

impact

international fortnightly

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The International Front

Have things really changed that much?

This is an age of shifting alliances and alignments, of new friendships and about-turns, and a greater flexibility in international relations. Whether or not one agrees with the *mot* of the late President de Gaulle of France that summit conferences are not diplomacy or negotiation at all but merely propaganda tournaments, it would certainly take a long time before the dust settles down on Nixon's visit to China. This was the high point of a process which one can now see right across the board in international relations and diplomacy and in the greater contact between people even of opposing views on many fundamental matters.

It has long been recognised that the world is no longer a bi-polar but a multi-polar one in which the Yalta division of the globe into spheres of influence is anachronistic and in which concepts like the cold war and rigid non-alignment are relics of the past.

It is being said that the new situation holds out abundant promise for the smaller nations and the nations of the Third World in particular, and this may well be so. But from the outset the spirit of optimism must be tempered by a stolid realism that the big powers have not forsworn their national interests and a greater say in the affairs of the world—both of which are often seen as very closely bound up, one with the other. But one could, like the naughty boy from England, in the poem, who ran away to Scotland, stand in one's shoes and wonder, and wonder that things have not really changed that much. So that while some people are pointing out that America, principally because of its experience in Vietnam, has abandoned any idea of policing the world and that Americans are more interested in rising food prices at home than in glorious dreams of the American century, others could wonder why America that “bastion of freedom and democracy” could be, for example, so solicitous of the military regime in Greece as to announce only recently more and

considerable aid to it in the interests of “security”. Whose security? Or they might wonder at the development of automated battlefields in Vietnam as the troops are destined to pull out.

There are other pointers to the fact that things have not really changed that much. The price Britain and NATO were prepared to pay for the retention of the base in Malta, Russia's warmth in signing more treaties of friendship and cooperation with countries in the Middle East and elsewhere, China's dogged building up of her national strength and the construction of air raid shelters all over the country—all show that the big powers are still wary of one sort of threat or another, or at least are playing the game very safely indeed.

Yet there have been changes and shifts and it would be simplistic to hold that any fundamental changes in the making would make themselves apparent in a month or two or even in a year or so. Changes are still working themselves out some more rapidly than others, in eastern-western european relations, in the northward expansion of South Africa, in the coming together of the Maghrib states, in the thickets of South East Asian politics—to name but a few areas. Some of the changes have been built on the debris of pacts which are not much more than a decade old, like CENTO and SEATO. Also, the RCD between Turkey, Iran and Pakistan wanes progressively as Iran seeks greater trading and other relationships with India. It is too soon for the vultures to leave the remains of a shattered Pakistan but they might soon turn their attention elsewhere in South East Asia like Indonesia where there are signs of growing American penetration. On a more hopeful, though cautious and modest note, so far as the Muslim countries are concerned, was the recent parley of Islamic foreign ministers in Jeddah which might have brought home some idea of where their genuine, valuable and deep-seated interests really lie.

As against these developments, there are certain areas where one could expect little or no change in the immediate future as for example in the Middle East where most of the big powers have never really questioned support for the squatter state of Israel even though to many of them it is actually a burden and sometimes an embarrassment. Taiwan can be ditched but can Israel be? Here is where, more than anywhere else perhaps, some fundamental change needs to be considered and made.

In surveying the field of international relations in recent decades, it is perhaps true to say that not much initiative has come from smaller nations in the shaping of their own destiny. Whether in Africa, Central and South Asia, Eastern Europe or Latin America, these countries lie naked and prostrate, an open field free almost to all comers. With the breaking down of the traditional divisions between East and West, the areas that would be opened up for common exploitation would certainly be greater.

Yet the breaking down of these barriers does present challenges to the nations of the developing world and the opportunity to pursue a policy with a great amount of independence. There is no reason why individual governments cannot be masters in their own houses.

