

# impact

international fortnightly

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## Some Christmas thoughts



In the Eastern churches, the Christmas celebrations have only just begun (12 January) some two weeks and more after the western holy day. For all though, it is still winter and there have always been expectations of a white Christmas in the North at least.

In the southern hemisphere there is never a white Christmas and the famous song "I'm dreaming of a . . ." is truly fantasy. So is the mistletoe and the holly, the yule log and the fir tree and the illuminations. The legacy of the pagan European west persists and spreads as it has become entangled with the birth of Jesus, peace be upon him.

The legacy is borne on the back of booming business. (The Bank of England reported a record amount of currency in circulation during the festive season). No sooner is the shopping spree for Christmas over, than the clanging of the tills begin again with a consumer mad populace rushing for bargains at the Sales. There is an abundance of everything including lavish fare and hard liquor—for everyone, children too.

The goodwill is there if only in the glass that cheers but also inebriates. Come the New Year and the last of the twelve days of Christmas and everyone from priest to ordinary populace is soaked in the insensate culture, and one recalls some lines from W. H. Auden's *New Year* written in 1940 when Europe and because of it the world had just been plunged into a mad war of calamitous proportions.

No shadow dares to criticize  
The popular festivities.  
Hard liquor causes everywhere  
A general detente, and Care  
For this state function of Good Will  
Is diplomatically ill.  
The Old Year dies a noisy death.

Indeed even now few bother to question the popular festivities—from cards to Christmas trees and illuminations. It's all for export too. A Regent Street is moved to Tehran or Malaysia and the tinsel-coated fir tree, whether natural or artificial, finds an obligatory place in many a home where the term "Christ" may not even be known. It's for the children, they say. For the adults, on Christmas or New Year's Eve, the champagne bottles pop, they sing 'Auld Lang Syne' and 'For He's a Jolly Good Fellow' and carry on with the heady midnight service to Bacchus.

Noise it certainly was and in the height of the festive season there were deaths too but little goodwill and care as America moved in to bomb Vietnam and one was shot through with the cold truth that the big peacemakers are not really trouble-shooters but trouble makers. It is two years now almost exactly, if anyone remembers, that American GI's were charged with killing an unknown number of 'Orientals' at My Lai. The unspeakable horror of it all. What an anniversary! But then too nearer here in Northern Ireland people were dying black and horrible deaths over the Christmas.

But drink, the terrible leveller, otherwise brings no real detente. Pilots and soldiers become high on it except of course the dandy pilots of Dacca who were 'high' but truly grounded as they sipped the Scotsman's distillation. But this was before festivities of another kind.

It is a sorry world, and people they say, have gone less peaceful. Perhaps it needs a fresh breeze to stir the conscience and usher in a time when popular festivities of a kind are no more than a shadow, when liquor whether hard or soft is truly left out in the cold and when care and goodwill are no longer matters of diplomacy.

## Survey

### PAKISTAN MYSTERIES ● NEW MINORITY ● ZANZIBAR

#### Pakistan—mystery and rhetoric

After the inglorious debacle of the Arab forces or more appropriately of the leadership in the unfought Six Day war of June 1967, *The Times* observed that with the crumbling of the Egyptian military might, there were only two armies left in the region: Turkey and Pakistan. Four and a half years later, on 16 December came the equally inglorious surrender of Pakistan's 80,000 troops in East Pakistan. Very much like Sinai and Gaza, it was the same lack of air-cover and the same lack of any real fighting. As a result, the largest and the most powerful Muslim state now lies humbled and dismembered. The rationale of such a defeat does not seem to lie in the military handicaps particularly when it is known that even isolated and overwhelmed companies were able to hold on until ordered to surrender. Unmistakably defeat and surrender are not the same things. The whole tragedy seems so much frightfully enveloped in mystery. The goings-on too remain clouded either in mystery or rhetoric and this is more dangerous.

The *prima facie* responsibility of General Yahya and his cabinet of Generals and civilians in bringing the country to such a military and political disaster is a very serious affair but the enquiry proposed confines only to the "circumstances" of surrender and ceasefire. This may be some sop to the present public mood in Pakistan but this would not provide any complete and objective appraisal of the policies and politics of the preceding Martial Law regime. Also there seem to be several elements of continuity and carry-over from the previous regime and it is necessary to dispel all public doubts in this regard. More than anything else, the new Government needs the confidence of the people of Pakistan.

The unconditional release of Shaikh Mujib was a wise step but again the whole processing has been mysterious and tardy. If the object is (and indeed it should be) to seek a reconciliation with the estranged realities in the better half of Pakistan, recourse should have been taken to straight and open politics. Notwithstanding the assurances given and the presumptions made, ultimately the deal may end up not in the interests of the two brothers but of the brokers.

Then what is the real attitude towards those powers who have played such a shameful and unashamed role in the dismemberment of Pakistan? True it is not a situation of heroics, but the present discomfiture should not be allowed to lead to a situation of irreparable losses. President Bhutto who already has experience of one Tashkent is least expected to walk into another, yet similar parlour.

#### Bihari Muslims—a new minority?

A new name has been added to the World's catalogue of minorities—the Bihari Muslims. They are not an ethnic minority, they belong to more or less the same racial conglomerate as other people of the former East Pakistan. They profess the same Islamic faith as the

majority of the fellow Bengalis, but it makes no difference; it only goes to underline the true pathos of the state of the Muslim Nation. The term Bihari includes all those Muslims who had migrated to East Pakistan to escape the persecutions and discriminations in India. They brought both capital and expertise and made a significant contribution towards rehabilitating and building up the administrative and economic infra-structure of the newly established province of East Bengal.

Welcome during the early years, but with the gradual rise of linguistic and regional nationalism, they have been leading an uneasy life. The first generation Biharis wrote and spoke the same language, wore the same dress, the food was not much different, there were inter-marriages too, and some tried even to merge in the new nationalistic stream under the banner of secularism and socialism. However, many continued still to cling to the old and eroding concept of Pakistani Nationalism. They had taken the pre-independence promise that Pakistan would be the homeland of 100 million Muslims of undivided India too literally.

Islam and not language or race or colour or customs or political affiliation, is the basis of Muslim nation. At least the leadership of the independence movement had told them so and they believed that too, but beyond that simple belief, many did not realise the obligations the concept imposed upon them. They imagined themselves to be like the first *mohajirs* from Mecca and the Bengali Muslims as the *Ansars* of Medina. Neither of it was true and the state of their dreams remained a non-starter.

Therefore, when it finally erupted, they found themselves trapped into a situation perhaps far worse than what they thought they had escaped from. In the beginning of March 1971, there was a big massacre in the port towns of Chittagong and Khulna in which around 15-20,000 were killed. The Pakistani Army hit back on the midnight of 25-26 March and while it was trying to re-establish authority with a counter-savagery in and around Dacca and the cantonments, in the district towns the rebellious Bengali army units and the nationalist elements went berserk with an unremitting brutality which included even bayoneting of the unborn foetus. This went on until the third week of April and the estimate of those butchered goes as high as 200,000. The Pakistani Army re-established control through a process no less abhorring than that of the insurgents. Instead of picking on the small body of what they called miscreants, and seeking reconciliation with their estranged brothers, they behaved as conquerors. The Biharis, perhaps willingly, perhaps optionless became the unfortunate tool of a policy, in the making of which they had little say.

Now, one reads sometimes of the few thousands besieged in Muhammadpur and Mirpur townships in Dacca but there are about 10 million of them. Justified fears have been expressed about the genocide of the Bihari Muslims, but no one seems really concerned. The Western press is operating a self-imposed censorship. The Indian occupation authorities won't let the International Red Cross do anything. The attitude of Pakistan to the problem is reflected by the advice they issued recently to the Pakistani press not to focus the atrocities of the Mukti Bahini.

It may be a harsh conclusion, but perhaps their fate is sealed already. However, in this

phase of ephemeral tragedy, they are not alone. There are millions of Bengali Muslims who too share the same fate in giving blood to the foundation of a Muslim Bengal—distant but not impossible.

#### Zanzibar—doesn't need a gaol

The erratic way in which the Zanzibar government has been running the country is now further illustrated by its decision to close all prisons and release those held in the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba. The Minister of State reasoned that if there were no prisons there would be no crime: "The existence of gaols encourages criminals to continue their activities. This can be avoided by employing them".

Ever since the present government came into power after the bloody revolution headed by Sheik Rashid Abeid Karume Zanzibar's laws have gone from one impulsive and arbitrary extreme to another. There have been massive arrests and deportations, sentences without trial, political prisoners being executed by firing squads and their identity not being disclosed.

The present measure however may have its benefits. At least when the amnesty comes into force on 12 January, the anniversary of the revolution, some of the mystery surrounding the political prisoners might be cleared up. For example, in October 1969, Reuter reported that 14 persons were arrested for plotting against the régime. Nine of these were sentenced to 10 years' gaol, one to 3 years and four were executed by firing squad. At the time it was believed that Othman Sheriff, a former Education Minister of Zanzibar and High Commissioner in London and also Tanzania's ambassador in Washington, was among those shot. So too, it was believed, was Kassim Hanga, a former vice-president of Zanzibar. There are faint hopes that they might still be alive.

Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, first vice-President of the United Republic of Tanzania, ex-stoker and dockhand, founder of the African Dancing Club and unquestioned dictator of the island, Rashid Abeid Karume has ruled Zanzibar with a heavy hand since 1964. His measures have been motivated by a desire for revenge against people whom he felt once exploited his black brothers. A racist and one responsible for such measures as forced marriages Karume is on record as saying that only those who can claim at least one black African parent can be considered citizens of Tanzania. The result of this attitude is that barely 1/10 of the 30,000 and more Indians, Arabs and Persians many of whom have been on the island for generations are now left. What is left are ghost towns and settlements and food shortages. Perhaps the 'criminals' who are to be freed would be turned to the task of rebuilding and development.

One remark may be made *en passant*: while organisations like Amnesty International have been consistently alarmed at developments in Zanzibar, Arab governments from the time of Nasser have never raised a single finger at the



## Survey

## MIDDLE EAST ● THE FOURTH STATE ● PRESS FREEDOM

injustices and crimes which were committed against the Arab people of the island.

### Middle East—needs more than two to make peace or war

Sadat's year of decision has ended. It is still no peace, no war. Indeed nothing else could have been expected. Possibly the only ones to benefit from the artificially created atmosphere of tension were the political commentators who were left guessing. Egypt from its position of weakness could only have hoped to lose whether it was political settlement or war. But no one can doubt that the aim of all the talk was to get a political settlement with Israel and it was Israel which was not willing.

While the Arab cause has suffered in credibility and diplomatic support, Israel has been forging ahead with developing its own very sophisticated weaponry and expecting more Phantoms from the United States too.

### The Fourth State—all is not well

The annual report of the International Press Institute, Zurich, could not have come at a more appropriate time. The report brings to focus some of the perils that confront the Fourth State in the present phase of our history. Governments and pressure groups, it laments, are eroding press freedom in a way that is "more perilous than censorship". Journalistic independence was being increasingly jeopardized by "slanted information and public relations campaigns", and by "threats and intimidations". The Institute's warning on this newer kind of threat to press freedom is, however, noteworthy. As a defence against growing pressures, the press itself has started resorting to concentration with the result that "the number of voices and range of opinion is fast thinning out".

In such a situation, the Institute feels, it is "boastful" to talk of press freedom in the West. "Slowly, the independence of the press is being eroded on the nibble system... with independent journalists threatened with the loss of their jobs, intimidated by subpoena threats... with sponsors and advertisers pulling strings to make the media dance the way they wish". In fact the threats that menace the Press are a legion and some of them originate from within: professional competence and moral integrity of the journalists themselves.

It is in this background that one needed to examine public relations campaigns, lobbying, conducted tours, planned liaisons, inspired leaks, contributed write-ups and the like. The threats indeed are external and overwhelming but the danger of succumbing to such threats is an internal phenomenon. As it is, many journalists, some wittingly, others unwittingly have felt tempted to either arrogate to themselves the role that was once played by priests

in the Dark Ages or become an operative of the governmental intelligence systems. Obviously neither is compatible with their real role.

It is perhaps a regression of the above that during the last 25 years there has been a remarkable decline of party newspapers and the so-called independent newspapers have assumed a political role without definition or commitment. One is supposed to read news but it is opinion. Whatever is presented as opinion may be both ignorance and prejudice. The analysis is not necessarily an intelligent reading of events and peoples, it may be a write-up based on intelligence reports or agency plans.

