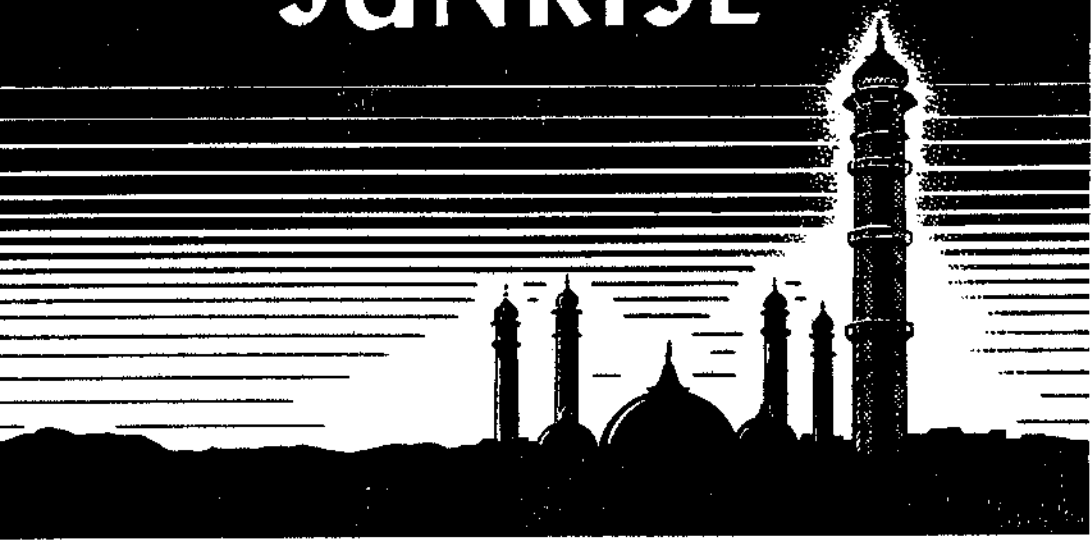


THE MUSLIM SUNRISE



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The Ahmadiyya Movement In Islam

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded by Hazrat Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi and the expected Messenger of all nations. In the spirit and power of all the earlier prophets, he came to serve and re-interpret the final and eternal teaching laid down by God in the Holy Quran. The Movement therefore represents the *True and Real Islam* and seeks to uplift humanity and to establish peace throughout the world. Hazrat Ahmad died in 1908, and the present Head of the Movement is his second successor, Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad under whose directions the Movement has established Missions in many parts of the world, the following being the addresses of some of them:

INDIA

Qadian, E. Punjab

PAKISTAN (Center)

Rabwah, Punjab

U.S.A.

1. The American Fazl Mosque,
2141 Leroy Place, N.W.
Washington 8, D.C.
2. 2522 Webster Avenue,
Pittsburgh 19, Pa.
3. 4448 S. Wabash Ave.
Chicago 15, Ill.
4. 265 W. 30th Street,
New York 1, N. Y.

ENGLAND

The London Mosque,
63 Melrose Road,
London S.W. 18

SCOTLAND

36 Mansion House Road
Glasgow S.I.

SPAIN

K. I. Zafar,
Lista 58, Madrid

SWITZERLAND

Beckhammer 35, Zurich 57

GERMANY

Oderfelder Strasse 18
Hamburg 20

NETHERLANDS

Josef Israel Laan 48
Hague

NIGERIA

P.O. Box 418, Lagos

GOLD COAST

P.O. Box 39, Salt Pond

SIERRA LEONE

P.O. Box 11, Bo

KENYA COLONY

P.O. Box 554, Nairobi

ETHIOPIA

Dr. Nazir Ahmad,
Debra Berhan Hospital
Adis Ababa

ISRAEL

Mount Carmel, Haifa

SYRIA

Zaviatul Husni,
Shaghour, Damascus

MAURITIUS

Hafiz Bashiruddin
Rose Hill

INDONESIA

Petodjok Udik VII/10
Djakarta

JAVA

Masjid Ahmadiyya
Nagarawanji 57, Tasikmalaja

BALI ISLANDS

Abdul Hayee,
Bandjar Djawa

CEYLON

99 Driesburgs Ave.
Colombo

BORNEO

Box 30, Jesselton

MALAY

111 Onan St. Singapore

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَجْمَةٌ وَنَصِيحَةٌ عَلَى رَسُولِ الْكَرِيمِ

A Passage From The Holy Quran

Verily, Allah commands you to give over the trusts to those entitled to them, and that, when you judge between men, you judge with justice. And surely excellent is what Allah admonishes you with. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

O ye who believe. Obey Allah, and obey His Messenger and those who are in authority among you. And if you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger if you are believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is best and most commendable in the end.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَبِيحًا بَصِيرًا
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأَطِيعُوا الَّذِينَ فِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا

ISLAM and COMMUNISM:

A Comparison

by

Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad

I

At present three great systems are contending for supremacy in the world. Two of them are openly ranged against each other. The third, though for the present withholding itself in the background, is waiting for the outcome of the collision of the first two. These warring systems are Communism and Capitalism whilst the third constitutes Islam, which God, for inscrutable reasons of His own, has been holding back to usher forth at the crisis of the first two. In His infinite wisdom God has decreed that the Ahmadiyya Movement is to be His chief instrument in bringing about this great change in the set up of Islam. This is evident from the fact that God has raised in the person of the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, the exalted Messenger of the Latter Days, who holds the same position in the Islamic Dispensation as Jesus held in the Mosaic Dispensation and is destined to bring about the final and lasting triumph of Islam.

II

Gog and Magog are labels applied by Islam to the present-day Communism and Capitalism. The Quran has prophesied that like a great deluge these two systems will swamp the earth in the Latter Days and that all the material resources of the earth will fall into their hands¹. Gog stands for the peoples of U.S.S.R. which is the leader and pivot of Communism. Magog stands for Capitalism or in other words the Western Democracy which embodies Britain and the U.S.A. Both these systems, radically opposed to each other, stand in deadly battle-array. Though not in death grip physically, there is, nevertheless, going on a secret war which in present phraseology is known as Cold War or in other words the War of Nerves. This cold war is likely to end soon in hot war and things are moving so fast and at such a dangerous speed that the partially slumbering vol-

1. *Al-ambiaa*, verse 96.

cano may erupt at any moment and its destructive lava sweep over every country and people of the world.

III

Outwardly both these systems—Capitalism and Communism—belong to the economic and cultural spheres, but in fact their tentacles run deep into politics, ethics, and religion and their rise and fall affects all fields of human activity so much so that no community or country of the world can remain unaffected. It is, therefore, the bounden duty of all to take stock of their present situation with a view to enabling themselves to draw up a program of life for their security. He who thinks that he can stand aside and feel secure is laboring under a dangerous delusion. He is the type of the pigeon that closes its eyes at the sight of the cat and thus considers itself to be safe from its attack, or the like of an ostrich, who buries his head in the sand in the mistaken notion that he is now safe from his pursuers.

IV

Communism may briefly be summed up as follows:—All wealth and all means of wealth must be nationalized. Individual property should be given place to collective possession. Wealth produced under collective organization out of collective resources, should be distributed under collective supervision among individuals according to their needs on the basis of an equitable system. All are to work according to the best of their powers, but distribution must correspond to the needs of the individual. On the other hand Capitalism which is now also dubbed as Democracy admits that every individual has a right to make individual effort for the production of wealth and he can also dispose of his produce in any way he likes. That of course is the theory of this system but in practice Capitalism gives such free reins to their rights so as to allow the accumulation of the national wealth in a few hands. This leaves no room for doing away with the wide gulf existing between the rich and the poor.