But the path to true independence must be tread very warily indeed. For certainly with the likely greater fluidity on the international scene, it would be no time for sleeping dogs and lame ducks. It would be a time when, if you do not have the strength of a lion, you would be wise to use the cunning of a fox or at least the agility and sure-footedness of the mountain goat in order to remain standing on the dizzy heights of diplomacy or withstand the buffetings of international intrigue. In all this it should perhaps be remembered that the path to glory, if that be the quest, lies primarily and very much in the development of the home front.

Survey

● POLISH ELECTIONS ● ISRAEL OUT OF UGANDA

Polish elections a limited choice

Elections in the Communist world have lost their function as a political catalyst but they do provide an opportunity to peep into the system and see what is going on.

Poland has been in a state of flux for the last two years. Gomulka, who emerged to power as a liberal nationalist communist in October 1956 despite Russia's abortive efforts then to block his way, gradually surrendered to the forces of conservatism and authoritarianism and finally fell into disrepute. It is an irony that he represented the relatively liberal tradition when the bloody episode of Hungary took place and tried to cash in on that crisis. But in 1968 he joined hands with Russia in the Warsaw powers' invasion of Czechoslovakia to suppress the wave of liberalism and nationalism within socialism.

If the aftermath of Hungary brought Gomulka to power, the aftermath of Czechoslovakia brought his downfall. In December 1970 the workers' strikes on the Baltic shores of Poland shook the regime to its roots. Gomulka had to go. Edward Gierek took over the leadership of the Communist party. He promised liberalisation and a greater flow of consumers' goods. The real significance of the March 19 elections lies in the fact that they have been held in the spirit that they constitute a referendum for the policies of Gierek.

The March elections were preceded by an interesting debate on some of the problems that confront communism in Poland. One is the relative roles of the Party and Parliament. In the communist system all power is concentrated in the Party. Gierek promised some shift of power from the Party to the Parliament on the plea that the Party should give more attention to ideological problems and should not be bogged down with administrative matters. He also wanted to reform the system of elections which had become more in the nature of ritual and less a part of the process of political change. Hungary and Yugoslavia have reformed their electoral systems to some extent. Czechoslovakia wanted to introduce a two-party system but the move was subverted by the August 1968 debacle. Gierek also wanted to modify the system to some extent but could not bring about any basic change. Marginal improvements, however, have taken place with the introduction of greater participation at the pre-nomination level. It is claimed that some 150,000 persons at the levels of Party central committee and local and factory committees were brought into the process instead of the earlier tradition of the

absolute judgement of the politburo. Of the 625 candidates put up for 460 seats, the proportion of non-party candidates was only 10 per cent. The voter received a list of eight names in order of party's priority, the first five or six being the choice which he was expected to make. But the voter had the right to strike off names or change their order. It is by an analysis of this periphery that some idea of the people's preferences can be formed.

The other issue that was prominent before the elections related to living standards. Real wages have increased during the last 16 months by a little over 50 per cent. The availability of consumer goods has also improved. But conditions in housing and health remain stringent. Gierek has promised greater priority to these areas neglected by the Gomulka regime.

Gierek is also trying to come to terms with the Roman Catholic Church which continues to wield great influence, particularly among the peasantry. Greater co-operation with the intelligentsia and consequently some freedom of discussion and dialogue are also parts of the Gierek programme of normalisation.

All these issues were involved in the elections and Gierek regards the vote as support for his policies and programme. Of the 97.94 per cent of the votes polled, 99.53 per cent of the valid votes were cast in favour of the National Unity Front led by Gierek. Gierek himself got 99.8 per cent votes. All this is normal in the Communist system. What is somewhat abnormal is the performance of many party functionaries and hardliners on the significant marginal zone which records some of the likes and dislikes of the people. General Moczar slipped down from the first (Party's) choice to the last (voters'), getting 95.24 per cent of votes in the Konskie district. Jozef Kepa, first secretary of the Warsaw party committee, met a similar fate sliding down from the top of the list to second from the bottom. Others who slipped down included the Foreign Minister Stefan Oiszowski; the trade union leader, Wladyslaw Kruczek; Party organiser, Edward Babiuch; Politburo member and security chief, Franciszek Szlacheic and the Minister of Interior, Wieslaw Ociepka.