One may become more conscious of this when following issues like Biafra, Ulster, Mid-East, Bangladesh or Vietnam but the quality of deliberate subjectivity is there even in such supposedly innocuous topics as health and education: It is, therefore, not strange that in spite of a phenomenal growth in the communications media, the human society today is less informed and more prejudiced than ever. A situation which threatens the very existence of the society cannot but threaten the Press as well.

### Kuwait—impatient about criticism

The problem of press freedom in the Third World is yet another quality. By very implication, it is a third person's if not an altogether third class world. It is, therefore, not very strange to find that even the International Press Institute is generally least concerned with the crucial problem of press freedom in the Third World, more particularly the Muslim countries. From time to time there is a degree of concentrated focus on some selected (perhaps favoured) cases and that's all. But the actual situation in the Muslim countries is far from normal.

Take Kuwait, for instance, where *Al Mujtama'a*, weekly organ of the Social Reform Society has been banned from publication for a period of three months. During the past few months, the magazine has been vociferous in criticizing Kuwait University affairs. The dean of Law and Shari'a Faculty was said to have told a meeting of the teachers in the Faculty that if he was given the Qur'an as a doctoral thesis, he would have rejected it because of the contradictions it contained (*Impact* No. 5, 23 July-12 August 1971). The controversy dragged on and recently the magazine criticised the director of the University for promoting co-social activities—free mixing between the male and female students—which it claimed was against the statute of the University. In this progressive and permissive age it may all sound 'right-wing, orthodox and reactionary but it was also too 'prude' and childish a ground to suppress a magazine. And grounds if there were any, the sensible course would have been to take recourse to the law of the land and try those responsible as ordinary criminals. How funny to think that in being a press-man one also loses even his ordinary civil rights.

### Pakistan Press: to be free or unfree

In accepting Gen. Yahya's invitation to take over as the Chief Martial Law Administrator and President of Pakistan, Mr. Bhutto must surely have been conscious of the colossal problems and the formidable nature of the challenges he is going to inherit. Now that he is the master, one of the elementary problems he would need to resolve is that of civil liberties and press freedom.

It is too early, of course, to judge but the position does not appear to be at all clear.

One of the very first measures taken after the change-over was the summary dismissal of Mr. Z. A. Suleri—who is perhaps the senior-most journalist in the country—from the editorship of *Pakistan Times*, as well as of the Chairman of the National Press Trust. Ironically enough the NPT was created when Mr. Bhutto was Secretary-General of the Pakistan Muslim League and a Cabinet Minister under the then President Ayub Khan. The Trust was designed as a bureaucratic device to tame the then not-so-acquiescing press and the sensible thing to do after the removal of Ayub Khan should have been the disbanding of the Trust. But Gen. Yahya too had essentially the same P.R. problem as his predecessor and the NPT was allowed to continue with some bureaucratic 'reform'. Mr. Suleri has been a strong critic of Mr. Bhutto's politics and apart from legality and equitability, the fact of his being a critic of the President should have been consideration enough to restrain the authorities from an action which may be taken as an attempt to cow down opposition to the regime.

A week later, the President told journalists: "We prefer to see no references critical of any of Great Powers or any other country and that includes India". This expression of preference amounted not only to putting a constraint on the freedom of the press but it was also asking for the impossible. It could be more practical to ban all discussions on the debacle. This was followed by another incident when the government of Sind ordered the two national news agencies, APP and PPI, to withdraw a statement issued by the retired Air Marshal Asghar Khan after it had already been credited. However, it must be said to the credit of both the Pakistani Press who strongly took up the issue and President Bhutto who publicly admitted that a mistake had been committed and said the press will be free to write and say what they like. But, two days later came the news that it was intended to appoint 'Administrators' (not an enquiry committee) to look into the affairs of four Lahore dailies, *Jawidan*, *Nidai-Millat* (now merged with *Nawai Waqt*) *Kohistan* and *Azad*. All these represented varying degree and quality of independence and criticism.

It may well be that President Bhutto has a problem very much similar to President Nixon's, that is of the presence of counter-purpose elements in his establishment. In any case this is a serious problem. Whatever is left of Pakistan cannot any more afford the recreation of a subservient and sycophant press. The days ahead are the days of re-appraisal and vigilance, and these cannot be provided by a controlled press.

## MUSLIMS &amp; CHRISTIANS

**And so the dialogue is a must \***

TUNKU ABDUR RAHMAN PUTRA

I must explain at the outset and try to make my position clear that I represent the Muslim Conference, an organisation which brings together Muslim countries throughout the world based on Islam and in pursuance with the teaching of our Holy Prophet that all Muslims are brothers. The objectives of this organisation have been set out at the Conference of Foreign Ministers in Karachi, Pakistan, in December 1970. They consist in bringing about closer understanding between Muslim countries; in providing help for one another; in improving trade between one and the other; in providing opportunities for discussion on political and religious matters; in strengthening and expanding art and culture; in the interchange of ideas which can be of benefit to Muslims in particular and the rest of the world in general. In short, the Conference complements and not substitute other international forums of international co-operation and not considered as a new alignment or bloc and it is not a theological conference. It shows that the Muslim people are now determined to march forward together and in confidence that with divine guidance, they can have the courage and the ability to face the challenges posed by the modern age. The Conference deals with political matters of such vital importance to the peace of the world, matters connected with the Arab-Israeli conflict, outbreak of trouble in East Pakistan, Southern Philippines, in Guinea and victimisation of the Africans living in that region and other matters of world interest and importance.

In short, the idea of coming together is to make the best use of our joint effort for peace and goodwill among mankind—in making the world a better place to live in. We are not a religious body as such as I have explained but a Commonwealth of Muslim Nations working together for the common good of each and all, by promoting better understanding and good relationship between countries with predominantly Muslim population.

There are many Muslim religious organisations established with theological objectives and these organisations deal with the spiritual religious side of Islam. Any matter arising at the conference connected with religion which is of intimate nature would be dealt with by my friends here with expert knowledge in that particular department.

At a farewell dinner given to me by the Christian churches in Malaysia, I had

said that I hoped one day it would be possible for Muslims and Christians to sit around the table and discuss problems of common interest. I did not realise that such an opportunity would present itself so soon, and so when I received the invitation from the World Council of Churches to attend this dialogue, I was delighted and I hastened to accept it. Apart from anything else, it is a new venture and experience for me and one which will prove of immense value to mankind irrespective of his race, colour or creed.

There are not many differences between Christians and Muslims when we go to the root of our respective religions. Whatever they are, they are not so serious that we are here to quarrel about them. We are occupied with more urgent problems which confront the contemporary world and causing a considerable threat to our respective religions and peace of the world. In fact, as between men who believe in God—men of faith—we must make a serious attempt to meet these threats together. The basic principles underlying all the religions are the same—belief in God—in His Goodness—to project His Image among men in order to make them good, clean, just and well-behaved; to remind them of their duties and responsibilities to their neighbours and fellowmen and to uphold the Image of God. In short, set a standard and a high code of conduct which places men above that of ordinary savages and barbarians, and bring them nearer to Him.

To find a basis for a dialogue between Christians and Muslims will not be difficult. If we look at the goings on in this world today, we appreciate the urgency for such a dialogue. There are so many, and varied are the topics for discussion outside that of religions. We Muslims are inclined to consider ourselves as a close unit even today though often enough our Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, emphasised the need for us to hold dialogue and discussion with people of other races and religions. But many of those who practise Islam do not quite carry out the wishes of our Holy Prophet. In fact, there are many things they do which are not entirely in conformity with the principle of our religion. As a result many are suffering today in areas which, if I may be permitted to mention in the course of this meeting, is due to their narrow outlook and prejudices which keep them isolated from the rest. We tie ourselves so tightly with our own concept of Islamic tradition that we are unable to keep abreast with developments taking place all around us, and are therefore left

behind in the race for progress.

The Christian-Muslim relationship is of vital importance to the peace and well being of the world. This no one can deny. The Muslims are well aware that what is happening in the world today presents serious problems to all men of faith—that men of one continent and men of one religion cannot by themselves face these problems.

What have we to face? The Muslims realise that we are faced with the violent forces which threaten to rock the world to its foundation and to destroy faith in God in its wake.

I. Forces of Anti-God. These are made up of the communists among others whose philosophy as taught by Karl Marx and later advanced by Lenin and other communist leaders.

Religion is considered as an enemy to communism. Man is considered because of it, to possess no soul, no personality. In this sense, belief in a Supernatural Being, accepted by all religions, is an opium which numbs the senses of men. The revolution must be based on defiance and militant atheism as communism views religion an evil that could not be tolerated. Therefore, it must be destroyed by use of force.

China's new prominence will greatly enhance the communist influence in world affairs. In Europe we have Russia and in Asia, China. Their powers and influence have spread to the African Continent, the Middle East and the rest of Asia. They work fast and they work deep into the hearts and minds of the people.

Do we think we can go it alone to protect ourselves, our respective religions from these powerful enemies?

II. The war cloud looms threateningly in the sub-continent of India, and it has started. The division of India and Pakistan is basically religious—in both countries there are living, peoples of both religions, Hindus and Muslims. A war between the two countries must inevitably bring about conflict and destruction to lives and properties of these peoples. The leaders are busy making ready for it, obvious of the consequences. Money and energies are being frittered away in preparation for war—when millions of their peoples are already starving and dying for want of food and amenities of life. In the meantime, one country had gone to the Western Communist, Russia, and the other to the Eastern Communist, China, for help. What help can these powers give except to supply them with weapons to destroy themselves and in the end enslave them.

\* Slightly abridged from speeches made in Geneva on 1 & 2 December 1971



III. The apartheid practised by South Africa. No doubt this strikes awe and feeling of revulsion in the hearts of men of faith throughout the world. The persecution of those who spoke against the injustice of apartheid have been cruel and persistently vicious. Recent events which caused the death of Ahmed Timol—a 30 year old Muslim—was a cruel illustration of the injustice meted out to him and many others under investigation. And then the sentence of five years imprisonment passed on Dean of Johannesburg for helping to feed the relatives of those held under detention. All these are but a few examples of what is happening under our very eyes.

There must be hundreds and thousands of injustices practised in the name of white supremacy, the Nazi doctrine of White Mastery in the name of God.

Apartheid is nothing but a policy of perpetuating the idea of slavery—a policy of debasement of dignity of man. All these acts of cruelty, unless the religions of this world put their joint weight against it will remain an affront to human dignity. This is truly a contempt of the Charter of United Nations under Human Rights proclaimed by U.N. We should condemn in general the policy of apartheid as inhuman and anti-God.

Lastly, the world sees so many changes—the worst among which I have already mentioned. But there are those which appear harmless on the surface, but in fact are dangerous to our civilisation. I refer to the change of the outlook of the young people of this generation. Their disregard of traditions, disrespect of parents and the elders, indulgence in drugs and other dangerous pastimes, disbelief in God and all things that are correct in life. These and other doings which really frighten us, and we cannot help but wonder what the world is coming to. If all these goings-on are allowed to go unchecked, the peoples not only of the West will succumb to all these excesses but of the East as well.

Many men now realise that the conflict between religions is a luxury of the past which they cannot afford to indulge in these days, and so we must sink whatever they are, and wake up to the realisation that all religions are being threatened and that if we are to save ourselves and our faith in God, then we have to apply ourselves together to the task before us and in real earnest. And so the dialogue between Muslims and other religions is a must.

Having explained my points and what I consider is the danger to man and religion you will readily understand why we must get together and plan how best to deal with these problems. Everyday they increase in magnitude. It is obvious, therefore, if left unattended they will pass beyond human control.

There is a suggestion that we should have a dialogue from year to year but

how best to persuade our constituencies to give full support to it, is the question now before us. In the past, your religion as well as mine would not tolerate the theological views which are theoretically opposed to one another and so it was not possible to sit together and talk without bringing up a point of religion to stalemate the discussion. There are among peoples of our religion who are still very narrow in their outlook. It frightens some to think that I am here to talk with you at a meeting of Christian Council of Churches. They asked if I am not afraid to be influenced and converted to your point of view in matter of political importance for they claim that you practise not only your religion but you have the imperialistic design as well. But my reply to that is that, I have some experience of affairs of the world, and a meeting with people of other races and creeds, bent on service to humanity can only do good.

I do understand that the dialogue you have in mind and for which this meeting has been convened, i.e., to understand more of one another's religion and give it even a wider scope for such understanding than hitherto attempted.