V

Communism, as a matter of fact, is a violent reaction against extreme Capitalism, or in other words it is its natural offspring. For centuries the world economy was working on capitalistic lines. The wealth of various nations and countries was slowly concentrating in

a few hands whilst the majority of the people could hardly make both ends meet. Poverty, indigence, want and helplessness were the natural concomitants of this system. Capitalism in its worst form showed itself in Russia where the Czarist regime with its corrupt dukes and rotten and depraved nobility had reduced the whole population to mere serfs who only lived to minister to the satisfaction of the low desires of the upper stratum of society. Whether it was man in the street or a day-to-day laborer or the tiller in the field, he was no better than a dumb driven animal. Indeed he was worse. An animal has at least the saving grace of being insensible, but the common man in Russian though sensible had no means to assuage his sensibility. Hence as is inevitable and has been the universal experience, the oppressive system of Russia produced in time a violent reaction against the established regime and ultimately swung the pendulum from one extreme to the other.

VI

In contradistinction to these two unnatural systems one of which blots out individualism while the other effaces collectivism Islam chalks out a golden *via-media*. In general it admits the individual's right to self-effort and its fruit, but at the same time it puts an effective curb on its extreme form. It has very wisely devised a machinery by which wealth cannot accumulate in a few hands. It has taken steps to see not only that the rich do not grow richer, but that they part with some of their wealth to uplift the poor. It tries to maintain an equilibrium between the two classes of society. Islam thus embodies the good points of these two rival systems contending for supremacy at present and at the same time it steers clear of their evils—adding its own additional provisions to safeguard society and contribute to general good and happiness. That is why in all those Islamic countries where the people have tried to follow the injunction of Islam neither Capitalism nor Communism have in their frightful forms ever taken roots, though it is a matter of regret that very little of true Islam meets the general eye. Wherever Islam is practised extreme individualism has never encroached upon humanity as a whole, nor has the dragon of Collectivism swallowed man as an individual.

VII

As a matter of principle Islam lays down that God has created

all means of producing wealth for the good of mankind. It does not admit the monopoly of any one individual or one section. The Quran says:

"O Ye people who live on this earth! God has created the earth and all that is in it for the good of you all."²

Thus Islam admits the claim of all to the means of producing wealth and denies the monopoly of anyone. This is the open-door policy for all. But at the same time Islam admits the claim of individual effort to the fruit of its labor. Says the Quran:

"Working under divine laws some people gain advantage over others in wealth."³

And "Don't they see that God widens for some people their means of livelihood and straitens them for others."⁴

Keeping in view these contradistinctive principles we notice that so far as the means of production of wealth are concerned they are open to all without any distinction whatever. But on the other hand, Islam also recognizes and accepts the natural results of individual capacity and the right to the fruit of individual effort.

This is the only natural form to maintain a right balance between the two extremes.

VIII

Against this, Communism, by collectivizing the sources of wealth has destroyed all personal initiative which is the greatest motive power for one's putting forth one's best. Indeed there are several other motives inducing a man to work but the most extensive and the most forceful motive power which induces a person to give the best of his self to the work in hand undoubtedly belongs to this personal initiative. No individual is free from it. Indeed every human being has this initiative planted in himself by Divine hand so that he should not only work hard but also directly eat the fruit of his labor without being beholden to others. Yet Communism has tried to crush it out of existence altogether. It is true that to help others and to work for the service of others is a noble human instinct and Islam has taken this

2. *Al-baqara*, verse 29.

3. *Al-Nahl*, verse 71.

4. *Al-ru'd*, verse 26.

side of human nature also into consideration, but Islam wants to maintain a right balance between all human motives. As the natural human desire to make the best of one's own efforts cannot be effaced so Islam has devised a happy *via-media*, and individualization and collectivization have been used in the best possible manner.

IX

Communism cuts at the root of another human instinct which impels man to go ahead of others and is one of the great motive powers in individual and collective advancement. It is this desire to excel others which hastens and widens our sphere of activity. Human brain thinks better and deeper when moved and impelled by this desire of excelling others. As a matter of fact, this spirit of healthy rivalry and excellence which is called *ambition* is one of the greatest natural motives which impel man onward and accelerate his speed of activity so that his heart burns with the desire to beat all others in the race of life. Yet in Communism this spirit of excelling others is almost paralysed if not positively crushed.

X

Communism also very greatly interferes in the exercise of human sympathies and fellow-feelings, for in Communism there is virtually no place for helping one's friends, relatives, neighbors and the poor which is a great redeeming feature of individualism. In collectivization it is the government that takes upon itself the duty of providing for others. Yet philanthropy, fellow-feeling and individual sympathy are all qualities that immensely help man in the improvement and perfection of his morals. Human nature is activated and developed to its fullest extent when it is moved to pity, which is in fact the divine quality of mercy reflected in man and comes into play at the sight of one's relations, friends, neighbors and the poor when one sees them around him in dire need and trouble. The door to exercise these moral qualities can remain open only if there is room for individual effort, but Communism turns man into a veritable machine although nature has not meant him for that. God has planted love and sympathy and fellow-feeling in every human being. So there should always be a way open for the exercise and development of these noble qualities.

Would, that the leaders of Communism had kept this side of man in view! Man is not motivated only by "brain"; he is also endowed with what we understand by the word "*heart*". As long as man's morals are not governed by reason-cum-sentiment man's nature would, as it were, be half-paralysed. True that there are some dangers attendant upon individual exercise for help and sympathy. The giver is sometimes prone to making a show of his obligation while the receiver is apt to develop a sense of inferiority. But Islam has guarded against both. He, who tries to make a show of his generosity is told that, by so doing he loses all claim to merit in the sight of God. He is indeed guilty of a heinous sin. So Islam directs man to see that as far as possible individual help should be rendered secretly so that the right hand should not know what the left hand does. Islam emphasizes that both the giver and the receiver should not be actuated by any baser motive. On the one hand, it lays the greatest emphasis on work and honest living and prohibits man to expose his sense of want to others in so far as it is humanly possible for him. Begging, extending of one's hands or asking of help are discouraged. On the other hand, to guard against the danger of needy persons suffering for not exposing their needs to others, Islam commands people of wealth and means to look for the needy and the helpless and render them voluntary help without their asking for it. It enjoins upon all well-to-do people to live and move about in the world with eyes open so that they may foresee the needs of the poor and the helpless and thus help them without injuring their sense of self-respect. In this way, Islam maintains a wise balance between reason and sentiment. But Communism woefully ignores this side of man.

XI

It is strange that Communism, despite sacrificing sentiment to reason, sets a poor price on reason too. Communism accepts man not as an embodiment of reason but a being no better than a machine worked by the organs of hands and feet. His value is based on what he can put forth as his production. It is, however, a well-known truth that if a higher quality is not valued and appreciated at its true worth it is bound to deteriorate. Sooner or later it is sure to come down from its high pedestal to the level of the lower organs. Thus Com-

munism tends to injure reason and intellect. The evil consequences may not be evident soon but ultimately and in the long run it is sure to affect us if not in our present generation, then surely in our next. It is the law of nature that if a thing or quality does not remain in good use long, it leads to its ultimate atrophy.