If this was a referendum, then the party hardliners have failed to emerge with flying colours and even Gierek must realise that his compromises with the vestiges of the old regime are looked upon by the people with suspicion. It is significant that some of the non-party candidates particularly those belonging to the former class got more votes than local party secretaries. Elections under communism do offer a very limited choice but the way this is expressed may speak volumes.

Uganda-Israel set-back

The unceremonious despatch of the Israelis from Uganda is an event of capital importance not only in the context of Israeli-Ugandan relationships but in the content of the whole tide of African affairs.

For many years now the Israelis have regarded Africa and relationships with African states as a major plank in their platform of international manoeuvre. They have seized every initiative they could and made openings for themselves even in the hottest of spots.

Africa was one of Israel's principal objectives when she launched, with Britain and France as willing accomplices, the tripartite aggression against Egypt to get the Straits of Tiran opened as a gateway to Africa. (Nasser's agreement to have the Straits opened was a fact which he managed to hide from the Egyptian people for many years).

From that time on, Israel stepped up its manoeuvres on the African continent, giving military and economic aid to various governments like Ethiopia, helping rebel movements like in Southern Sudan and in Biafra but not of course in Eritrea and Chad. It has had involvements of one kind or another in Ghana, Upper Volta, Senegal, the Central African Republic with South Africa of course (which contributes a huge amount to Israel's balance of payments), and even economic relationships with a country like Tanzania where one might not normally expect such relationships.

Apart from South Africa, Israel could have pointed to Uganda as a place where it had the strongest support and a foothold stretching over a decade. One might have expected this to continue especially since the present ruler of Uganda General Idi Amin owes his position very much to Israeli help. With the Ugandan army and air force (such as it is) being trained by Israeli experts and with a number of civilian advisers in various fields totalling 800 (Israeli sources say 500), the Israelis seemed to be in a solidly entrenched position.

Then came Amin's charge that the Israelis were engaging in subversive activities in Uganda and he proceeded to wind up military agreements with Israel, order the expulsion of army and paratrooper advisers and then finally of all Israeli civilians in Uganda... Most sources agree that Amin's visit to Libya and promises he may have received there helped in his decision to break with the Israelis.

So far there are no details of what the alleged "subversive" activities were but one can be certain that Israel's policy in Africa is not as altruistic as Israeli and pro-Israeli sources frequently make out.

Survey

• A NEW MALAYSIA • BANGLADESH LEADERSHIP

Malaysia—towards a new Tanzimat?

Tan Sri Dato' Muhammad Ghazali bin Shafie has recently resigned as a senator in Malaysia's Dewan Negara in order to contest a bye-election for a safe-seat in the Dewan Ra'yat or the House of Representatives. Article 43 (2) (a) of the Malaysian Constitution says "the (King) shall . . . appoint as . . . (Prime Minister) . . . a member of the House of Representatives . . ."

Gus, as Muhammad Ghazali is known, may well be on the way up and there is some speculation that he might be Malaysia's next Prime Minister. He is a high-ranking personage in the Government holding the portfolios of Minister of Information and Honourable Minister with Special Functions. He has been the brains behind many of the Cabinet's moves since the 13 May 1969 debacle.

Politically, he is said to be on the more reactionary rightwing of the United Malay National Organisation which is to all intents and purposes the ruling party in that it is the overwhelming element of the ruling Alliance Coalition. On the other hand, in matters social and cultural, he is regarded essentially as a secularist. In this context his possible rise to power may not be unwelcome in many circles.