Human ignorance, misunderstanding and miseries in the world get worse everyday. If men of religion can turn a blind eye to these, then what value is religion, they ask?

Religion of Islam is a faith in God, plain and simple. In practising it, no man is asked to do anymore than the others—so there is no priesthood, no such thing as practising Muslims. Those who are more religious than others and have more time to devote themselves to it, attend to the mosques and the holding of prayers, religious schools, other religious institutions and matters connected with religion. They have to be paid for doing the work naturally, otherwise how else are they to live.

We believe in other prophets besides our own—we believe in Abraham, Moses and Jesus, and the bible besides our Holy Qur'an and the Jews and Christians are accepted by us as Ahl-e-Kitab—those who believe in the revealed books. It is not all that difficult for us to come together and consult one another on religion.

I am convinced, however, that all men, whether of religion or of politic or in business or profession, would welcome the prospect of getting together to discuss religious and world affairs, and if this suggestion is accepted, then the dialogue you have in mind though not strictly so, will undoubtedly receive worldwide support.

I feel that when we start to discuss all these problems in earnest, the peoples will begin to sit up and take notice, and so take more interest in what we are doing. Whereas, in the past, they considered religion as a shelter for the aged, for those who depend on religion for their livelihood, for the superstitious, for the

helpless, for the weak and the sick. When they see young and active politicians, theologians, professional men, industrialists, businessmen taking interest and participating in fostering it for the good of man, then they will be inspired by it, and consequently it will give them a fresh enthusiasm in what we are doing for the good of humanity. They will realise that the religions are not made by God to suit any particular race or people but for the good of man.

I realise only too well that our difficulties, in particular on my side, are to convince the Muslim people to agree in principle for participation in large scale dialogue with non-Muslims. We have to approach this question cautiously and slowly and we hope in time the benefit of any such meeting will unfold itself to them and then we could hope to count on their support.

I talked about apartheid in South Africa. There are other injustices that have been going on and done in the name of religion. I like to bring to your attention in particular the persecution of the Muslims in Philippines. In the southern islands of Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan where three million Muslims are living, there has been massacre of innocent Muslims. This has been reported in the press and on other news media. I do not propose to go into details but thousands are suffering today because they are Muslims. I have taken it up with the Filipino government. The reply was that it was not a religious persecution but rather political and agrarian. I found that religion was behind it all. The split in politic is religious; the alienation of land is to Christians as Christians were sent to take over lands occupied by Muslims who had, through ignorance, possessed no titles to them. As a result, clashes occurred. The most serious of which was the killing of men, women and children in a Manili mosque on 16th September, 1971. I suggest if we are to prove our usefulness, a committee or commission should be formed at this meeting made up from both Muslims and Christians to intercede with the Philippine Government in the name of God, for justice and fairplay. This commission might make on-the-spot visit for this purpose.

I mentioned, too, about what is happening in dark Africa, in Portuguese Angola, in Eritrea. But I know very little about this and perhaps we might be able to collect information and see what we can do to ameliorate the situation.

If we are able to do all these, the world will know the value of the meeting of minds between men of great religions. A concrete and substantial result has emerged from it. Muslims and Christians throughout the world will support such future dialogue because they know the motive behind it and the good that can come of it.



# Of the few who accept Islam

**Shaikh Abdel Jalil Shalabi**, Imam at the Islamic Cultural Centre, London, here speaks about people who accept Islam at the Centre, some of their problems and what needs be done.

I think that those who accepted Islam did so either because they came into contact with some good Muslims or were able to know about Islam through 'right type' of book. Then, of course, there are those who accept Islam for other reasons as well, like a girl who wants to get married to a Muslim or a man who wants to marry a Muslim girl. But such acceptances are, and remain, mostly superficial. If the case in question is such, I never issue a certificate because this is in no way out of love for Islam.

The proportion of people who come to Islam for reasons of marriage is not too high though. The total number of people who have during the last five years, come to the Centre to embrace Islam can be put at around 80. Out of these 15-20 were those who wanted to be Muslim because they desired to have a Muslim partner. However, most people who embrace Islam do so out of a genuine desire to be Muslim. They are middle-aged and around forty. This means their decision is mature and well-considered. Those who have lived with Muslims or in Muslim countries and have seen Islam in practice, they adopt the Islamic faith for purely genuine reasons. Such people are very pious and they practise Islam in its true and full sense.

Though the majority who accept Islam is from Britain, there are many others who came from Holland, Germany and elsewhere in Europe. There was a lady who was a refugee from Russia and is now living in this country. She came with her husband from the North and asked for some books about Islam. They were Muslims already and were fasting. When I told them about Zakat they replied that they were paying it, but they paid more because they thought 2½ per cent was too small an amount. This lady and her husband offered their prayers with me.

Once we had nine young boys and girls. They were actors and actresses. They came to inquire about Islam and its practices. During the course of my discussion with them, I asked if they needed any certificate that they were Muslims. They inquired if they needed to have a certificate to be Muslims and they took no certificate. This shows their sincerity.

In my experience, most of the people who have accepted Islam were educated and had read about Islam before adopting it. This means they were not moved or attracted by something momentary or emotional; they had made up their minds after comparing Islam with their own belief or disbelief. That is why they are so few in number. People who are really educated and are interested to read about religion are not numerous.

Before last Ramadan, a gentleman who had graduated from the University of London came and told me that he had spent three years reading about Islam, comparing it with his own Roman Catholic faith before deciding to be a Muslim. He wanted to accept Islam before Ramadan so that he could start fasting from the very beginning. He really did fast. I told him that Islam may cost him a little: "You will pay *zakat*, you will pray five times a day. You will fast during Ramadan. It may be 'hard'". He replied: "I have read about this and I know I must do this. I have accepted

Islam after giving the matter a great deal of thought".

As to the reaction these 'new Muslims' meet in their own society, not much is known... Sometimes their family would regard them as having gone 'mad'. A father once threatened his son that he would turn him out. The son came to me and told me about this and asked: "What shall I do?" I replied: "Islam obliges you to show respect to your father. Even though he may hit you, you must respect him." He then went to his father and told him that Islam bounds him to show respect to him. That was his right; if he answered back or insulted his father that would mean going against his religion. Yet the man was not pleased. He said: "Are you mad. How did you come to accept Islam. All the Muslim countries are poor; none of them is powerful; none is independent. The Muslims are really bad people".

This shows how some people look at Islam, they measure Islam by looking at Muslims and the Muslim society.

Any way those who adopt Islam, no doubt face many difficulties in re-adjusting themselves. For example this boy whom I mentioned earlier, his family would not stop eating pork. The boy did not like eating pork even before he had become a Muslim. The family would not co-operate. Then he wanted to go for pilgrimage—Hajj. He told his parents he was going to Germany.

*Marriage is another problem. They must at least find a girl who is ready either to accept them as a Muslim or herself accept Islam. Some girls do accept, but only for a while. Most girls do not understand wudhu or taharat and find it difficult to fast during Ramadan, particularly when one does not believe in it. Modesty of dress is another thing which these girls do not find easy to put up with. Such a girl finds herself unable to keep off from pork, from drink, or from dancing with other men for the simple reason that she had only accepted to have a Muslim as a husband and not accepted Islam. They would rather go back and be like others. Naturally these relationships are not happy, they do not last.*

In any case, the problem of arranging clean Muslim food, of *halal* meat etc. is a problem common to both new Muslims and Muslims living in isolated areas.

However, the really important problem that a newcomer has to face is his unfamiliarity with basic Arabic. Thus they are at a handicap in studying Islam from its primary sources. They have to depend on books written in English mostly by the orientalist, and here one has to be careful not to be taken in by the distortions and fallacies which these books carry. Most of the orientalists who wrote about Islam, I dare say, did not understand Islam really. Even those who are so sure and confirmed in their criticism and antagonism are not capable of translating a single *ayah* of the Qur'an. This is one problem.

One cannot, therefore, rely on what the orientalist say about Islam and this makes the knowledge of basic Arabic all the more important. At present, we do have some good translations of the Qur'an, but none of them can convey the fuller meaning and impact of its message. I feel, to read



Shaikh Abdel Jalil Shalabi

the Qur'an through a translation is not really reading it. One gets only a limited meaning, one misses the inspiration. Many who have accepted Islam are very happy, but naturally they do not know what they are missing.

Personally, I give them some Islamic books, tape recording of prayers i.e. reading of *Fatehah* and Quranic verses etc. But we don't follow it up, we can't. Certainly there is need to do more. What we have done is very little and not sufficient at all. We need to establish a school to teach Arabic, at least the verses of the Qur'an, and how to perform the various prayers correctly. We badly need teachers for Arabic and other Islamic subjects.

As far as this Centre is concerned, the facilities we have are not enough. Many people come to us from the provinces as well but the Centre cannot cater for the needs of even those who come from London. So there is a real need to increase the facilities at the Centre. We should go round the provinces to give talks and meet people. Friday *Khutbah* in the Centre is not enough. Those who come to the mosque on Friday are Muslims already, but we need people to go and present Islam to those who are not.

Then there is a need for a magazine to present the elementary teachings of Islam. The magazine should be able to present Islam in comparison with other religions. People today are very much materialistic. They don't really believe in God. Nowadays they believe in Freudism, Marxism and nationalism, and other materialistic concepts. It is not easy for them to believe in the spiritual life and unseen things and a magazine can do a great deal in this respect.

The Azhar has recently decided to send to this country three Islamic scholars. Their job will be to visit other small mosques and communities outside London. It will be something new. They are going to be here in about three months. They will be able to go round to the local schools and other institutions and present Islam before non-Muslims.

I think, we also need to issue each month a series of pamphlets, particularly on Islamic history. This may start with the *Seerah* (the life of the Prophet) and his teachings, and go onward to correct what the orientalists distort, so that we can give the European people a correct idea about Islam.

Besides the orientalists, there are some Muslims also who in order to please the Western mind modify the Islamic teachings. Sayyid Amir Ali has said in "The Spirit of Islam" that Islam in fact, was against polygamy and it recommended only one wife. Mr. Mohammad Ali of Lahore denied that there was any capital punishment in Islam—I feel, there is need to understand and explain and not deny or feel shy about.

And finally we do need a team of capable Islamic teachers. They should be well-versed not only in the Qur'an and Sunnah but in other faiths and ideologies as well. A good command over the English language is another must.



# No business like the business of war

K. B. N.

From time immemorial war has been regarded as an extension of foreign policy but now it has become an instrument of economic policy as well. The phenomenon of direct and indirect state trading in guns and armaments, is a development which has become more manifest during the Second World War. It is during and after World War II that the USA has come up as the principal arms supplier to Europe and in the words of Jean Monnet become the "arsenal for democracy". Democracy is a different tale indeed, but with Russia, Britain and France joining up, the Arsenal Club has since grown terribly formidable.

If the arms business is to flourish, there have to be wars of localised but festering nature. Global wars would obviously be self-defeating and it is in this background that one can view the emergence of "limited wars" as an important element in Big Power strategy. During the last 26 years there have occurred over 60 wars of significant size, duration and intensity in various parts of the world. *All these wars have been fought with imported arms and ammunitions. And almost all these post World War II conflicts had their locale in the 'under-developed' countries.* Arms industries now occupy such an important place in the structure of the developed countries, particularly the USA, USSR, France and Britain that any slackening in the arms trade can throw these economies into a serious recession. The yearly volume of trade in arms is currently estimated to be about 5 billion dollars. George Thayer estimates (*The War Business: The International Trade in Armaments*, London, 1969) that between 1945-1967 military hardware and services valued at over 66 billion dollars were dumped by the Big Powers in the non-Communist World. Their respective shares being: America \$50 billion, Russia \$7 billion, Britain \$5 billion and France \$3 billion.

In this respect the data presented in two recent international reports make an instructive reading: SIPRI—Stockholm International Peace Research Institute is a prestigious foundation established by the Swedish Government in 1966. It is financed by the Swedish Parliament and is headed by the well known economist Gunnar Myrdal. Every year SIPRI publishes a survey of the armed strength of all countries of the world. This survey is more detailed and comprehensive than the "Military Balance" published by the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London. For the last four years, a team of five SIPRI researchers headed by economist Frank Blackaby has been studying the question of arms trade with

the Third World and its 910-page report, *The Arms Trade with the Third World* was published last November.