XII

Communism has another great defect. In the distribution of human rights it does not keep in view the natural division of these rights. It has only one measure and one principle for all. But human rights are of diverse kinds. The preservation of some rights belongs to the government, the distribution of public posts and offices, the administration of justice, etc. In this sphere of rights the door to progress and prosperity should be open to all alike without any distinction at all. But there are other rights which a man possesses owing to his natural and inherent qualities and aptitudes or which are the results of his personal and individual efforts, for instance, his diligence and qualities of the body, the heart and the brain. In these some inequality is bound to occur for who can ignore mental and physical differences? Who can blot out inequalities in individual effort?

XIII

Communism and Capitalism both suffer from one great defect. Both of them seek to take man out of his field of self-effort and make him rely on external props, thus reducing him to a slothful being. Capitalism accumulates wealth and thus renders the wealthy idle, while Communism makes people depend upon government and so makes them lose the great natural initiative and incentive. But Islam keeps man into the field of activity. It wants him to keep on working and struggling. Sometime Islam too brings in external props yet only to the extent that man does not give up his self-effort, and that is the right natural way. It keeps alive in man the desire to work and support himself. This helps to keep his brain active and alert. And in case of emergency external props too are not lost sight of. It is an undeniable truth that man should not be reduced to a state of total dependence upon government. On the other hand if he relies on his hoarded wealth even then he is apt to lose his power of self-reliance. Indeed once he ceases to strive for his own living and for further progress an atrophy of his natural powers is sure to set in.

Whether rich or poor Islam says that man must keep on working for the necessities of life and try to pave his own way. Thus alone he can maintain a healthy outlook and keep off from falling into the slumber of idleness.

XIV

Religious minded people whether they be Muslims, Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs or the followers of any other religion, must also bear in mind the fact that the whole approach of Communism is materialistic. It is entirely swayed by materialistic philosophy and in practice too its whole stress is laid on the physical side of man. It totally ignores the spiritual side. It is indeed out to destroy spirituality by every means. It may deny belief in God or it may not, it may declare its disbelief or keep mum on it but the hard fact remains that one purpose is to cut at the spiritual side of man. Its practical expression has taken the form of atheism. It has certainly destroyed the better half of man. The future offsprings of these practical virtual atheists are sure to be rank disbelievers in God. It would indeed be hard to expect any seeker after God among them. No wonder some of them are active crusaders in the spread of atheism.

XV

Strict secrecy is another sign of Communism. The Iron Curtain of Russia is well known. If Communism is really a useful thing and a mercy to man, why this secrecy about it? Why are foreign observers shut off from Russia? Why do Communists pursue a policy of secret penetration in foreign lands. The history of the world bears witness to the fact that no truth was ever given in the garb of secrecy. From our great progenitor, Adam, to the greatest of prophets, the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace be on him) and then from the latter on to the present day all the prophets and reformers that have appeared in various parts of the world at various times, have proclaimed the truth with the beat of drum and have never made any mental reservation about it or even tried to keep it under a cloak. Indeed one must seriously consider why Communism maintains such secrecy? Why is not Communism put upon the open market? It is certainly worthy of serious thinking by all wise men.

XVI

Now I take up the Islamic point of view. As I have already stated Islam teaches that this earth with all its resources and natural wealth is for the good and benefit of all men. Islam does not recognize the monopoly of any particular class or people to it. At the same time it does not ignore the differences in property or wealth due to the personal striving and intelligence of different individuals. It is thus not a question of the equality of distribution of wealth for that is inevitable. It is the question of the equality of opportunity that every race or class of people or individual is entitled to. But even more important aspect of the equality of man is not what relates to the distribution of wealth but what relates to the status of man as an individual and the status and position of different races of mankind. It is this aspect of the question that deserves our consideration for it is generally here that the social gulf is created and rival camps come into existence. It was in view of this that the Holy Founder of Islam said:

"Hearken ye people! your Lord is One and your progenitor was also one. Aye hearken to me, O ye people! An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor has a non-Arab any superiority over an Arab; nor do the whites have any preference over the dark colored people excepting, of course, what a man can acquire by his personal qualities of morals, intelligence and self-effort."

This Islamic principle is the root of the Islamic conception of equality which has placed all the peoples and nations and races on the same level. At the same time Islam recognizes and promotes the inborn individual desire to excel others. Each individual and people is free to excel others by the exercise of healthy personal striving.

XVII

A question may here arise that in spite of the fact that natural resources are for the benefit of all people without any distinction what is the remedy that Islam proposes to smooth down the inequalities that inevitably come into being owing to the natural disparity in the efforts and intelligence of different individuals and the consequent accumulation of wealth in a few hands? That is a valid question. And Islam has a remedy for this also. The Quran says:—

*i. e. "Those who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way prescribed by Allah, give to them the tidings of a painful punishment. They should remember the day when it shall be made hot in the fire of Hell, and their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded therewith, and it shall be said unto them: 'This is what you hoarded for yourselves; so taste ye now what you used to hoard up.'"*⁵

With this golden teaching Islam forces the well-to-do to bring out their superfluous wealth into the open market and thus indirectly help to support the poor and the needy. If a person invests his accumulated wealth in commerce and industry he certainly benefits the man in the street. Islam warns the hoarders of wealth that if they store up their wealth they would be creating trouble for themselves not only in the life to come but also in the present life. This is amply borne out by the present day insecurity born out of racial as well as class rivalry. The present day gruelling competition and struggle between the capitalists and the labor, the trade unionists and the business magnates is not a secret. It is indeed this cut-throat struggle between the capitalists and the common man, between the master and the servant which has embittered the lives of all and has destroyed the peace of mind of the people at large.

XVIII

But Islam does not content itself with laying down general principles only. It has devised an effective machinery for a fair and equitable distribution of wealth. To keep this machinery in running gear it has laid down definite instructions. For instance, it lays down as a divine command that property must be fairly divided among all near relatives at the death of the property-holder. This law of inheritance in Islam has been very wisely conceived. It does not recognize the law of primogeniture. It recognizes the claim of all children and other kith and kin. According to a well defined proportion the whole property is divided among the children of the deceased, male and female, his parents, and in some cases his brothers, sisters and other relatives. Thus Islam has created a sort of hurdle at the different

5. *Tauba*, verse 34-35.

stages of time in the way of accumulation of wealth and at the passing of each generation a new hurdle is imposed to equalize the disparity which may have been created in the meantime. It is not merely the division of heritage that is aimed at, but the fair and equitable distribution of national wealth is also one of the objects. As a corollary to this law of inheritance, Islam has also devised and enforced what may be called the law of Testament, according to which every Muslim can will away one-third of his property for the non-kindred inheritors. For instance, if one holds property worth three million dollars, he can set aside $1/3$ of it, *i.e.*, one million dollars for those who are not within the circle of his legal inheritors, or for some charitable institutions, or for similar other purposes. This supplementary arrangement has proven a means for disposing of accumulated wealth among the general public and thousands of righteous Muslims have in their time left instructions to that effect.

XIX

There is another Islamic law which not only advocates the co-operative basis of society but also arranges practically to disperse and spread accumulated wealth for the general good. This law is two-phased, obligatory and voluntary. The obligatory side of this law is what we call the law of *Zakat* by which an Islamic government can collect a considerable amount of money ranging from $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ to 20% of the total national wealth to be spent on the poor, the needy, people in straitened circumstances and for public good. It should be borne in mind that this tax is not collected from the rich only but from every one who has a definite amount of surplus over his minimum requirements. The idea is to lift up those who are needy and helpless and thus equalize the general disparity. The words used by the Holy Founder of Islam in this connection eloquently explain the purpose of this obligatory tax. He is reported to have said:

"The object of the institution of *Zakat* is to cut away a part from the income of better-off people to be returned to the poor and the needy."