It has been for example, a constant complaint of secularists, missionaries, communists, orientalist and western political commentators generally that the vested interests of the Malay sultans in preserving their positions as the constitutional heads and in maintaining the status of Islam in their several states and the consequent prohibition of proselytizing the Malays are a barrier to progress. The orientalist put it more from the shoulder: they are a barrier to the secularisation of the Malays. Secularisation is, of course, roundly hailed by the usual groups as being generally progressive, desirable, twentieth century, and all-in-all a Good Thing.

Muhammad Ghazali, Musa bin Hitam and an assorted collection of Malay 'intellectual' army officers, mainly of junior and field rank, and others are hailed in the Malaysian Press as "Young Turks"—and some even call themselves such. The Young Turks was a group which, often by conspiratorial means, worked for the break-up of the Ottoman State.

Some of this "Young Turk" Malay group advocate the restriction of the powers of the Sultans in their states. They regard these powers as being out-of-date. Muhammad Ghazali leans in this direction. Appropriate for a Young Turk, he is a main advocate of certain constitutional reforms, some already passed

(the recent amendment restricting free speech in Parliament, for example) and some in the pipeline.

The obvious question which many people are asking is: Are we moving towards a Malaysian *Tanzimat*? An affirmative answer to this question may not be off the mark if we read a little into the words of Tan Sri Dato' Muhammad Ghazali bin Shafie when he said in a speech to the Dewan Negara on 5 March 1971: "We must start afresh and be determined to be the pioneers of a new Malaysia."

Bangladesh— problem of leadership

While the police in Dacca had to fire shots to disengage and disperse members of two rival trade unions, Sheikh Mujib was telling a mass rally at Khulna that if the people of Bangladesh did not follow his advice and work together, he would leave everything and resign.

A threat to resign in that part of the world more likely indicates a desire to cling to power. But in the present case while it did point to a certain degree of exasperation and a somewhat nervy attitude to the quagmire of problems Sheikh Mujib finds himself stuck in, it might also be taken to mark a turn in his personality from being a "mob-led" leader to the position of responsible leadership. If so, it may well be the silver lining in an otherwise grim and clouded situation.

Really the most serious problem which Bangladesh faces today is not the shattering of the economy, the break-down of administration or the lack of liquidity. All these are problems natural to the circumstances in which the state was established but the truly crucial problem is posed by the Bangladesh leadership, more particularly of Sheikh Mujib who unquestionably carries the mantle of the father of the new state.

Many "non-collaborating" East Bengalis have already started questioning the catastrophic way Sheikh Mujib came to achieve his "life's-goal". Despite the diabolical role played by certain West Pakistani leaders, they say that Sheikh Mujib could have achieved independence of Bangladesh through peaceful and constitutional means instead of through a process of self-attrition.

However, what is more relevant at this stage is the continued lack of grip and leadership so evident now in the whole Bangladesh situation and this is no consolation to those who did not agree with Sheikh Mujib or his Awami League.

Sheikh Mujib's independence day broadcast on 26 March while providing a catalogue of the problems he is facing in putting 'Sonar Bangla' on its feet, also

shows that despite having now been independent for more than three months and recognised as such by 55 nations, there is a definite lack both of self-confidence and a will to solve the problems at one's own level. A great deal of reliance is placed on the "liberal assistance and cooperation from friendly nations to rehabilitate the refugees and reconstruct the economy." How far this reliance is desirable is a different matter but clearly no amount of external aid can compensate for the lack of realism and statesmanship on the part of the leadership and adequate social motivation by the masses.

Sheikh Mujib throws part of the blame on "the provincial administrative framework which is absolutely workless". One hopes it is not the case of a bad workman quarrelling with his tools. It may however be more serious. Much of the Bangladesh idealism had its origins and support in the bureaucracy and if it is they who now show any lack of zeal and inspiration, it may well mark the beginning of the end of Sheikh Mujib's revolution. Along with the "war-devastated lands, destroyed villages, hungry children and naked women", the Prime Minister also spoke of "dejected men". But why "dejected"? If we read this along with the Bangladesh Assembly Rules promulgated recently that any member leaving or expelled by the political party on whose ticket he was elected shall lose his membership of the Assembly, it would show that the disenchantment extends deeper and includes the Awami league legislators as well.