The report shows that the export of major weapons, aircraft, naval vessels, armoured vehicles, missiles etc...to the Third World has registered a phenomenal rise. Between 1950 and 1970 the total yearly value of these exports went up seven times and by the year 1970 the total amounted to over 1.5 billion dollars. This represented an average yearly increase of 9 per cent i.e. nearly twice the average increase in the gross national product in the Third World, and four times greater than the rate of growth in one-third of the LDCs—less developed countries.

Between themselves, the four Big Powers are responsible for exporting over 90 per cent of the lethal goods to the developing countries "where all wars have been fought in the past 25 years". Though the USA has so far enjoyed a lead, Russia has now become a close runner-up; in fact it has stolen a march over America in respect of nine Third World countries excluding Vietnam. During the period 1960-69 the Russian arms exports to these areas amounted to 3.3 billion dollars as against 3.29 billion dollars by the United States.

The British and the French share about 20 per cent of the total arms trade. While British exports show a declining trend the French exports have been registering a sharp increase. Since 1960, these have gone up by 16 per cent each year. India, Israel and Egypt have been the major recipients from all the four.

Another interesting study on the subject has been published by the U.S. State Department. It concentrates on the Soviet and Chinese arms and economic aid to the non-Communist countries. From the array of facts and figures in the report, the trend that emerges is that Russia is laying more stress on arms aid as against economic aid, while China is giving preference to economic aid. Russia's pledges of arms aid to non-Communist developing countries in 1970 totalled 800 million dollars as against her economic aid commitments of 204 million dollars. In 1969, economic aid commitments totalled 662 million dollars. The figure for 1970 was thus only one-third of the 1969 quantum and lowest since 1962, but at the same time commitments of arms aid in 1970 were highest ever since 1964.

It is interesting to note as to why China is offering more economic aid and less armaments and why Russia behaves otherwise. Plainly it is not a question of fundamentalism or revisionism but of what goods and wares each can offer. The differing priorities indicated also the relative stages

in Imperial development attained by the two Communist Super Powers.

Of a total economic aid pledge of 1.1 billion dollars made by the Communist countries in 1970, China had promised to offer 709 million dollars. The study also estimates that during the period 1954-1970 although total Communist economic aid pledges to the LDCs stood at 11 billion dollars, only less than half of it was actually delivered. The comparative rate of short-fall in Western economic aid is about 20 per cent.

Since 1955, under the Russian arms aid programme at least 20,000 trainees from the LDCs have gone to the Soviet Union. In 1970 an estimated number of 61,000 Soviet military advisers were stationed in half a dozen countries of the Third World. There were large concentrations in Egypt and India. About 2,400 Communist economic technicians are working in these non-Communist developing countries.

Both reports reveal the nature of relationship between the Big Powers, and the smaller countries. With arms provided by the Big Powers, wars are waged either on the soil of or between the less developed countries. As a result, the transfer of resources taking place from the poorer to the richer countries is high and significant. Arms exports are paid back at a highly exploitative price both in terms of political and economic costs. So the poor become poorer still. It is an altogether different kind of revolution, the barrel of the gun has become a siphon to suck the resources of the poorer countries.

Qualitatively there is little that is different in the way the 'aid' game is played—either by the Western or the Communist countries. The ideological veneer of the fifties has eroded enough to show the hard base of national interests. Some ideological pretences are maintained but only for the gullible. The *real politik* is Imperialism and National Interests.

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# The World of Islam Festival. . . .

## Impact report

When Dr. Martin Lings of the British Museum had finished commenting on some *ayats* of the Qur'an at the Festival of Islam last month, a member of the audience remarked; "He has the very looks of a sufi". Of Prof. Seyyed Hossein Nasr of Tehran University who held the centre of the Festival's stage for the better part of a week, it was said, "He is a revolutionary academic who speaks with remarkable force and clarity". When Dr. Jan Knappert of the School of Oriental and African Studies had finished speaking on 'Islam in Indonesia' an infuriated member of the audience said; "Anyone could have done better".

Such reactions indicate how discerning an audience attended the Festival. In fact, when some people began to walk out, for the only time in the Festival, in sheer disappointment at the garbled and wishy washy lecture on "Islam as a way of life" by a SOAS lecturer, one realised that the Festival had already gone a long way in enlightening people about what Islam really is. But that there was still a long way to go in this process was shown up by the lecturer who could speak, in an otherwise brilliant talk on 'The Mosque—its beauty and splendour through the centuries' of the "Friday Prayer or Khutbah"! Or, of another, and he was Muslim, who spoke of the fast as lasting from *sunrise* to sunset. Or, of the member of the audience who asked about taking alcohol during Ramadan as if it were allowed to Muslims at other times and of a lady teacher who was prepared to believe at the very end of the Festival that in Islam a woman has no soul.

But even if one may be able to point a finger here and there or may have one or two fundamental criticisms, it was impossible not to have been deeply impressed by the Festival as a whole. For many Londoners, its effect was truly liberating and it may be no exaggeration to say that it could represent a landmark, a much needed one, in the relationship between Islam and the Western world. A remarkable testimony to this has been the experiences of Mr. Paul Keeler, the organiser of the Festival. (*Impact*, 24 Dec.—13 Jan.) Below is another testimony to this. It is from Mr. Roger Cook, a lecturer in Fine Arts at the University of Reading. It can stand being quoted *in extenso*.

"Over the past five years I have become increasingly interested in all non-Western

cultures, and most especially in the art of these cultures, since the practice and teaching of art, (particularly painting) is my profession.

Traditionally, Islamic art (like the art of other non-Western traditional cultures) is little-known to students of art in the West. The History of art courses in the Fine Art colleges deal practically exclusively with Western art, and even then mostly with post-Renaissance art. There is therefore a real need for more study to be made of traditional cultures; but unfortunately those few able to direct such study are specialist scholars dealing with these matters in too great detail and depth to be able to communicate about them to students of art.

Islamic art has much to offer the Western artist at the present time, particularly on account of its highly developed 'abstract' pattern. I hesitate to use the word 'abstract' because Islamic pattern is far from 'abstract' in the common usage of this word, or decorative (another word used in this context), as writers such as Titus Burckhart have so admirably pointed out. Flowering, as it does, from a profoundly metaphysical centre, it enunciates with supreme clarity and elegance the principle of Unity in Multiplicity, and thus directly challenges the unstructured, non-structured, non-metaphysical basis of most modern Western 'abstraction' and decoration. The sheer beauty of Islamic art, of itself, is bound to promote wonder in a sensitive observer as to its 'ground' and lead the modern western artist to question his own level of operation, and lead him to seek deeper levels of awareness concerning the form and function of his art. Naturally, this cannot but help the present highly critical situation. I feel further that Islamic art and culture is of central importance at the present time, principally for two reasons. The first is that it is centred on Unity, a principle that is of the utmost importance for the whole world to-day, and the second is that it acts, and has acted in the past, as a bridge between the Far Eastern traditions and the West.

There is, fortunately, a growing interest in these matters amongst students of art in this country, but as yet little is being done to cater for this interest. I attended many of the lectures and events of the Festival of Islam in order to acquaint myself more fully with the religion, culture and art of Islam, so that I might be

able to transmit as much of its spirit, as I am able, to those I am given to teach.

As to the Festival itself, I feel that the lectures given by practising Muslims were by far the most important, particularly Professor Nasr's. The lectures given by non-Muslim scholars, whilst they were of great interest in themselves, lacked a 'dimension', which in general tended to place the emphasis rather more on information than inspiration, or perhaps I should say aspiration!"

An amusing incident happened during the last event of the Festival—an open forum discussing Islam and the West. Mr. Cook was pointing out the difference he had noted between the contributions of 'practising Muslims' and those of 'non-Muslim scholars' and chose two names to illustrate his point. At which Mr. John Burton-Page of SOAS smiled and asked, "Now which of the two do you think is more Muslim?" and went on to explain that in fact both were Muslims.

Another testimony to the usefulness of the Festival comes from Lynda Thomson, a Highgate schoolteacher. She wrote: "I feel this festival has served the useful function of bringing awareness of Islam to people in the West. If I take myself as an example of a westerner, I used to think a Moslem must be a very strange person, simply because I knew nothing about them. Now I know what their religious rules are, I respect their pattern of their life and greatly appreciate the effect this regulation has on the societies that still follow the laws of Islam.

In the realm of Art History, scholars are waking up to the tremendous debt the Medieval and Renaissance phases of western culture owe to Islam—to their practice of the crafts, to their knowledge of alchemy, science, optics, mathematics and astronomy, and the divinity of all these fields of knowledge.

If one is interested in the principles upon which pattern making became so predominant in Islamic art, then the Exhibition at the Festival has made a great contribution towards the understanding of them. To the person who expected to see the carpets, ceramics, and calligraphy of the Islamic world, the exhibition was a disappointment unless they realised they could go to the Victoria and Albert



## ... what it meant to some in the West

Museum and the British Museum to see their collections of things that had actually been made by craftsmen of the Islamic world. The Exhibition made one thing plain: colour-slides, cardboard arcades, pattern analysis, photographs, are no substitute for going to the mosques themselves and to the countries themselves in which they are situated; and the study of the art of Islam from the outside is paper-thin if its inner reasons for its creation in the first place are not understood as well.

Very fortunately, Dr. Nasr in his four lectures in London, gave the spiritual insight that all people were blazing to find at the heart of the exhibition. All the information about the history of Islam, its mosques, localities and objects, were necessary facts to know about, but Dr. Nasr proved to be the spokesman for the unity of all religions in the perennial truths of man's existence but with emphasis on his own tradition of Sufism in Islam. I for one, having been brought up as a Christian, look at my own tradition with new eyes since it has been set alight again by the glory of Islam, and know I would feel as happy in a mosque, church or temple—but the act of Islam has the power to delight and calm the mind with the laws of Allah."

Dr. Nasr's contribution was really outstanding. His lectures were courageous and uncompromising. He was described by one of his listeners as an 'extraordinary man' who could speak about Islam in its various facets, about Zen Buddhism, and also deal critically with such persons as Dostoevsky, Sartre, Iqbal, German philosophers and American ones too. However, "the unity of all religions" was a view which was not acceptable to all. Some felt that the belief in the message of Islam as being complete and final was not stressed as it might have been. Instead a synthetic view of not only civilisation but also of religion as such often seemed to emerge. When Dr. Martin Lings spoke in almost Christian terms of the Fall of Man, when Dr. Fehervari postulated Parthian origins for certain aspects of the mosque tradition, when Dr. Nasr spoke of Buddha as a prophet, they all seemed to be voicing in different ways the belief in the unity of religions or specifically their view of Islam as a "bridge culture". There may have been a tendency to syncretism in certain areas of Muslim civilisation, but perhaps if this is overstressed, there might be difficulties in explaining some fascinating questions, for example, why and how has

Islamic civilizations, despite its vicissitudes, been able to preserve its gifts in such a remarkable manner.

This is a fascinating question and perhaps the answer lies partly in another point which needs to be made: the distinction which has been and ought to be made between that which is Islamic and that which is Muslim. Islam is transcendental, and immutable. On the other hand, someone known to be Muslim need not be representing that which is authentically Islamic. This indeed was very well illustrated by the "Evening of Middle Eastern Poetry" at the Festival. The Arabic and Turkish poetry, almost without exception, had nothing to do with Islam, and could hardly be said to have been inspired by Islamic attitudes. Their burden was western through and through.

Some would extend this criticism—albeit in an attenuated form to the performances of the Whirling Dervishes of the Mevlevi order. Some Muslims are prepared to regard it as entertainment with certainly a very spiritual quality about it, with the recitations of the Qur'an, the songs in praise of the Prophet, the melancholy and eternal notes of the flute, and the sensation of other worldliness which is produced. Some would go further and regard the whole performance as 'repulsive'. Yet others who are and feel in tune with the Mevlevi tradition object to the box-office performances. One such in a letter from America wrote: "I am not quite sure that I approve of Mevlevi dances being performed in a profane setting, but maybe abnormal things are permissible in an abnormal age!" But the organisers did go out to explain that it was a spiritual ceremony and there were no ovations at the end. But many of the dervishes themselves were conscious only of providing entertainment and their behaviour as they left the stage was anything but religiously affected. More than a thousand people attended their performances each night. Did they consider these performances strange or abnormal, especially as sufism is alleged to be becoming a popular cult in the West?

Where then lies the impact of the Festival? It lies partly in the fact that there are now that much less people who have "strange" ideas about Islam. And as the work and the planning continue for other festivals we may look forward to more and more people getting a wider and more close up view of the world of Islam.