The words *to be returned* are most wisely chosen and deserve particular notice. They are purported to imply that this tax is not to be deemed as an act of goodness to and obligation upon the poor lest

the rich should feel that they are doing an act of kindness to them. The idea is that they should do it as an act of duty and the poor should accept it as a matter of right. The great Creator of human nature intends it to be known that the wealth of the rich is mainly due to the industry of the poor; hence the poor have a rightful claim upon the wealth of the rich. That this is to be so is self-evident. For, in the first place, everything belongs to God Who is the Lord and Master of all. Hence, as His creatures, all have a claim to everything. Secondly, the production of wealth is mainly due to the labor and industry of the poor. Again the word *Zakat* signifies purification and augmentation, for, on the one hand, the levying of this tax releases the giver from the obligation he owes to those who have been instrumental in the production of wealth, on the other, this adds to and augments the resources of those who receive it.

XX

As we have stated there is a voluntary side of taxation as well. This is summed up under the general term 'charity'. It includes all kinds of alms-giving that are not obligatory. By instituting this charitable organization Islam has not only helped the poor and the needy but it has also promoted general philanthropy which means mutual love, sympathy and fellow-feeling. Islam is keen to keep alive this side of human nature and it has consequently laid great stress upon it. The Holy Prophet of Islam has counted it as one of the greatest virtues and a highly meritorious act in the sight of God. Himself, the Holy Prophet was most open-handed in the distribution of alms. It is said that his hand moved with the swift motion of a gale which disdains all obstacles. He would often advise his followers that whereas it was necessary to spend openly out of the government-collected money, *i.e.* *Zakat*, they should make it a point to distribute personal and individual charity in a way that the right hand did not know what the left hand gave, so that the giver and the receiver may both be saved from the superiority or inferiority complexes. As noted above the indirect way of helping the poor and the needy was instituted by way of voluntary contributions as opposed to government collection of *Zakat*, which is obligatory. The idea is that not only should the rich and well-to-do part with a goodly portion of what

they have earned with the help of the poor but they should also be inspired and actuated by the ideas of fellow-feeling, love and sympathy. Thus whereas Communism turns man into a machine and kills all these noble qualities that should characterize a human being Islam engenders and promotes them in the best possible manner.

XXI

Then again, the Islamic law relating to business and commerce, etc., also acts as a great brake against undue hoarding. For instance, Islam declares the institution of interest or usury as forbidden and unlawful for it is mainly this taking and giving of interest that destroys the general equilibrium between man and man. In the first place the idea that a man can borrow money as he likes at a certain rate of interest encourages him to undertake enterprises beyond his power. It also tends to make people's money flow into a few hands. As a matter of fact, institution of interest has turned capital into a dreadful monster. Stop this dealing in interest and you will find all the great trades and businesses going out of the hands of the few capitalists. Trade and commerce will, then, change into co-operative systems of commerce and industry which help in diluting and dissipating great hoardings and the general wealth of the country will consequently pass into the hands of the government or be fairly spread over the public. It is obvious that co-operative enterprises or government ownership in certain well-defined lines helps in keeping healthy balance between individuals which is beneficial both politically as well as nationally. The prohibition against interest and usury also prevents the rich from exploiting the poor for, then, they can no longer suck the blood of the laboring class. To say that the present-day business cannot be run without the institution of interest is an illusion bred by the present West-ridden conception. It is the outcome of the Western capitalistic system that has unfortunately gained world-wide sway. But it can gradually be dispensed with. After all, before the rise of the West, trade and commerce were carried on in a great part of the world without the intrusion of this capitalistic device of exploiting the poor. We hope to God when interest is abolished trade and business will still flourish and flourish better than before. Instead of the present system Islam prefers business on the debt-of-honor or on debt based

on mortgage or through a system of co-operation. Business in these forms keeps commerce and trade open without disturbing the general equilibrium and without offending or crushing those noble instincts that go to make a man.

To the prohibition of interest Islam has also added the prohibition of gambling. In gambling the individual, rather than rely on his personal effort and skill, depends more upon chance which not only destroys morals but also creates an undue disparity of wealth without even the use of any kind of effort and skill so as to make a person lose his life's earnings in a few seconds and make the other person rich in the same manner.

XXII

The above-stated law relates to cases where there are no extraordinary circumstances facing the people of a country. But if an emergency arises and an unusual situation is created by war or famine affecting food and other means of subsistence then Islam proposes extraordinary remedies for such situations. If, for instance, as a result of such extraordinary circumstances a part of the country or people be in danger of dying from starvation, Islam ordains that all resources must be pooled together and rationing resorted to, so that none should suffer needlessly. There is a well-known *Hadith* in which a companion of the Holy Prophet relates, "We started on an expedition with the Holy Prophet but it so happened that our food stocks ran short and the people were in great distress. We, therefore, made up our minds to slaughter a few of the riding camels to meet the situation. At this the Holy Prophet ordered us all to bring together what we possessed of our meagre stocks of food and then out of this common stock he rationed us all till we were able to tide over the crisis."

Another *Hadith* on this subject is as follows:

"The Holy Prophet says that the tribe of Ash'ar have a very praiseworthy custom among them. Whenever during a journey or even at home they run short of food they resort to the pooling of individual resources and then out of this common stock they equally divide food among themselves with a common measure. I am of them and they are of me." It is clear from this that though Islam does admit an

individual's claim to what the individual has earned it also keeps the collective welfare in view. It looks after the needs of the poor and under extraordinary circumstances it even enjoins collectivization so that in times of emergency people may not unduly suffer. This indeed is the happy means which Islam aims at and it is only this which can promote and preserve peace in society.

XXIII

Lastly, there are always some people whom the government or society must look after, such as the ailing, the cripple and the halt who, owing to some natural defect or acquired weakness may not be able to earn their living, or what they earn may not be sufficient for their legitimate needs or there may be the unemployed, whose unemployment may not be due to any idleness on their part or to voluntary shirking of work. It is such people whom, according to Islam, the government or society is bound to look after and provide for their minimum requirements so far as the basic requirements of food, clothing and residence are concerned. This is further clarified by the Holy Quran where it says that the provision for the basic needs of the creation, is the ultimate responsibility of God Himself. Hence a worldly government is bound to look after the needs of such incapacitated people who cannot, in spite of their will to work or in spite of their effort, make both ends meet.

XXIV

To sum up:

- (a) Communism weakens individual self-effort and destroys the great natural incentive to work.
- (b) It kills feelings of human sympathy and fellow-feeling.
- (c) It puts no value upon brain work and thus puts it on the road to decline.
- (d) It ties down man's economic condition to unnatural external props.
- (e) It deals a death-blow to spirituality and sows the seed of atheism and materialism.

In sharp contrast to this:

(a) Islam adopts a *via-media* between Communism and Capitalism, combining the uses and discarding the abuses of both.

(b) It admits the right of an individual to what he has earned by self-effort and at the same time devises a machinery for fair distribution of national wealth.

(c) It leaves an open door to everyone to make use of the natural resources of wealth.

(d) It keeps alive and strengthens sentiments of love, sympathy and fellow-feeling.