The dejection, disenchantment and alienation setting in so soon after the establishment of Bangladesh is a grave challenge to the area and its people and should concern all those who are interested in peace and stability in South Asia. Sheikh Mujib's response to the challenge so far has been negative and paranoid, and instead of leading he has allowed himself to be led. The solution of his problems lies entirely within his competence and the quality of inspiration he can provide to his people. And if this threat to resign denoted any desire to give a lead and assert leadership, then this may be a sign of hope.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

ISRAEL IN AFRICAN POLITICS

Erratum: The date on the last issue should have been 24 March—13 April instead of 24 March—6 April.

Islamic Conference — from talk to take-off

By Our Correspondent

"When we met in Rabat in September, 1969, we were mainly reacting to the heinous Israeli attempt to burn down the Aqsa Mosque. It clearly showed where our disunity can lead us to. We were shocked but also unsure. All of us believed in the spiritual, moral and socio-economic values of Islam and the need to consult and cooperate. The Summit, therefore, decided that the Foreign Ministers of the Islamic States should meet in March 1970 and discuss the subject of establishing a Permanent Secretariat to make 'contacts' with governments represented at the Conference, and to consolidate their activities. We met in Jeddah, then in Karachi and are now meeting again in Jeddah. True, the progress has not been fast. Most of the while, we have been talking instead of doing anything tangible but this talking phase was unavoidable, perhaps necessary too . . . However, this phase seems over and, without being over-optimistic, one can say that we have come to the point where we can start giving practical shape to cooperation and consultation between the Muslim states. With the approval of the Charter, the Islamic Conference now has a personality of its own."

That was how Mr. Hasan Tuhamy, Special Adviser to President Sadat and leader of the Egyptian delegation, summarised his evaluation of the Islamic Conference held in Jeddah recently. But in saying this he was not voicing any personal or sectional opinion. This in fact summed up the views and feelings of most delegates with whom I had the opportunity to meet and talk. Diplomatic comments and expressions of opinion do not always carry the obvious meaning but there is something like the transparent truth which one can always tell.

I selected Mr. Tuhamy's comments to typify, because until lately Egyptian regimes had not been very forthcoming about Muslim unity, and this illustrated not only a change of attitude but also signified a valuable contribution which was made by the Egyptian delegation. One also failed to sense the old rivalries and petty jealousies as to who should or should not be the leader. In keeping the Conference atmosphere free from such distracting undercurrents, one can also make note of the Saudi and the Pakistani attitudes. While firm and clear on issues, Saudi Arabia was careful not to assume or impose leadership. The tone was set by King Faisal himself who inaugurated the Conference and told the delegates: "You are responsible and know what is the duty of every Muslim . . . We need to prove our words by our deeds . . . God will grant us success if we unite and cooperate . . ."

Pakistan had on her hands the difficult problem created by the Indian aggression, and the forced secession of its Eastern

Wing. Even the slightest degree of over-occupation with her own self or interests could have easily marred the whole atmosphere. But Malik Meraj Khalid, who headed the Pakistani delegation said: "As far as we are concerned, the cause of Islamic unity is an extension of our national self and represents fulfilment of our own dreams. We do want support for our cause but certainly not at the cost of this movement for unity." This spirit of self-sacrifice resulted not only in the Conference coming out in unanimous support for the integrity of Pakistan and warning India that a failure to abide by the UN General Assembly resolution of 7 December, 1971, and the Security Council resolution of 21 December, 1971, may affect her relations with Muslim states but also strengthened the spirit of brotherhood and togetherness.

