Muslim world goes on.

H. A. Reed, the assistant director has just returned from a research trip under a Ford Foundation fellowship to Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait and the Lebanon. Dr. M. D. Rahbar from Lahore is on the visiting staff in Montreal for 1954-55. A graduate recently returned to a journalistic post in his native Pakistan and Dr. A. G. O’Connor, of the Western staff left for Baghdad’s College of Arts and Science to lecture on philosophy.

Professor Smith’s personal connections with Muslim Universities help a great deal to further these exchanges.

The Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill makes a very fine effort to find and explore the possibilities for mutual understanding between Islam and Christianity. In the cool and neutral atmosphere of scientific research there is very little place for unobjectiveness and the emotional appeal of religion and philosophy serves as a moderator rather than a motor. Islamic society today presents a fascinating item for deductive analysis, and combined with the even more fascinating humanitarian concepts of the greatest and humblest faith on earth, forms an irresistible attraction for the open Western mind.

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