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# Nota Bene

by Scribe

Sugar and not candy is bad. So goes an odd exotic saying and similar is the case with alcohol: alcoholism and not 'drinking' is the modern man's vice. Alcoholism affects production, causes traffic accidents, possibly some private unhappiness and it has, therefore, to be controlled. To be controlled, a problem needs to be studied by the professing and professional experts and so we have departments and committees. The committees produce reports, analyse the whole problem in all its micro aspects and discover that the problem is not as simple as is generally taken, it is profound and complex and needs a more fundamental study.

Another committee, a fresh lease of life to the 'Problem-bureaucracy', a Committee again to study the report of the previous one... and so it goes. Meanwhile someone has the problem of classifying and filing these reports. But life is like that. The situation we live in is not a perfect situation, it is a problem situation. If one is realistic one cannot escape problems.

□ □ □

Drinking is an attribute of high culture and talking of culture one cannot but talk of France.

In 1954, the French Government appointed a "High Committee for Study and Information on Alcoholism". The committee's report was published at the close of 1971. According to this report there are 2 million alcoholics and another 4 million heavy drinkers in France (Total population: 51 million). The annual per capita consumption of alcoholic drinks is 115 litres (more than 25 gallons) of wine and 40.7 litres (9 gallons) of beer. In a year, an average Frenchman thus consumes about 28 litres (6 gallons) of pure alcohol. Drinking does account for one out of every three road accidents and there are about 100,000 deaths a year from alcoholism the highest killer after cancer and heart diseases.

Yves de Givry, director of the Committee says there are some contradictions in the Government policy. On the one hand the Government wants to discourage alcoholism and on the other "three is too much publicity for alcoholic drinks." The policy is "to expand wine growing, notably with a view to the development of the Common Market". Revenue from excise duty is a good source of income but "hospitalisation and treatment costs for alcoholics" cost far more.

Now if there are some real contradictions involved in the social policy and moral attitude of accepting alcoholic drinks and condemning alcoholism, it was not for this High Committee to say or do anything. Besides, one is hardly supposed to vote himself out of the job.

□ □ □

France leads not only in drinking, *haute culture* implies its quota of scandals as well. But one should not be put off by the word *scandal* because that too was for the love of the poor and the persecuted: from Dreyfus affair to the BDPA, it has been the same scandalous concern for the under-developed. The story is rather involved but not complicated.

The trouble between SDECE (the French Secret Service) and the US Drugs Administration was recently in the news. Nothing big by any standard but things really are so involved.

Roger Delouette of the SDECE who is stationed in the US went to the dockside to collect his Volkswagen car shipped from France. The car also brought 44 kilos of heroin. All this exploded in the press: who others were involved and what else has the SDECE been doing? Then someone mentioned BDPA (Bureau pour le Développement de la Production Agricole) a department established to help the under-developed countries, particularly in Africa. Under-development is part of the Afro-Asian totality, they needed tanks and guns in as much as they needed tractors and seeds. Naturally SDECE/BDPA had also been sending arms to Africa and not necessarily through the orthodox channels. It was through BDPA that French arms were smuggled into Biafra and South Sudan, and also to India and 'Bangladesh' guerillas if the allegations are true.

*Bureau pour le Développement de la Production Agricole*, has provided enough food for thought if not always in real-grain terms. Of course, the whole cuisine is French. It has to be.

President Sadaat's "year of decision" has slipped into the bye-gone. Some one tried to say that it was actually 1971 of the *hijra* calendar but let bye-gone be bye-gone. Now Abba Eban has designated 1972, as the year of negotiation—negotiation net settlement!

The Central Committee of the Arab Socialist Union of Egypt has, however, declared that "battle is the only means of liberating occupied territories". Similar resolve has been expressed by the heads of the Arab Federation and the Defence Ministers of the Arab League. But perhaps these resolutions and communique have not yet reached the battlefield? On 17 December, the Egyptian military authorities had informed the Israeli High Command, through of course, the UN truce supervisors in Jerusalem, that "it was holding manoeuvres on the West Bank of the Suez Canal." An act of chivalry? No the information was relayed lest the Israelis misinterpret these 'war games' as an Egyptian build-up.

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## Comparing the Incomparable!

**The Social Laws of the Qu'ran:** considered and compared with those of the Hebrew and other ancient codes by Robert Roberts, Curzon Press, London, X + 136 pages, £2.

This is the offset reprint of an old, and therefore much outdated, book. The preface is apparently composed anew, since in one line of the German title of the original work dated 1908 there are two printing mistakes. The title too is not quite correct, since the Jewish and the Babylonian codes of Hammurabi, which alone are treated, do not deal at all with many points which Muslim law elaborates in great details.

From the very first paragraph one is struck by an approach which is nothing but unscholarly. The author proposed to "consider and compare" the Quranic laws; there ought, therefore, to be no question whether the Qur'an is a divinely revealed book or not. But it is said that the Qur'an is a book of "fictitious revelations". The best course in this case would have been to "compare" it with the "revealed character" of Bible. Since many may not be familiar with the Old Testament, it may be useful to say a few words about the Bible, as it is known today.

The Bible is not a code, but only the story of a family, of a tribe. There are a few pages of introduction, from Adam to Abraham, thereafter there is nothing but the story, not always very edifying, of the children of Israel. The *Deuteronomy* is said to emanate from Moses, but anachronically it speaks also of his death and burial. In actual fact it was discovered from a cave some five hundred years after Moses. Among its blasphemies is the incident in which God gives the following command for genocide (20/10-20): Since the Amalek defended their homes against the aggressive invasion of the Israelites, after the conquest, everything that breathes should be put to death. This "order" to genocide is further explained in the book attributed to another Messenger of God, Samuel (I Sam. XV, 3): "Men, women, infants and sucklings, cows and sheep, camels and donkeys" of the Amelak should be exterminated for the implausible reason that they defended themselves against foreign aggressors. The entire book of *Esther* teaches how to wine and intoxicate a ruler in order to obtain from

him a writ to kill his minister and other high officials. The book of *Judith* relates how Jewesses should enter the camp of their enemies and treacherously assassinate the enemy commanders. The very concept and image of a "prophet" to say the least is strange and inexplicable: Some "prophets" accuse other "prophets" of being liars; there are those who say categorically that "I am not a prophet", yet they are recognized as prophets.

The book under review begins with the chapter on marriage. To Muslims, God's word is sacred, not an iota of the Qur'an can be changed or abrogated. The method of "comparison" followed by the author is to put the Qur'anic law of marriage against not the law of the Old or the New Testament, but of modern Western practice. *No religion, not even Christianity has forbidden polygamy.* Islam is the only religion to limit it to four and marriage in Islam is a bilateral contract which can accommodate all lawful stipulations. For instance a woman may bind her fiance to stay monogamous all through their marital life, and this is Islamically lawful. There is that well-known case of the Abbasid caliph al-Mansur which has been cited by Tabari. Mansur had made such a promise and later wanted to get out of the contract. He asked *fatwa* from the jurists of Iraq, Hejaz and other centres of learning. He even invited the jurists individually so as to be able to influence them; but none would say that the condition contracted by him was unlawful! The caliph was thus obliged to remain monogamous. Conversely if the parties to a marriage do not stipulate monogamy, no outside agency has the right to interfere and force such a choice on the spouses.

In Islam it is the fundamental law that no marriage can be concluded without the consent of the woman, not even the father of the woman can impose a husband on her. As against this, the Bible says that a husband does not require the consent of the first wife to marry *as many wives as he desires.* A very venerated person in the Old Testament is reported to have had "seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines". According to the Gospel of Matthew (15/11-12), Jesus found it a matter of course that a man married ten women, the same night and all being simultaneously subsistent.

The next chapter deals with the Islamic attitude to concubinage. The whole thing is misunderstood and misrepresented.

Slavery has been formally abolished neither by the Jews, nor by the Vatican, nor also by the Protestants. It was abolished under purely materialistic demands of the Western colonial interests. When they discovered that a machine is cheaper than a slave, they wanted to get rid of the slave, and escape the burden of feeding, lodging, clothing, and burying him in old age. In the Muslim society even when slavery existed, it was so much different in every respect: in matters of their rights, privileges, status and title. It is also wrong to say, that in Islam, a master could cohabit with a slave girl who was already married and had a husband. The legal position is this: when a married woman is made a prisoner of war and failing an agreement otherwise, the capturing government decides to place her under the charge of any one of its citizens, her marriage is juridically terminated, and she becomes a husbandless woman. If her husband is found in Muslim territory or under Muslim jurisdiction (in a military camp etc.), her marriage continues to subsist and the guardian has absolutely no right to cohabitation. Further the guardian alone has the right to have sexual relations "without marriage" with a husbandless slave girl; not even his son, much less a stranger can do that without regularly contracting marriage with this slave girl. If a slave girl is married she is lawful only to her husband, and no more to her guardian.

Why has the guardian the right of cohabitation without marriage? Jurists point out that in a contract of marriage with a free woman, the husband obtains only the *usufruct* of the body of the wife; since in the case of a slave girl he *owns* the body, he has in a pre-eminent way, the same rights as a husband. Further as soon as a slave girl gives birth to her guardian's child, she acquires a right to automatic liberation at the death of the guardian. This does not preclude earlier liberation for all practical purposes, she is to be treated like a wife.

According to the Bible, Jews enslaved even Jews not only in civil wars, but even for not repaying debts; neither eventuality is possible according to Islamic law. In the whole of the Bible there is not a word about liberating the slaves (with the sole exception of the slave of Jewish religion who may be liberated after seven years of good behaviour). Hobhouse (*Morals in Evolution*) has rightly said that "after the

## ..... the Incomparable

arrival of Christianity, the condition of slaves worsened". Of the very many Quranic provisions for the liberation of slaves, one may point out to just two of these:

1. The government budget must earmark every year a considerable sum—according to Imam Shafi'i as much as one-eighth of the whole budget—for liberation of slaves on the Muslim soil. These sums are to be paid to the guardians for the release of their slaves.

2. It is open to a slave to offer to repay his guardian—and the guardian cannot refuse it—and obtain also the right to work for earning the necessary amount. During this period of time, the slave is not bound to serve his 'master'. Both state and an individual can help such a slave by contributing wholly or partially towards the sum to be repaid. That in Muslim law both the liberator and the liberated are called *maula* is not a term void of significance; in fact there is no difference of status between the two, both are treated as two brothers or two neighbours. Who does not know that in Islam the freed slaves have founded even dynasties of rulers: Mamlûk in Egypt, Ghulâmân in India?

The chapter on divorce also betrays misrepresentation. Hebrew law gives right of divorce only to the husband; and this right is unlimited. As to Jesus, he proclaims that divorce is absolutely unlawful except in the case of adultery by the wife; for Catholics, the Pope can allow in other cases also. In the Christian West, including the USSR, divorce is now obtainable through a recourse to law courts, but still it is not directly available to persons concerned. In Islam there are the following four possibilities:

1. Unilaterally by the husband.
2. Unilaterally by the wife, if she has contracted that right through "*taf-weed at-talaq*".
3. By mutual arrangement (called *Khul'*)
4. By judicial separation, even when the husband refuses (*tafreeq*).

It is a lie to say (p.22) that caliph Ali "married and divorced more than two hundred women". Also baseless is the statement on the same page that "95 per cent of Moslem marriages resulted in divorce". Not even 5 per thousand is the real average. Or that "there are many men in this country who in the course of ten

years have married as many as twenty, thirty or more women". It is wrong also to translate *mahr* as "dower" because there is no such thing as dower among Muslims.

On the contrary, until the last century, a husband in Great Britain could sell with impunity his wife alongwith the child.

The author also seems unable to view objectively the Muslim law on the remarriage of a divorced woman (p.26). According to the Bible, if such a woman is divorced by the second husband also, she can never remarry the first "husband"; the Qur'an says: "She can if the parties think that they can observe the Divine prescriptions" as to married life. Why consider this third marriage as an adultery. Divorce is there, because otherwise incompatibility between the spouses may bring life to a dead-end. But Islam is not for unrestrained divorces. It discourages divorce through both persuasion and prescriptions. The Prophet has said that "in the sight of God, the most detested of the permitted things is divorce". *Mahr* is a condition *sine qua non*, and a husband must pay that to the wife, more so if he divorces her. Reconciliation is prescribed by law and the husband can relent, revoke the divorce and reconcile with the wife, but only twice. In a third pronouncement, divorce is final and irrevocable. He cannot touch the woman and she is never again lawful to him unless she happens to get married to another person and per chance gets divorced or becomes a widow. This rule is a powerful deterrent against abuse of the right to pronounce divorce.