(e) It keeps in view the spiritual relationship between the Creator and the created.

Thus, against the extreme systems of Communism and Capitalism Islam is the *via-media* or the happy means which can best promote the human ideals of brotherhood, progress, culture and civilization. And we hope to God that the future of the world will be based upon Islamic principles which are bound to reassert themselves with the coming renaissance of Islam, that has already been ushered in with the appearance of the Promised One. How beautifully does the Quran say:

“O Ye Muslims! We have made you a middling people, avoiding the extremes. It is your duty now to guide the people of the world to the right path for they are straying away from the path of truth and rectitude. Ye are indeed the divinely appointed witnesses for the path of righteousness.”⁶

A man asked Muhammad what was the mark whereby a man might know the reality of his faith. He said, “If you derive pleasure from the good which you have performed, and be grieved for the evil which you have committed, you are a true believer.” The man said, “What does a fault really consist in?” He said, “When anything pricks your conscience, forsake it.”

* * * * *

Heaven lies at the feet of mothers.

(*The Holy Prophet*)

6. *Al-baqara*, verse 144.

Democracy's "First Line of Defense": Islam

*Excerpts from an Address by
Congressman John T. Wood*

(We owe sincere thanks to Honorable John T. Wood of Idaho who has been pleased to give us the permission to reproduce excerpts from his address delivered in the House of Representatives on February 25, 1952. For a complete text of the speech reference may be made to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 98, No. 28.)

Mr. Speaker, we are witnessing today throughout the world an unprecedented upsurge of national self-expression by the weaker and smaller nations never before manifested as the recorded histories of all civilizations will testify.

If we prostitute our national prestige and pander to the predatory ambitions of nations seeking to sanctify their aggression by the pious use of power, we shall also reap the penalty which finally rewards traitors to their trust. That is the irrevocable law of retributive justice. There is escape neither for nations nor individuals.

The Moslems scratch their soil and they find it rich beyond measure with God-given natural resources. They regard these natural resources as their national heritage. They feel that they are entitled to something more than the horse, the goat, and sometimes the gun their alien oppressors permit them as the substitute for their God-given rights.

In the fulfillment of their historic mission they cannot understand why it is considered wrong to revolt against the foreign oppression which enslaves them and exploits their natural resources. In the well-known words of the illustrious Colonel Lawrence of Arabia, "there is a revolt in the desert." Alas, he omitted the nub, "against oppression."

The time has long since passed into history when such unfair standards can prevail anywhere in the world. These recent victims of political and economic servitude to alien oppressors now seek their inalienable God-given rights and their rightful place in the family of the peace-loving nations.

The peoples of the Near East, Middle East, and the Far East are Moslems, with few exceptions. This also applies to North Africa. "Islam" is the "official" name for the religious belief practiced by Moslems. There are approximately 400,000,000 Moslems in the areas I have just mentioned, including the Philippines. *They were all our friends.*

The world's 400,000,000 Moslems are a deeply religious people. Moslems observe their religion more seriously than do most nominal Christians. Few Christians get down on their knees three times daily for devout prayer. The word "Islam" itself may be literally interpreted, "Thy will be done." Moslems

are capable of the most intense religio-patriotic fervor. Witness Islam becoming the greatest empire in world history within the first hundred years after the death of the founder of their faith in the Seventh Century A. D. *Islam is today a greater spiritual force than ever.*

The Soviet Union did not dare to attempt an invasion of the Near East recently, when the time seemed so opportune, because the Soviet Union had never been able to organize effective branches of the Communist Party in Moslem areas. Where Islam flourishes the soil is not fertile for atheism. *In the presence of Islam, communism retreats.*

The communizing efforts of the Soviet Union's agents in Moslem areas had never reached the point where internal revolt and the creation of puppet satellite governments were at all possible. Communizing efforts of the Soviet Union have apparently been outstandingly successful only in Christian countries, with the exception of China, and that sell-out was plotted by those who call themselves Christians, "*but who are not.*" Where Islam thrives, atheism dies. *Islam is the invincible, yet invisible, foe of communism.*

Why have the communizing efforts of the Soviet Union succeeded amongst Poles, Czechoslovaks, Hungarians, and Bulgarians, yet failed among the Moslems? The answer can be stated in one word, "*Islam.*" The believers in Islam stand like a wall of stone against the onrushing flood of that Communist-bred atheism which is sweeping over the world and already has under its rule almost one-half the world's population and one-half the total land area of this world.

It is nothing short of a spiritual paradox that the Christian nations of the world should owe such a debt of gratitude to the believers in Islam in the present international "*knock-down-and-drag-out*" state of affairs. No other conclusion can be reached if one wishes to be honest with one's self. Islam appears to be Christianity's "*first line of defense*" against this world-wide creeping-conquest of atheism.

The leaders of the Communist-bred atheist creeping-conquest of the world get a shiver down their spines at the thought of collaboration, between the 400,000,000 Christians in the free world and the 400,000,000 Moslems, to resist their seemingly certain victory for atheism. Collaboration by the 400,000,000 Christians of the free world and the 400,000,000 Moslems could very well mean disintegration and defeat for Communism's program for their domination of the world.

The Communist-bred forces of atheism could never survive a real coalition between the two great religious groups of the world today. The combined resistance of the 800,000,000 deeply religious peoples of the Christian and Moslem worlds will certainly triumph over the assault of the 800,000,000 Communist-bred atheists against that bastion of the inalienable right of the individual to freely worship God according to one's own conscience, without interference.

The believers in Islam do not fear death in battle for a righteous cause. Death in battle is reputed to transport a believer in Islam immediately into the realm of the blessed. In spite of propaganda to the contrary Americans must learn that through the ages Moslems have earned the reputation of being completely reliable and absolutely faithful allies in peace as well as in war. Islam teaches Moslems to be hospitable to strangers, and they practice this inspired attitude toward all. Islam, like true Christianity, is a living manifestation of a valid "*brotherhood of man*," in action.

There exists a superlative degree of religious harmony among all Moslems. To a greater extent than generally realized, Moslems are engaged in pastoral pursuits. Whether by choice or necessity, Moslems have remained close to "*Mother Earth*." In their soil they see their security, their salvation, and their survival. *Their land is their hope.*

Likewise, a little-known fact to Americans is the historic truth that the ancient ancestors of the Moslems of today, as we know them, were world leaders in architecture, astronomy, geography, mathematics, medicine, poetry, and other leading branches of the sciences and arts at the time when Europeans were still living in mud hovels like the barbarians they were. The system of numerals in use today throughout the civilized world is a contribution to world culture and progress for which we must acknowledge gratitude to the ancient ancestors of modern Moslems. The land they inhabited was the cradle of our modern civilization.

The 400,000,000 Moslems inhabit the broad stretch of territory extending across North Africa, the Near East, the Middle East, and the Far East from Morocco on the Atlantic to the Philippines in the Pacific. Exclusive of these areas, about 75,000,000 of the 400,000,000 Moslems are integrated populations in the Soviet Union, Red China, the Balkans and other areas behind the "*Iron Curtain*." The 400,000,000 Moslems inhabit every strategic area along the extremely extended "*under-belly*" of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union has resorted to every conceivable strategy to attract into their orbit the 400,000,000 Moslems along their entire "*under-belly*." What is taking place at this very hour in Egypt, Iran, Burma, Indo-China, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and the Malay Straits is the result of agitation in these countries by agents of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is fanning the flame of nationalism in these countries to create revolutions which will result in the creation of numerous additional Communist governments.