This spirit of service, sacrifice, and mutuality was not confined to one or two states. It characterised the approach and attitude of most other countries and delegates. During the first two days, some delegates did show a kind of protective reserve and a desire to polarise on the basis of traditional groupings as between the "progressives" and the "reactionaries", but as soon as they were able to sit together and exchange notes, they discovered that they were all sailing in the same boat, suffering from the same inflictions and contradictions, and having similar external strings, much of the self-imposed tension automatically melted away.

Even before the Conference had started, rumours had promised splits and divisions particularly over the issues of 'Bangladesh' and Palestine. On the very first day, Tel Aviv radio reported serious differences. There were talks first of a 'Bangladesh' delegation and then a 'Bangladesh' lobby but nothing like that ever appeared. The events in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent instead became a factor of unity. Senegal's Foreign Minister explained that they had recognised 'Bangladesh' because they were told that Pakistan herself was about to recognise. Malaysia and Indonesia said they did not uphold India's aggression and fully sympathised with Pakistan; they have acted to help the Muslims of Bengal and hoped for a possible reunion in future. Indonesia recounted the initiative it had taken to bring about a reconciliation between Pakistan and 'Bangladesh'. A meeting was arranged in Jakarta, Sheikh Mujib's representative arrived but no one turned up from the Pakistan's side. No one heard any more about the 'Bangladesh' lobby. On the other hand the delegates wanted Pakistan to tell them how best

could they help bring about a reconciliation between the two brothers. It's a different matter that the Pakistan delegation itself had no clear brief on the point. When the composition of the reconciliation mission to be sent to Islamabad and Dacca came up for discussion, one delegate observed that in order to help settlement, he was prepared to go to Delhi. The chief delegate of a country, regarded generally as soft towards India, said that the problem was between two brothers and there was no need to involve a third party and not India of all countries. We must realise, he said, that India went to the last extent to destroy Pakistan and one should not underrate the threat it now poses to other Muslim countries.

The original draft resolution sought also to condemn Indian aggression but it was later deleted. President Bhutto was earlier reported to have sent a special emissary to President Qadhafi to request him to instruct the Libyan delegate not to press with too harsh a resolution.

Palestine, no doubt, is an issue which has divided the Arabs and keeps them divided and it did produce some sharp exchanges but in conclusion the Conference offered greater consensus than could have been possible in a purely Arab forum. It was the overall approach, Islamic rather than nationalistic, which helped both the Establishment and the Revolution.

Speaking about general attitudes, there was a certain euphoria, produced no doubt because of the simple fact of togetherness and brotherhood, but one could also discern a great deal of earnestness and seriousness of purpose. The Conference had to extend beyond the original schedule of three days to five days and these were spent not in quarrelling but in serious discussion of the points and issues before it. Mr. Moussa Shafiq, Foreign Minister of Afghanistan who is not notorious as a religious fanatic, said that instead of translating the word Jihad as 'Holy War' the Joint Communiqué should retain the word as such because he felt that in the European languages Holy War did not convey the same meaning as Jihad.

Some delegates were concerned also for the reason that the question of unity concerned not the Governments alone, it involved also the masses back home. They felt a sense of obligation to their people and could not afford to disappoint them. Others showed an attitude of realism, an awareness of their own incapacities and limitations and the need to be patient, to be cautious and to go slow. There was a frank admission that they all suffered from internal contradictions, each one tied to some string which prevented him from making a free move. The only worry, however, was that if these contradictions

*See also Charter of the Islamic Conference, on page 5

persisted too long, the next generation may lose all faith in the basic values.

The recent tragedy of Pakistan and the enforced stalemate in the Middle East had made the lesson clear to most if not all the countries. There was a clear desire to get out of this straight jacket and to be 'ourselves'. On 28 December, 1971, *Radio Moscow* broadcast a talk by Dr. Yevgeniy Primakov, Deputy Chairman of the World Institute of Economics and International Relations of the USSR Academy of Sciences (*Impact*, 14-27 January 1972) which sought to take note of the fact that because of the Soviet attitude towards Pakistan, "our enemies—enemies of the Soviet Union and of the Arab countries—were trying to drive a wedge between us." He concluded a long explanation by asking: "Lastly, is it possible to place abstract Islamic solidarity above the tangible anti-imperialism solidarity?" To which he himself answered: "Of course not". I mentioned this to the chief delegate of a country regarded as an ally of Russia. He said: "Of course this is nonsense."