The fourth chapter is on "charity" which is a bad translation for *zakat*. Charity is neither obligatory, nor determined in time or quantity. *Zakat* combines all three. It is a kind of rate a Muslim pays to the Muslim government on all sorts of things: savings, commerce, agriculture, exploitation of mines, etc. all are called *zakat*. The beneficiaries according to the Qur'an "are for the poor among the Muslims, for the poor among the non-Muslim subjects, for those who work for these (taxes), and those whose hearts are to win, to free the necks (of slaves and of war-prisoners), and the heavily encumbered and in the path of God and for the wayfarer". The first two are self-explanatory. Taxation includes not only collecting, but also disbursing, accounting, auditing etc.; similarly, *zakat* encompasses entire administration of government. To win the heart, would include expen-

diture on promotion of goodwill and understanding. Muslim and non-Muslim subjects of the Muslim state, who are made prisoners by the enemy are to be ransomed by the state, which also has the duty of liberating slaves in the Muslim Society. Those who are heavily encumbered are not necessarily the poor, who are already mentioned in the beginning of the verse. This is in fact a sort of social insurance in case one is unable to meet his liabilities which may be too heavy or (like paying the blood-money in case of accidental homicide) and beyond his means—"The path of God" may besides expenditure on propagation of religion also include expenditure in the defense of the Muslim society. Provision even for wayfarers shows the quality of welfare in a Muslim State as against many modern states which draws so much from the tourists. The safety of travellers (police, roads, bridges), the health of these passengers (quality of food-stuff in the market, hospitals), even their lodging and hospital-ity fall within the sphere of the States' responsibility. Under Islamic hospitality a traveller is to be provided food and lodging for three days gratuitously.

The sixth chapter deals with commercial laws. It is true that the *Talmud* also forbids usury, but only from Jewish debtors. In Islam interests of all kind are forbidden, without any distinction as to the religion of the client. It was not long ago when Keynes admitted that economic ills came only from usury but today even the communist regimes are unwilling to abolish interest.

Islamic law, whatever be the criterion is a Divine Law given to the true and real welfare of the human-kind.

A. M. Nuruddin

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## Briefing

### Russia looks to the Sea

by David Fairhall  
Deutsch, £3.95

Outlines the spectacular development of the Soviet sea power. In 1917, Russia had only 100 transport ships, quite old and useless during winter; the small navy which it possessed at that time was weak, and so much undependable especially after Kronstadt mutiny. During World War II Stalin initiated the building of the giant ice-breakers. When Khrushchev came to power he wanted to replace the Stalinist programme of heavy cruisers with that of building up a mainly submarine navy. But the then chief of the naval staff, Admiral Gortchkov opposed this scheme and prevailed upon Soviet leaders to let him build "a Red fleet capable of independent military action and of fulfilling a political role in the West's traditional Blue Waters." The book also throws light on the evolution of the Soviet mercantile shipping and its role in international trade.

### Soviet Military Power

by John Erickson  
Royal United Services Institution, £1.25

The expansion of the Soviet military power, which in the western circles is generally considered a result of a farsighted expansionist Soviet policy, is according to the author of this short essay dictated mostly by considerations of its own security and defence. This accordingly explains various haphazard strategic postures of the Soviet Government. Concluding his essay on Soviet expansion in the Mediterranean, the author remarks: "While this is a manifest increase in capacity, it is no great change in strategy and suggests that these external involvements are construed basically in the light of their contribution to Soviet 'security'..."

### Mao's Great Revolution

by Robert S. Elegant  
Weidenfeld and Nicolson, £4.

While presenting an account of the 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution', the writer hopes that in the days to come China would take a more reasonable course of action and policy. Because "when they have finally learned to know themselves, the Chinese could learn to know other peoples better."

### Governing Without Consensus

by Richard Rose  
Faber, £6

Looking at the politics of the Northern Ireland, Prof. Rose rejects the British claim of a legitimate right to rule in Ulster. This he declares is not supported by the consensus of the Irish people who prefer "to assume the responsibility for their own defence rather than trust alien (British) troops subject to a distant command".

● The first volume of the second edition of "The Albanian Worker's Party Main Documents" has been published. It includes documents from the creation of Albanian Communist Party upto 1948, some of which are being published for the first time.

An editorial commission headed by Marshal Grechko is supervising the preparation of a multi-volume history of the Second World War. Publication of the completed work will be timed to coincide with the 60th Anniversary of the October Revolution in November 1977.

● *Literatura*, a new Polish literary weekly is to replace the bi-weekly *Wspolczesnosc* from January 1972.

● A temporary ban has been placed on the circulation of the 10 December issue of the Zagreb weekly *Telegram*.

## The Media

### A serious business, even humour included . . .

#### "Monitor"

● Critics from the British dailies all agreed that 1971 was a marvellous year for television. There was excitement, all kinds of surprises and an overall higher standard. They had lined up on BBC2 (*Late Night Line-up*, Wednesday 29th December) to discuss television awards for 1971.

The award for the best Current Affairs Programme went to Granada's *World in Action*. Most critics agreed that the programme's record over the year was an excellent one giving remarkable variety and depth to a host of subjects, often at very short notice. Some of these subjects included the Industrial Relations Act, Non-Smoking Week in Britain, Soviet Women, the Death of George Jackson, Bangla Desh Irregulars, the Back Street War of the CIA in Laos. There were, however, some dissenting voices—those who thought that the twenty five minutes allotted to the programme made for superficiality. One critic felt that the programme was disastrous and was pure show business. Programmes were made to be exciting and there was the feeling fostered that all truth was to be found in them. The views presented were unbalanced and there was the tendency to telescope things far too much. That the programme paid too much emphasis on dramatising events was well seen in how it dealt with "The Man at the Window", the story of the Basque nationalist who burnt himself as a protest against the Franco regime. (A clip of the film was shown in which the Basque nationalist said: "I am well aware that the world can be beautiful and life can be pleasant" but there were ideals and these called for sacrifices). Special commendation was also given to other current affairs programmes like *Man Alive* and *Horizon*.

Other awards given were for the best play of the year, the best series, the best light entertainment programme, the best documentary and the worst show of the year. The prize for the best documentary was given to the 4½ hour French film "The Sorrow and the Pity" which dealt with France during the Nazi occupation. A minority of critics displaying a British chauvinism thought that the award should not have gone to a foreign film.

Ironically, some of the most serious and strongly held views concerned the choice of the best light entertainment programme and the very question of humour itself. Some complained about jokes on minorities—Negroes, Pakistanis and Jews. Some felt that laughter was a safety valve providing an outlet for pent up prejudices. Others disagreed saying that such type of humour promoted rather than dispelled prejudice and that it was merely an excuse for parading the worst type of bias.

There is need perhaps to extend the canvas of the criticism since there often seems to be a glut of trash which passes for light entertainment. This came out very well during the Christmas holidays and one cannot help but agree that much of this entertainment was but "tarnished tinsel". Even more than that one may well ask how much does a nation's humour form part of or reflect its basic ethos. By the look of things it does so to a great extent. The programme which was chosen as the best was done by a group of northern humorists and it was remarkable how often such things as drink, women, sex, and nakedness feature in their gags. Of course in other humorous programmes

there is a certain refinement and subtlety—as opposed to the vawdy and the tawdry which incidentally seem to go down well with everybody. But the freedom of it all is sometimes stunning. When we see satirists poking good-natured fun at political figures and even at the Head of State, we spare a thought for those in other parts of the world who are at the wrong end of the law merely for messing about for example with the national flag!

● Even humour included, broadcasting is a serious business. Take the BBC. It is truly a formidable institution. With a staff of almost 25,000, an expenditure of about £70 million and with broadcasts in about 40 different languages it must be well poised in the battle to inform, entertain, propagate views and win around people generally to things British.

The Annual Report of the BBC published last month (*HMSO*, £1.85, 256 pp.) is indeed an eye-opener on the ways and manner of the Co-operation and the constraints which it has to undergo. Its problems are many beginning with the crisis of inflation from which it is suffering. It is accused by both Conservative and Labour politicians of being partial. It came into the line of fire from India over the Malle film, and from differing groups in Northern Ireland where two of its reporters have been murdered in the past year which emphasises how supremely dangerous the job of the newsman is. It is subjected to what it calls "the extravagant criticism" of those who say it is too conscious of audience ratings and that apart from advertisements there is no difference between Independent Television and the BBC.

Yet the BBC soldiers on. The Report begins with a vindication of its policies set out in 1969 in "Broadcasting in the Seventies" which aroused much controversy at the time especially with regard to what was then the Third Programme and BBC2 whose function it was charged was to create intellectual ghettos and perpetuate classification in British society. This debate is not by any means over and many people are profoundly disheartened at the seemingly endless diet of strident pop which passes for music and the seemingly exclusive programmes of haute culture on Radio 3 and BBC2.

The justification sometimes pleaded is that the masses cannot stand heavy fare. Which television audience accustomed to *Crossroads* and *Z Cars* would sit patiently down and look for 4½ hours, without even a break for a commercial, at the French Documentary which was shown twice on BBC2? None, I dare say. The masses then do not and are not expected to think. They merely imbibe. In this respect they are very much like foreigners who listen to the BBC overseas service and who place implicit faith in it.

The part of the Report dealing with External Broadcasting shows how conscious the BBC is of this "sustaining effect" of its broadcasting especially in an ever-growing war of words in which, say, the Federal Republic of Germany has out-paced the BBC in the number of hours it devotes to external broadcasting. But the BBC is not very worried by this. It still believes that it has a monopoly of the truth.

# Letters

## What happened to Bandung, co-existence and non-alignment?

All those who care for world peace and international law are entitled to be shocked and bewildered by the recent war between India and Pakistan.

As a friend of both India and Pakistan, I am more or less familiar with their problems and troubles. But I ask myself: "Did the troubles justify the invasion of Pakistan by India, the torch-bearer of Gandhi's pacifism and Nehru's wisdom?" I submit that India's invasion of East Pakistan severely damaged the three fundamentals of present-day peace and order in the Third World, namely, the Bandung spirit; the policy of non-alignment; and the United Nations Charter and the peace-keeping capacity of the United Nations.

At the Asian-African Conference of Bandung in Indonesia in 1955, I well remember Prime Minister Nehru's enthusiasm for the principles of peaceful co-existence and non-interference in other countries' affairs. I had the pleasure of attending a luncheon party at Mr. Nehru's residence where Mrs. Gandhi was acting as her father's charming hostess. On that occasion Mr. Nehru strongly defended the principle of peaceful co-existence. Bandung's main achievement, besides uniting its members to fight colonialism in all its forms and shapes, was to promote the principles of peaceful co-existence and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. Today one may ask: Did India's invasion of East Pakistan reflect the spirit of Bandung? Where does India stand today? What happened to the principles of co-existence and non-interference in the affairs of other states?

There was a sharp division in Bandung on the advisability of joining pacts and of forming power blocs. India was the main champion of non-alignment. I was a fervent defender of the Baghdad Pact at that time. After Bandung the principle of non-alignment became the rule of the day. India, along with Yugoslavia and Egypt, was one of its main exponents. But India today has abandoned non-alignment and joined a great power, the Soviet Union. The first fruit of this alliance seems to have been an act of aggression on a weaker neighbour. Pacts and alliances which contribute to peace and stability may be justified, but what about pacts and alliances for aggressive purposes? By invading East Pakistan and benefiting from three Soviet vetoes in the Security Council, India has dealt a mortal blow to the policy of non-alignment. The repercussions of the Indian alignment in terms of war in Asia have already been shown. But what about world peace?

The peace-keeping machinery of the United Nations was put to a hard test. The United Nations Security Council, as a peace-restoring machinery, was paralyzed by the Soviet veto. India ignored the vote of the overwhelming majority of the General Assembly in favour of stopping the fighting and withdrawal of troops. What hope is there for small nations to get protection from the United Nations if its peace-keeping machinery is paralyzed by the veto or defied by power politics? Once the United Nations is incapacitated, the law of the jungle will again prevail among nations.