The Soviet Union seeks to deprive the Christian world of the friendship of this great reservoir of manpower, the enormous reserves of natural resources, and the strategic areas lying along the Soviet Union's "*under-belly*." They are not exactly fools. This Nation will live to rue the day we permit Soviet Union strategy to convert the believers in Islam from loyal friends into bitter enemies of Christendom. When that becomes an accomplished fact this Nation will

drop into the lap of the Soviet Union like a ripe plum. It will be too late to call out the fire engines after the house has burned down. *Our common sense should tell us that, should it not?*

The believers in Islam have as yet not lent themselves to sovietization. The inherently deep and genuine religious fervor of the followers of the Prophet has so far precluded any possibility of the acceptance by them of Communist-bred atheism. They have so far resisted contamination of their political, social, and economic systems with the virus of Communist-incubated atheism with a fortitude worthy of "*spiritual Spartans*." Islam remains immune to atheism.

Islam has truly set an example which the Christian nations of Europe, and the North and South American continents would do well to follow. "*He who knows not the way is a dangerous guide.*" Let us abandon the insidious leadership of United Nations, that international incubator for Communist-bred atheism, and follow the example of believers in Islam. *Islam and Christianity have common aims.*

Believers in Islam will never willingly consent to the surrender of their inspiring and compelling faith in God to gain the doubtful benefits accruing to the millions who have accepted the spiritual sovereignty of the Communist-bred atheists. The preponderant majority of those who have already surrendered, unfortunately for Christendom, have been Christians, not Moslems. Take note of that fact please, if you will. Where "*ignorance is bliss*," in my humble opinion, it is not "*folly to be wise*." To the contrary, it is very necessary to be "*wise*" to what is going on in the world if humanity is to survive as a society composed of free men.

It is not difficult to understand the confusion which exists today in the minds of Moslems everywhere. These devout aspirants for their liberty and freedom now observe us turning against them, even using United Nations as a bludgeon to beat them into submission. They now see this Nation making common cause with their oppressors and exploiters, within and without United Nations and its numerous agencies, *using words with mortal effect instead of bullets.*

The present hour finds the Moslems entering upon a Twentieth Century Islamic renaissance. The great spiritual forces now reawakened and released will make a great contribution to the progress of mankind. The Islamic world is turning to the Christian world for cooperation and collaboration. They are seeking the friendship and collaboration of the West. They truly trust that it will not be unduly denied. The West will prove itself unworthy of its part in the sacred trusteeship of mankind's spiritual mission if it treats this appeal with indifference. *Or worse still to become accomplices of the oppressors of the Islamic world.*

If as a result of false pride or ignorance we turn away from their outstretched hand we shall live to regret the folly of that act. They may need

us now, and we may be able to help them. The time may come when we may need them, and they may be able then to help us. Reciprocity is a basis for human relationships which has been practised far too little in this world of ours. Reciprocity as the basis for our international relationships has been merely a mirage.

Christian and Moslem collaboration can stop communism dead in its tracks. Only then will it deteriorate, disintegrate, and disappear. There is no other defense against the aggression of Communist-bred atheism. It will grow, and grow, and grow unless Christian and Moslem collaboration immunizes man's mentality against this malignant disease which now threatens civilization's survival.

The Father in heaven of Islam and Christianity is a good God. The forces of righteousness can always count upon His help if they help Him in caring for His children here below. The two great religious groups of the world, collaborating in the service of God, will not lack for Divine assistance. God will aid in preserving a climate on this earth which will not preclude nor prohibit worship of Him by those who recognize and accept His spiritual sovereignty.

The Christian churches must invite, *not merely await*, the collaboration of Islam in this program. The Christian churches must go more than halfway in creating this conference. The Christian churches were guilty of errors of omission through the ages even though they were not guilty of errors of commission. It is their Christian duty to give sympathy and consideration for a conference to plan a program for such collaboration. It calls for top priority by all.

In their all-pervading belief in God the Moslems will join their Christian brothers at a round table to sift the ashes of civilization in the attempt to find a spark of spiritual dynamism. The power of belief must vanquish unbelief. Those now in the service of God must resist the anti-Christ.

If Islam and Christianity do not win, the fate of mankind is sealed. The human race is doomed to face a fate more miserable than my vocabulary can do ample justice.

I cannot speak for Islam. I wish I had that privilege. But I can say a few words for the Christian churches and Christianity. The Christian churches must be made to understand that they have been made the innocent victims of a Communist-bred atheist CONSPIRACY to destroy them.

When the debris of Communist-bred atheism has finally been swept into oblivion by the collaboration of Islam and Christianity, world-peace may come to the God-loving peoples of the human race. This reward justifies our struggle.

The United Kingdom of Libya

The Fezzan, Tripolitania and Cyrenaica

A new Muslim nation was born on January 1, 1952, when the three provinces of a former Italian colony were united as the independent State of Libya — the first country in history to be created by a world organization.

Since World War II, Cyrenaica and Tripolitania were temporarily administered by the United Kingdom and the Fezzan by France. The future status of the three regions was finally settled in November, 1949, when the United Nations General Assembly, without a dissenting vote, recommended that Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and the Fezzan "shall be constituted an independent, sovereign State". A provisional government was established by the Libyan National Assembly in March, 1951. This Assembly also recommended that Sayyid Muhammad Idris al-Sannusi, the Amir of Cyrenaica, should become the constitutional monarch of the new country, the United Kingdom of Libya.

Fezzan

The Fezzan is bounded on the west by southern Algeria, southern Tunisia and Tunisia, on the south by French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa, on the east by Cyrenaica, and on the north by Tripolitania. It is a vast depression, with an area of some 800,000 square kilometres, enclosed within plateaux which isolate it from the sea — some 500 to 600 kilometers distant — and from the neighboring lands. Within the depression lie three oases — Sebha, Brak and Murzak — around which is grouped the non-migratory population. Widely scattered and thinly planted palm groves are also to be found in the Zelaf.

The population of the Fezzan is estimated at 50,000, of which one-fifth are nomads or semi-nomads. The non-migratory population is found within the depression; on its fringe and beyond live the nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples. In the north these are tribes of fair-skinned stock with a strong Berber influence. In the south, in the foothills of the Tibesti and in all the area as far as Fort Lamy, Tebbous of Hamitic origin are to be found. In the Tassili, in the west, there are

sections of the Berber Confederation of the Tuareg-Arjer, who are scattered between Timbuctoo and Nigeria.

Ethnically, the non-migratory population of the interior is mixed, containing elements of both fair and black races. They live among palm trees, cultivating wheat, dates, barley, millet and sorghum. This population can be divided into two groups: three-quarters are very poor, deriving their livelihood from the harsh and unremitting labor with which they irrigate small plots of land; the remaining quarter might be described as the middle class of the country, living in relative ease. These are the land owners, traders and officials.

The subsistence economy of the Fezzan, based upon an oasis palm-garden culture, is handicapped by the difficulty of obtaining water and by primitive methods of irrigation and cultivation. The depressed economic situation is reflected in the under-nourishment of the population and the annual emigration, which further aggravates the problem of manpower.

The chief resource of the Fezzan is the date palm. Estimates of their number vary considerably, but most of them are wild and uncultivated, and it is probable that not more than 1,000,000 date palms are productive. The date crop, of about 15,000 tons annually, is in excess of local needs, and the surplus is bartered for oil and barley with the nomads or exported by caravan or lorry. The poor quality of the crop, together with the transport cost to markets, limits its export value. Local production of grain is insufficient to meet the requirements of the population and must be supplemented by imports.

In the three principal valleys of the Fezzan, a water table of varying depth makes it possible to increase the area of irrigated land, either by open wells in the area where the phreatic folds are nearer the surface or by flowing wells from the artesian level. Open wells, in the present stage of technical development, can only be exploited by traditional methods, efforts to introduce petroleum pumps having proved failure. Artesian wells, which do not require the labor of men and beast, not only relieve the pressure on the utilization of manpower, but also provide for a greater area of irrigable land in proportion to expenditure.

The condition of the serf-like *jebbad* or drawer of water, bound by a system of contracts to the proprietor and receiving only a share of the harvest, has been progressively improved during the French administration. The lot of the *jebbad* and the entire population can be improved by the further distribution of newly irrigated lands, continued supervision of the harvesting and storage of crops and maintenance of the security of the non-migratory population against raids by nomads.

The only known mineral resource of commercial value is natron (sodium carbonate), the annual export of which is less than 100 tons. There is no industry; rudimentary handicrafts have only limited local importance.

Tripolitania

The existing administrative division between Tripolitania and the Fezzan was agreed between France and the United Kingdom for the duration of the occupation of Libya. Tripolitania, by this definition, extends over some 250,000 square kilometres between Tunisia and Cyrenaica. The greater part of its area is desert. The widely settled parts of Tripolitania consist, first of the narrow coastal belt of oases between Misurata and Zuara, which contains 60 per cent of the population of the territory, and, secondly, of the northern edge of the Jebel, a broken plateau running north-east from the Tunisian frontier to Homs, where it intersects the coastal belt. The Jebel is separated from the coastal area by a wedge of steppe, and south and west of the Jebel this merges into semi-desert and desert country suitable only for pastoralism and the shifting cultivation of barley. The total area of productive land varies with the annual rainfall, but only about 1.6 per cent of the total area is devoted to static farming. This area is, however, generally well-watered and offers a fertility in striking contrast to the greater part of Libya.

The population of Tripolitania is estimated at 800,000. The indigenous population, numbering about 730,000, is Arab with a considerable admixture of Berbers, of whom some groups in the western part of the country have retained their distinction of community and their language, and continue to follow the schismatic Ibadite rite. Arabs and Berbers live amicably together in spite of past differences.

All are Muslims: the religious followers of the Sannusi Order have been estimated at 30 per cent of all Muslims.

The urban population is about 165,000. Some 105,000 Muslims live in the towns, mainly engaged in handicrafts and small trade. Most of the rural population are settled farmers living in the coastal oases and in the Jebel. Semi-nomads are numerous, both in the Jebel and in the steppe areas bordering the oases. Inasmuch as many of the non-migrating population combine pastoralism and shifting cereal cultivation with static farming during parts of the year, it is impossible rigidly to classify the population by numbers according to the ways of life. The wholly nomadic population is much less important than in Cyrenaica and is found principally in the Sirtica and Ghibla areas. Only among the nomads and a few of the hill tribes exists the closely-knit tribal structure which characterizes Cyrenaica. In the more prosperous and populous coastal area the tribe is gradually giving way to a village and town society.

The minorities comprise about 45,000 Italians, 13,000 Jews, 2,000 Maltese and 400 Greeks. The level of the Italian community has, as far as possible, been maintained numerically by the British Administration at the point to which it had fallen at end of the war. The Italians, about half of whom are town dwellers, have large commercial and agricultural interests which had been developed during Italian rule.

The Jewish minority, now almost exclusively urban, has been rapidly diminishing in the last 18 months because of emigration, largely to Israel. This exodus has reduced the Jewish community from about 29,000 in 1948 to 13,000. The rate of emigration has recently slackened.

The economy of Tripolitania is based principally on agriculture, animal husbandry and fisheries, with esparto grass and rough handicrafts as auxiliary resources. Olives, barely, citrus fruits and grapes, which cover a considerable area of the coastal belt, are the principal crops. The Muslim population of the coastal belt lines chiefly by gardens and palm groves, cultivating market crops and fruit trees irrigated from wells operated mostly by animal power. Some Arabs have, how-

ever, undertaken farming on a larger scale. In the northern part of the Jebel, olives and other fruits are grown in important quantities, and tobacco, which is a monopoly of the British Administration, as it was of the Italian, is grown with some success, although it is mostly of inferior quality. In the steppe and semi-desert sheep and goats are pastured and barely cultivated by scratch ploughing.

The Italian community outside the town is chiefly engaged in the cultivation of olives, citrus fruits, vines, almonds, and, on a lesser scale, wheat. The Italian farms, both private concessions and para-statal settlements, represent a remarkable feat of pioneering and land reclamation, which, chiefly owing to the comparatively long period of immaturity of the olive tree, has only recently begun to demonstrate its full productive value. Indeed, many of the plantations will not bear fully for some years to come. They are, however, the greatest economic asset of the territory, an asset which can easily be lost if constant care to prevent erosion and other deterioration is not maintained. Both the concessions and the settlements were assisted by the considerable tax exemptions, subsidies and credit facilities accorded to agriculture by the Italian Government. A certain unbalance is becoming apparent in their financial position as a result of the gradual expiration of these facilities, and it is likely that some measures will be needed in order to maintain them, since production and markets are not yet proportionate to the capital and maintenance outlays.

After two years of serious droughts in 1947 and 1948, the territory has enjoyed good harvests, and exportable surpluses of agricultural products have increased.

Cyrenaica

Cyrenaica extends over 700,000 square kilometres. It lies between the Western Desert of Egypt on the east and Tripolitania on the west. On the south, it reaches the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and the mountain wilderness of the Tibesti, in French Equatorial Africa. Its area is almost entirely desert, which is rainless throughout the year. In the north, however, a low plateau of limestone hills benefits from rainfall adequate for the profitable cultivation of cereals and fruit. A number of fresh water springs are also to be found in the hills,

which support considerable vegetation. This plateau is fringed by a narrow coastal belt, where the rainfall again declines. The plateau gradually falls away to plains in the south and east, which provide pasture over a considerable area and where barley is grown, as the rainfall permits, year by year. In the few oases of the southern desert, date palms and some vegetables are grown.

The population of Cyrenaica is estimated at 300,000, the overwhelming majority of which are Arabs. There is a Jewish minority of some 200, reduced from 4,500 in 1948, and small Maltese and Greek communities. Except for a few priests and nuns, the Italian pre-war population left the country before its final occupation by the Allied Forces.

The town-dwellers number some 85,000. The rural population consists mainly of semi-nomadic tent-dwellers, mostly inhabiting the coastal plateau where they cultivate their barley and herd their animals. On the plateau tribal boundaries are well defined, and nomadism consequently severely restricted. In the desert fringes to the south of the plateau the vagaries of the rainfall necessitate a greater latitude of movement, but it is only a minority which leave their habitat on the plateau to find grazing and cultivate in the desert. The rural population is organized in tribes, among whom the land is divided. The main tribes (Sa'adi) hold their land by right of conquest dating from the Arab invasion in the 11th century. In addition, there are dependent groups (*Murabitin*) who have attached themselves to the powerful Sa'adi tribes. All the Bedouin claim pure Arabian extraction, but there is undoubtedly an admixture of Berber stock, especially in the oases to the south of the plateau.