Article 2 of the United Nations Charter which bans interference in internal affairs of other members was violated by India. What legal justification had India for armed interference in East Pakistan which is an integral part of Pakistan? How often has New Delhi ignored and suspended the duly elected governments of Indian regions when those governments went against the Indian Constitution? Her actions were considered as internal matters within Article 2 of the UN Charter. If India claims that the people of East Pakistan under the leadership of Sheikh Mujib ur-Rahman are entitled to separate from Pakistan, should not the same principle be applied to Kashmir under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah?

If the principle of dividing composite states is accepted, what will happen to the map of the world and which country can maintain its integrity and its stability? India herself? The Soviet Union? Yugoslavia? Great Britain? Canada? etc. etc. We cannot understand the logic of the new Indian policy towards Pakistan. Consistency and universality of principles and policies are essential if world peace is to be maintained.

Now that fighting has stopped, all well-wishers of India and Pakistan hope for the restoration of peace. But peace cannot be restored unless and until the same moral standards and the same international law is recognized by both India and Pakistan. To restore good neighbourliness and brotherhood and to promote tolerance, freedom and equality, both India and Pakistan should recognize and uphold each other's independence and integrity. The resolutions of Bandung and the principles of the United Nations Charter should be respected. Let us hope and pray that the bitter feelings and the loss of life and property will be replaced by a lasting and just peace and friendship between India and Pakistan.

DR. MOHAMMED FADHEL JAMALI  
Former Prime Minister of Iraq  
University of Tunis, Tunis

## The crisis of Islam in the Pak-Indian subcontinent

As a self-exiled Muslim of Indo-Burmese origin who finds himself deeply involved in the Pakistan crisis I have been disturbed by the tendentious nature of many of your recent articles on this subject. My central guiding criterion in discussing this issue is Islam and the protection and promotion of Muslim interests in the entire subcontinent. Can there be any other valid standard or point of reference for Muslims?

Whereas we may begin from the premise that Pakistan has been the homeland of many millions of subcontinental Muslims it would be a grave error to equate the Government of Pakistan with Islam. (The late Sir Hamilton Gibb once observed with great perspicacity that although the Arabs, at various stages of their history, identified themselves with Islam, Islam never identified itself with the Arabs. This observation is relevant in discussing the question of the nature of the Pakistani nation state. Further, did not the Holy Prophet of Islam declare that God had made the whole world a mosque for him?) In fact the problem cannot be meaningfully discussed apart from the total historical context of Islam in the whole subcontinent. In the light of this consideration it needs to be emphasized that if there are Pakistani, Bengali and Indian points of view there is equally, and for Muslims more cogently, a Muslim point of view which cuts across all three. This must raise, of necessity, the question of the complex development of Indian Islam at least from 1857 onward; and we must especially focus on those peculiar conditions and circumstances which, very late in the historical unfolding of Indian Islam, culminated in the Pakistan movement. Considering that this movement led to a major division in the one body of Indian Islam (today there are at least 60 to 70 million Muslims in India as against 40 to 50 in West Pakistan), a division which is now, by an extraordinary irony of history, on the verge of becoming a tripartite one (Indian, Pakistani, and Bengali)—we must reopen the question of the soundness of Mr. Jinnah's two-nation theory. Suffice it now to say that in view of the division just mentioned it was invalidated upon the very day that Pakistan was born. Even if it is allowed that Pakistan was created in the name of Islam let it also be admitted that this was an event of unique significance, in fact quite unprecedented, in Islamic history. Must we not therefore judge the conduct of the state of Pakistan by the very Islamic standards which were invoked to justify its inception? The issues which come to the fore are those of state and religion,

secular nationalism, and the treatment of minorities. On the last mentioned what Muslim can justify the shameless killing and persecution of many millions of innocent, poverty stricken Hindu citizens in East Pakistan?

Since the foregoing part of this letter was written total war has broken out on the subcontinent—one's immediate reaction is one of deep anguish at the shedding of so much Muslim blood. But the pain is mixed with indignation as we Muslims witness the terrible judgement of history upon the follies and blunders of some of our most prominent leaders over at least the past 31 years, and more especially the profoundly and tragically mistaken attitudes and policies of President Yahya Khan's government since March (1971).

Clearly a major reappraisal and reassessment by Muslims of this catastrophic crisis of Islam in the subcontinent is urgently needed. Our central guiding concern must be that of eventual reconciliation between the disjunct and antagonistic groups within the mutilated body of subcontinental Islam. The problem of appropriately translating and effectively implementing the Quranic vision of the world-wide spiritual community of Islam (the *ummatun-wusata*—Al-Qur'an 2:143) in the middle of the twentieth century is one of the gravest challenges of the modern world to Islam. The successful resolution of this great problem must engage the attention of Muslim scholars and intellectuals as an important and urgent priority—indeed an adequate solution would be one essential manifestation of the continuing spiritual and intellectual vitality of Islam. This consideration is the true measure both of the mistakes and failures of our twentieth century Muslim leaders in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent as well as of the enormity of the task that faces us today.

M. SALMAN RASCHID  
London, N.W.3

## Might & Right

I feel tortured like so many other Pakistani Muslims. We suffered so much for Pakistan and look, where we are now! Right, Truth and Justice are mere words used by the weak, and once again it has been proved that 'might is right'.

I wonder where have all those liberals, internationalists and human rightists have gone now. They were so loud in professing freedom, liberty and what not.  
Liverpool, 17 Mrs. W. ABBASI



## World Opinion

### Abstract Islamic solidarity or tangible anti-imperialism?

Yesterday I said that our enemies—the enemies of the Soviet Union and of the Arab countries—were trying to drive a wedge between us and that they exploit every opportunity and event to this end. An attempt of this kind, for example, was made during the Indian-Pakistani conflict. Indeed such attempts are still being made...

The enemies of the Soviet position say that the Arab countries should have supported the former leaders of Pakistan in all their actions because Pakistan is a Muslim country. But this argument is quite flimsy and inadmissible. The Islamic label in itself does not make this or that movement, this or that country good or bad. There are well known cases when Jamal Abd an-Nasir waged a relentless and successful war against the Muslim Brotherhood group in Egypt. The Muslim Brothers and their organization acted from reactionary positions, opposed the social changes in Egypt and the strengthening of the progressive regime there and rejected Egypt's friendship with the Soviet Union. Jamal Abd an-Nasir declared a merciless war on this organization although it bore an Islamic name...

Lastly, is it possible to place abstract Islamic solidarity above the tangible anti-imperialism solidarity? Of course not, especially when the Arab States are in a position in which they bear the burden of hard and difficult struggle to eliminate the effects of the Israeli aggression. It must be stated that it is to the credit of many Arab leaders and journalists that they have recently begun to realize to a greater degree the attempt of the West to exploit the Indian-Pakistani dispute and the reaction of some Arab quarters to this dispute in order to strike a blow at the friendship between the Soviet Union and the Arab countries...

(Talk by Dr. Yevgeniy Primakov, Deputy Chairman of the World Institute of Economics and International Relations of the USSR Academy of Sciences; *Radio Moscow*, 28 December 1971).

### Turkey—cause of conflict

Political theories based on the interaction of economic interests need modifying in Turkey where the hold of religion has long caused the main conflict to be between traditionalists and reformists. Two hundred years ago the feelings aroused by this caused a mob, led by a Turkish bath owner, to tie a modernising Ottoman Pasha to the tail of a donkey and drag him to his death through the streets of Istanbul. This March, the same conflict led to the Army's ultimatum which ushered in the reform Government of

Professor Erim. Now, after being forced to resign three weeks ago, Professor Erim is back at the helm, but steering a slightly different course...

The reforms which should have been introduced are unlikely to have achieved the results hoped. They have to deal with problems resulting from the neglect of centuries and are unlikely to make their mark before the next general elections.

These are almost certain to be won by the Justice Party. But it is now questioned whether the Army's desire to leave direct rule to the politicians will over-come its fears of entrusting management of the reforms it has insisted on to a party which stands for much of what it has tried to do away with. For, with a near-obscurantist peasantry making up two-thirds of the electorate, what form of democracy is possible if Turkey is to continue the modernisation desired by the Army? And what form is this modernisation going to take now that the Army has broken so many of its links with the progressive intelligentsia who had once contributed to its thinking? (*Financial Times*, London, 30 December 1971).

### Afghanistan: pressure for change

Like most governing monarchs, Afghanistan's King Mohammed Zahir Shah... has power problems. How much is to be shared? When? And how?...

The King is clearly unwilling to permit any other focus of power. But his delay could be critical, because some focuses for political power do already exist unofficially. The conservative Islamic elements—as in Turkey, Libya, and to a lesser extent Egypt—seen in such groupings as Ittehad-i-melli (National Union) and Akhwan Muslimin (Moslem Brotherhood) could form parties and wield immense power in the country-side...

The leading left-wing group, the pro-Chinese Sholai-Jawid ("eternal flame") has a strong appeal among these university and secondary school students. Already some of its members are in prison. The pro-Soviet Communists are divided along personal and tribal lines—the Parcham ("flag") group, which was banned after using language to praise Lenin normally reserved for the Prophet Mohammed, and which is led by one of the two pro-Communist deputies in Parliament; the Khalk ("people") faction centred on Kandahar and the Pushtu people; and a third grouping around the former Prime Minister, Mohammed Hashem Maiwandwal. Into this mêlée must be fed the factor of the strong army, trained and equipped by the soviet Union and selected for loyalty to the King. The pressure for change and political parties is there. (Power-sharing in Afghanistan, *The Guardian*, London, 7 December 1971)

### Population—controversy and clichés

... the question whether Britain is or is not faced by a potentially disastrous population explosion is a matter of learned controversy, and on this point Prince Philip should be aware of swallowing too easily what happen to be the dominant clichés of the day. More seriously, neither side in the abortion controversy has come anywhere near to accepting the proposition that abortion can be justified merely as a curb on population growth. Some say that the supreme consideration is the welfare of the prospective mother: others that it is the interest of the unborn child. The notion that the community has a legitimate interest in fostering abortion is revolutionary, and, to many people, profoundly immoral.

(Babies And Royalty, *The Daily Telegraph*, London, 29 December 1971).

### Probably anti-semitic propaganda

On Wednesday 15th December, the Arch-bishop of Canterbury issued a statement about the new building by the Israeli Government in Jerusalem. The statement said, among other things:

"It is distressing indeed that the building programme... is disfiguring the city and its surroundings in ways which wound the feelings of those who care for its historic beauty, and suggest an insensitive attempt to proclaim as an Israeli city one which can never be other than the city of three great religions and their peoples."

This was phoned through to the offices of the Press Association, Reuters, the *Times*, the *Guardian*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Mirror* and the BBC.

The Press Association refused to put the statement on the tapes. The articles written on the basis of the statement by Baden Hickman and Basil Gingall, religious affairs correspondents respectively of the *Guardian* and the *Times*, were not printed in any form. The statement was completely boycotted by all the national press and by the BBC home services. Only Reuters and the BBC World Service made any reference to it.

On Friday 17th December, the Anglican Archbishop of Jerusalem, the most Rev. George Appleton, said that Dr. Ramsey's plea "reflects the concern of many thoughtful people in Britain." His statement was totally ignored by the British Press.

Three days later, on 20 December, Dr. Zerah Wahrhaftig, Israeli Minister for Religious Affairs, invited Dr. Ramsay to inspect the new building for himself. This challenge was reported in the *Daily Telegraph* which referred back to the Archbishop's statement. None of the other newspapers followed suit...

Seasoned PR men were pointing out that they had never known an occasion when a public statement from the Archbishop of Canterbury had been completely ignored by the press.

Any suggestion that British newspapers tend to suppress stories

critical of the Israeli Government because of heavy advertising from Zionist circles is wicked, probably anti-Semitic propaganda which seeks to undermine the very fabric of our free press. (*Private Eye*, London, 31 December 1971).

### Changing the human nature in Baku

As an institution the Islamic faith is weak here. The veil has virtually disappeared.

The industry of Baku has been modernized and diversified and new plants have been installed in district towns. But vestiges of the past remain to bedevil and frustrate determined Marxists.

In two unusually tart speeches in March and October, Aliyev (the local Communist Party Chief) castigated ideological backsliders of all kinds. He was upset by commercialism in local theatres, painters who copy "the worst models of modern art of the West", the undue pessimism of some novelist, non-Marxist probing of local history, worrisome curiosity about religion among the young and even financial donations to mosques by leading intellectuals.

"Islam is more aggressive and more reactionary than other religions" asserted Gasham Aslenov, editor of the Communist party youth newspaper *Yumort* which circulates 350,000 copies three times a week. "This religion teaches people to think about themselves and their families".