The economy of Cyrenaica is handicapped by the lack of natural resources and the underdevelopment of its land and water. It is based on the raising of livestock which is carried on, together with the shifting cultivation of barley, by the majority of the rural population. On the northern plateau, however, and in some parts of the coastal belt, wheat is grown by modern methods, and olives, vines, apricots, and other fruits thrive together with market vegetables. The development of this area is actively encouraged by the Ministry of Agriculture.

CURRENT TOPICS

West: Debtor to Islamic Genius

Western civilization owes much to the contributions of Arabic genius, particularly in the fields of mathematics and physics, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization says. Intellectual life in the Arabic world was vigorous during the Middle Ages, when science and culture were making little or no headway in Europe.

From the fifth century to the thirteenth, when Europe was passing through its "Dark Ages," many important scientific discoveries were made by Arab scholars. A recent release by UNESCO adds that this period in Arabic history might be termed "a veritable golden age in art and science."

The cultures of ancient Greece, Egypt and Asia Minor were carefully preserved and studied in Arabic institutions of learning. The old manuscripts of Aristotle, Archimedes, Ptolemy and others were translated into Arabic.

By the eighth century the Arabic language had become an indispensable tool of scientific work and it brought together great minds over a vast region that extended from Persia to Egypt and from India to Spain. Arabic scientists and scholars gathered in cultural centers at Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus, Bokhara, Cordoya and elsewhere.

"These men were all learned in many fields and were always open to new ideas," the UNESCO release explains. "They absorbed both classical Greek geometry and the Hindu analytical method. Through the Sanskrit language they learned the principles of algebra and trigonometry.

"Arabic numerals, so superior to the clumsy Roman numbers, made possible great mathematical advances. Progress was made in every science. But certain branches of physics were especially advanced.

"Knowledge of mechanical motion and action was profound. A book on this subject by three gifted brothers, became a standard ref-

erence during the Middle Ages. In the twelfth century, Thabit Ibn Kurra made known the specific weights of liquids and solids and described capillary action.

"But the most striking advances were made in optics—that branch of physics which deals with light and its effects. Al-Kindi began by revising an ancient Greek study on optics by Euclid.

"Following this, Ibn al-Haitham, the great Arabic physicist, showed how light is reflected from concave mirrors. In his explanation, he developed a new technique in algebra. He was the first to study refraction, that is the bending of light rays when passing through different materials. And he corrected the errors of Euclid and Ptolemy concerning the nature of light.

Although Ibn al-Haitham's greatest contribution was in optics, he also worked in other fields. During his life he wrote about mathematics, astronomy, philosophy and medicine."

Arabic inventions of the period included intricate machinery to propel water-driven and weight-driven clocks. Improvements in the magnetic compass aided navigation. The notable advances achieved in the Arabic world during its "golden age" did not reach Europe until the thirteenth century. Then the Western World began to absorb the important progress that had been achieved by Arab scholars.

The New York Times, March 31, 1952.

Dangers of Eating Pork

One in six people in the United States of America and Canada have worms in their muscles — trichinosis — from eating pork infected with *Trichenella* worms. Many people so infected have no symptoms. Most who do have symptoms slowly recover. Some die. Some are left permanent invalids. All were careless in eating pork.

No one is immune to this disease and there is no cure. Neither antibiotics nor drugs nor vaccines affect this tiny, deadly worm. Preventing infection is the real answer.

Full-grown *Trichenella* worms are about one-eighth-inch long and 1/400-inch broad. They remain alive for up to 40 years, curled up in lemon shaped, invisibly tiny capsules between muscle fibers.

When you eat infected meat, these dormant worm capsules are digested, but their live contents grow into full-size worms each of which has about 1500 offspring. They get into your blood one to three weeks after you eat their parents. Because many organs can be invaded by the worms, symptoms can resemble those of about 50 other diseases. This makes diagnosis difficult.

Ordinary methods of salting and smoking do not kill these worms. Nor can Government inspection of meat at packing houses identify all infected pork.

Dr. Glen Shepherd, in *The Washington Post*, May 31, 1952

The Origins of Christianity

During the last century, an immense amount of research has been done on the origins of Christianity. To some, this may seem to be a prodigious waste of time. We know, these good people say, what Christianity now is—you either believe it or you don't—say the Creed or refuse to say it—and that's the beginning and end of it. But it is not as simple as that: a little reflexion brings out great difficulties. People may use the same words and yet mean very different things. If for instance, you said Jesus was the Son of God to an ancient Greek, he might quite reasonably have added—"like *Heracles*". If you had said it to a Jew of the first century, he would probably have taken you to mean that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah whose chief business would be to free Jews from the Roman yoke. Today, no-one gives either of these meanings to the phrase and, it is to be feared, many use the words without having any clear notion of what they do mean. Some people today mean that he was God and they can speak of Mary as "Mother of God". Others, again, are rather shocked by that and would prefer to express it in the words of St. Paul—he was "the fulness of the God-head bodily"—God as far as is possible on human life. The New Testament never went beyond that. The fourth Gospel sometimes appears to do so. The Emperor Julian thought it a blasphemous book for that reason, but read with its proper Gnostic background, it can be made to conform with the rest of the New Testament.

Prof. Gilbert Murray as reported in *Religious*, London, January-April 1952.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Middle East in World Affairs. George Lenczowski. Ithaca, New York. Cornell University Press. 1952. 459 pages. Price \$6.00.

This book is a diplomatic history of the Middle East, an area to which the author very aptly refers as "the hub of the Eastern Hemisphere". Both Russia and the Western Powers have shown an increasing interest in this strategic part of Asia. If, on one hand, the Middle East is located astride the imperial life line of the British Commonwealth, on the other, Russia is also particularly exposed to direct attacks from this area should a war start between the Big Powers.

The Middle East is important in many other respects also. It is the Center of three hundred million Muslims. The prophets of the Bible, all of whom are accepted by the Muslims, and the Master Prophet Muhammad were born in this part of the world. The land of Palestine possesses a focus of aspirations of Jews and Christians alike. Both the U.S.S.R. and the Western Powers look covetously to the great reserves of oil of the Middle East. No wonder, therefore, that the American political scientists have given particular attention to the study of this strategic area.

Professor Lenczowski divides the Middle East into two main regions, the Northern Belt and the Arab Core, distinguishing the latter from the former in that the Northern Belt is ethnically non-Arab and that it has a direct boundry with Russia. In an introductory chapter, he presents a brief history of the Ottoman and Persian Empires without which it is hard to fully understand the politics of this area. The main theme of the book starts from 1920 and leads the reader through the events in 1951. After discussing eleven countries of the Middle East in separate chapters, the author brings his thesis to conclusion by dealing with the problems transcending the limits of individual countries in their relationship with the world politics.

Professor Lenczowski has committed a serious mistake, however, in his discussion of Afghanistan. He says that when Pakistan was about to be created, the Kabul Government demanded a plebiscite in the North Western Frontier Province to determine the future allegiance of this area. He contends that this plebiscite was refused by Pakistan. Actually a referendum was held in 1947 both in Baluchistan and Northwest Frontier Province to determine the people's choice between accession to India and accession to Pakistan, in accordance with the procedure proposed for all doubtful provinces. The issue was settled with an overwhelming majority of the votes cast in favor of allegiance to the latter.

Every student of the Middle East will find this book informative and enlightening.

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Editor: Khalil Ahmad Nasir

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2141 Leroy Place, N. W.,
Washington 8, D. C.