"We lived about 1,300 years by this religion, by this ideology," he explained during a chat in a hotel cafe. "We have lived under Soviet power only 50 years. During 50 years it is very difficult to change human nature".

(Hedrick Smith: Azerbaijan, *The Chronicle-Herald*, Halifax, 15 December, 1971).

### What is there in Malta?

... The main units based there are two RAF squadrons, one in the process of converting from Shackleton maritime reconnaissance aircraft to jet-powered Nimrods, and the other equipped with Canberra photo-reconnaissance bombers. Their function is to maintain surveillance, on NATO's behalf, of the Soviet Navy's extensive activity in the Mediterranean.

At the moment, they are supported on the ground by a Royal Marine Commando group... and the Royal Navy also maintains a small presence to deal with visiting ships.

Other Mediterranean bases from which the RAF could still do its NATO job include air-fields in Sicily and Italy, the British sovereign base on Cyprus... and Gibraltar.

In spite of this, and the increasing range of modern aircraft, Malta retains a positive value for NATO because of its ideal strategic position between the two Mediterranean basins. And the negative value of a NATO presence there—to keep the Russian out—is much greater. (David Fairhall, *The Guardian*, London, 30 December 1971).



# news brief • news brief • news brief • news brief • news brief

**AFGHANISTAN.** In a message to Col. Qaddafi, the King said the issue between Afghanistan and Pakistan is a legacy of imperialism and that Pakistan should respect the right to self-determination of 8m Pashtun brothers. ● Soviet Russia shall supply Darvaz highland area with 600 tons of wheat flour, sugar, etc. ● Hungary is to grant a 500,000 Forints credit and some equipment to help fight the results of drought.

**ALBANIA.** *Drita*, organ of the Albanian Workers and Artists Union, has criticised revival of religious remnants in Soviet Union and other revisionist countries. More and more paintings and books in the USSR reflected religious under-tones, and the intelligentsia has grown indifferent to atheist-scientific work. The youth, scientists, writers, playwrights or cinema-workers are not interested in the struggle against religion. In the high region of Tajikistan during the last 2-3 years about 100 mosques and many holy places were opened.

**BULGARIA.** An international school was opened in Varna for the training of co-operative workers from Africa, Asia and Latin America; the first batch has come from Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.

**EGYPT.** Prime Minister Fawzi told Parliament that despite war preparations, production had risen by 15 per cent and the budget deficit has been more than halved since June 1967.

● The ASU Central Committee affirmed its earlier decision that there is no way to liberate occupied lands except through battle. The Committee noted the failure of the United Nations as well as the collusion between Israel and the United States.

● A number of agreements on economic and technical co-operation have been signed with Romania which has also expressed interest in the Suez-Mediterranean oil pipe-lines. ● Ban on the entry of foreign books about Israel has been lifted.

● The Preparatory Committee of the Afro-Asian Conference in Cairo invited Bangladesh to send an observer with "full rights" of participation to its preliminary meeting held in Cairo on 10 January. Israeli authorities have banished 70 Arab families from Khan Yunis in Gaza to a special camp in the Sinai desert.

**GHANA.** In view of the country's financial position, the Government has decided to reduce the number of official entertainments to the barest minimum.

**INDIA.** Elections to the provincial assemblies in 8 Indian states are to be held during the week beginning 5 March. No dates have as yet been announced for West Bengal and 5 other states now under direct rule of the Central Government. ● Indian forces have captured more than 300 members of the Mizo underground liberation movement struggling for the independence of the Mizo tribes in India's North-East frontier.

● India is expecting to reap a bumper harvest of 112m tons. From an average of 50m tons in the first half of 1960's, the production reached 99.5m tons in 1969/70 and 108m tons in 1970/71.

**INDONESIA.** President Suharto criticised those Indonesians who

preferred imported goods merely in order to show off. He stressed that it was time to feel proud to use home-made products. ● The IGGI—Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia—meeting in Amsterdam, approved aid worth 670m dollars for 1972/73. The World Bank and Asian Development Bank have pledged 145m and the US one-third of the total. The balance is to be contributed by Netherlands, Belgium, Australia, Canada, Western Germany, U.K. France and Japan have agreed but have not yet announced their share. ● A 600-room luxury sea-resort and casino complex is to be constructed in the Bali island, and Paragon Investment and Development Co., a Sydney-based group of property developers have been granted a 90-year lease of 225 acres. ● A study made in the University of Indonesia says economic hardship seems to force a number of pregnant women to commit crimes in the hope that they would give birth in prison so that the cost would be borne by the State.

**IRAN.** Russia occupies the first place in Iranian exports. Apart from machinery and technical equipments Russia exports large quantities of ferrous metal, chemicals, timber, cement, dyes, certain food-stuffs and consumer goods. The volume of trade between the two countries in the year ending 21 March 1971 was about 15,000m Riyals. ● Russia is also to dispatch over 3,000 tons of metal girders and a consignment of bucket excavators for metallurgical works in Iran. ● The first section of the Arya Mehr Steel Works at Isfahan constructed with Soviet help has started producing coke and its chemical by-products.

**'ISRAEL'** Total Israeli exports have risen to 841m dollars: an increase of 30 per cent in diamond exports and 20 per cent in agricultural produce. Israel's balance of payments deficit is expected to approach \$1,500m. Foreign debts now amount to \$3,500 million, i.e., \$1,200 per capita. ● The Verd Company which undertakes projects for the Foreign Ministry has registered a loss of \$10.8m. The Company lost valuable equipment in Biafra and had to close down in South Africa. It is presently completing a dam in Iran.

● Ezer Weizmann, the Chairman of the Herut Executive, said that Israel had to learn a lesson from the Indo-Pakistan war regarding the importance of secure borders. This war had proved that secure borders had to be preferred over recognised borders; also that in certain situations the great Powers' ability to intervene was limited and that small countries had the capacity to withstand and manoeuvre against the major Powers.

**KENYA.** Sole Boneh, an Israeli Company, has been awarded a contract to build a 28km. section of road between Kenya and Ethiopia. ● The trade licence officer has warned non-citizen businessmen that their licence will not be renewed unless they negotiate with citizens for the transfer of their business.

**KUWAIT.** The Prime Minister inaugurated the new Bank of Kuwait and the Middle East and said that in

general devaluation of the dollar had had considerable effect on their revenue. It will have greater effect if the selling prices of oil are not adjusted to the level of devaluation.

● Kuwait and Sudan are co-operating in building a Sheraton or Hilton type international hotel in Khartoum. **LIBYA.** Special football tournament has been organised in Benghazi to raise contributions for war victims in Pakistan. ● The first air route linking Tripoli with Damascus via Benghazi and Beirut has been inaugurated.

**PAKISTAN.** Gen. Yahya accepted cease-fire on the Western Front and handed over to Mr. Z. A. Bhutto as President and Chief Martial Law Administrator. ● President Bhutto set up a Commission to inquire into the circumstances of surrender in East Pakistan and cease-fire in West Pakistan. ● Gen. Yahya and 11 other generals were retired "gracefully and honourably" and Lt. Gen. Gul Hasan promoted as acting C-in-C. A number of senior naval officers were also retired. ● Mr. Nurul Amin was appointed Vice-President and a new Cabinet including 3 advisers were sworn in.

President Bhutto met Sheikh Mujib on 27 December and on 3 January announced in Karachi that Sheikh Mujib will be released unconditionally. ● The President said that the Soviet Union is "our neighbour and friend and Pakistan wants to have close relations with her". He reaffirmed his promises to the people, but said he should be given a little time. He told a meeting in Karachi that if India responds he was prepared to go to Delhi. ● He earlier asked the journalists to make "no reference critical to any great power or any other country and that includes India". ● The Finance Minister said that they stood for a mixed economy and will look at all things objectively and not with any dogma. ● Government appointed 'Management Boards' took control of 10 categories of industries covering basic and heavy engineering undertakings. ● Messages of support for Pakistan's integrity were received from Indonesia, Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan, Turkey, Kuwait, Senegal, and China.

**PHILIPPINES.** Reports have been received about killing of Muslims in November 1971 at the hands of "Iloga" terrorists. According to a statement issued by Senator Maminal Tamano a convoy of some 270 Muslims was stopped at an army post in Tacub village in Lanao Del Norte province, and gunned down, killing 117 in cold blood.

**SOMALIA.** The Secretary of Education, Challe Aboko announced that the Somali script is to be introduced sometime during the year. He said their revolutionary ideology was based on pragmatic approach, Socialist attitude and Islamic religion. ● Gen. Mohammad Ali Smatar, Vice President, declared that Somalia has chosen socialism, but those who favour the total nationalisation of private wealth were not realistic.

**SOUTH YEMEN.** A Romanian technical group arrived in Yemen to explore minerals in various parts of the Republic. ● A Chinese

mission was expected to arrive and open a branch of the vanguard Marxist Party in Ataq. Abd al-Fattah Ismail announced that the Party shall embrace all Communist groups in Aden and branches opened in all provinces.

**SUDAN.** The Foreign Minister denied the accusation of repression in the South. He blamed members of the rebellious party for fomenting ideological conflicts in an area where ideology does not mean anything. A South Sudanese was Vice-President and all their three governors were in the cabinet. The aim was to promote development and self-administration. ● The Trade Union Council has framed a plan to "eliminate subversive elements inside the worker's movement".

**USSR.** A hoard of over 800 silver *Dirhams* which circulated in Russia in 9-11th centuries has been found in the village of Rakoutsy in Belorussia. The coins show the names of local rulers, next to the names of the Caliph in Baghdad; many are not represented in either the British Museum or the Hermitage collections.

**WEST GERMANY.** Pakistanis, Turks, Arabs and Germans joined in protest against the Indian aggression in Pakistan. On 19 December, a procession of 2500 marched through the streets of West Berlin and called for halt to Indian aggression. Similar demonstrations were also reported from Bonn, Munich and Frankfurt.

## PEOPLE

Sh. Mujibur Rahman arrived in London on 8 January, met Premier Heath and Mr. Wilson, and left next day for Decca via New Delhi. Dr. Idham Chalid, re-elected chairman of the Indonesian Nahdatul Ulama Party. ● Mr. Mohammad Ahmed Al Khatib took over as Premier of the Arab Federation. ● Yahya Abd al-Qadir, is the new Egyptian Ambassador to the Kremlin. ● Maj. Alwan Husayn, commander of Iraq's First Division HQ reported to have asked for asylum in Iran. ● Mr. Ahmad Shukairy, former chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation denied reports that he intended returning to active politics. ● Herr Kurt Waldheim, Austrian diplomat succeeded U Thant as the Secretary General of the United Nations. ● A petition has been submitted to the Supreme Soviet to pardon the imprisoned author, Andre Amalrik. ● Fahmi Al Yussufi, elected President of the Syrian Parliament. ● Alexander Solzhenitsyn, has asked the Swedish Academy to arrange for him to receive his Nobel Prize in a Moscow flat if it is impossible for the ceremony to be held in the Swedish Embassy. ● General Dayan, 56, divorced Ruth after 36 years, expected to marry Mrs. Rachel Koren, 46.

## VISITS

Shah of Iran to Islamabad ● Abd al-Khalig as-Samarra, acting Economy Minister and Murtada Sa'id Abd al-Baqi, Foreign Minister of Iraq to Peking. ● Muhammad Masmudi, Tunisian Foreign Minister to Algiers. ● Maj. Jallud, Libyan Minister of Economy to Algeria. ● Dr. Ali Barraoud, Upper Volta Minister of Health to Cairo. ● Vitaliy Ruben, Vice President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to Iran. ● Sir Alec Douglas Home to Thailand, Hong-Kong, South Korea and Japan in February. ● Mr. William Rees-Mogg, editor of *The Times* and family to Israel. ● Mendes France, former French Prime Minister to China. ● Muhammad Ali formerly Cassius Clay to Mecca for *Umrah*.

## DIED

K. H. A. Wahab Chasbullah, 87, Chairman, Grand Council of Nahdatul Ulama Party of Indonesia on 29 December. ● Prof. Amir Hasan Siddiqui, former Head Dept. of History and Dean Faculty of Arts, University of Karachi and Editor, *Voice of Islam* monthly on 17 December. ● Lt. Gen. Hamdi, Egyptian Minister of Marine Transport on 24 December. ● Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, 52, Chairman, Indian Atomic Energy Commission and India's chief nuclear physicist on 30 December.