On the political issues the Conference expressed itself not only on the Middle East situation, Palestine, Jerusalem, the Philippine Muslims, the situation in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent and the Portuguese aggression against Guinea but it also took the opportunity of expressing its solidarity with the African people struggling against Imperialism and Racism. One did, however, note the serious omission of the problems of Kashmir, Cyprus, Eritrea and the suppression of Muslims in India, Ethiopia and Pattani. Not that these problems have ceased to exist but it seems that somehow no one cared or remembered to sponsor the issues.

The establishment of an International News Agency, Islamic Cultural Centres and organisations, and International Islamic Bank moved from proposal stage to project stage. Projects on News Agency and Cultural Centres were approved but both needed a great deal of shaping. The news Agency is proposed as an association of existing national news agencies but its original role and functioning need to be more precisely defined and elaborated. The objectives and functions laid down in the statute of IINA do not seem possible of achievement by the mere joining of the existing national news agencies. The majority of the existing national agencies cater essentially to the local interests and were not designed to perform any Islamic functions except that which may be incidental. The matter would need to be worked out. Both Somalia and Iran wanted the IINA to be headquartered in their countries but it was finally agreed to seat it in Jeddah.

Similarly, the decision to create and establish institutions for "the propagation and protection of Islamic ideology and culture in all countries" represented an important and a big decision. The field is so big and vast that one should look

forward to a phased growth and a modest start. The question of preparing studies on Muslims in non-Muslim countries, opening Islamic Cultural Centres and an International Islamic University would need a detailed project planning taking into account the existing institutions and the experience of their working.

The proposal to agree in principle to establish Islamic Banking institutions being a matter of material significance engendered greater interest and controversy. The study* which formed the basis of these proposals recommended in the first instance the establishment of a Committee of Experts within the Secretariat to study and prepare an implementation plan. It is interesting to note that not a single objection was raised either on the ground of *Sharia* or on technical grounds. No one came forward to say that the interest charged or given by banks is profit and not *riba* which is prohibited by Islam. The objections being raised were more procedural and dilatory than real. A delegation of the French-Arab Bank happened to arrive in Jeddah during those days and with Lebanon and Senegal (both having French connections) being in the picture it was impossible to escape feelings about a possible international banking interest being involved in the matter. The committee debate dragged on until Thursday, 4 March. On Friday morning all the delegates flew to Medina to visit the Prophet's Mosque and while inside the Mosque one of the delegates spoke to his filibustering colleague and soon the controversy was settled. The Financial and Economic Administration to be established in the Islamic Secretariat shall, however, study and give advice instead of being responsible also for executing the plans.

The most tangible achievement of the Conference is, however, the approval of the Charter without which the whole forum had so far been no more than a debating club. Keeping in view the situation of the Muslim countries, one has to recognise that to draw up a Charter was not an easy task. Some states felt that no Charter was needed. Indonesia said that since the word Charter is binding, it should be termed 'Joint Statement'. At the outset, the question was whether the association be loose like that of Commonwealth or more formal like the United Nations. The present Charter is a combination of the UN, OAU, Commonwealth and Motamar Alam-e-Islami (World Muslim Congress, Karachi) Charters, and represents a loose but formal pattern of relationship. The original Saudi proposal was to call the forum Islamic Countries Conference.

The more tricky problem, in regard to the charter, is that posed by Turkey, Indonesia and Lebanon who plead a constitutional inability in fully adhering to the

*A detailed note on the Egyptian study regarding establishment of Islamic Banking Institutions will appear later.

ISLAMIC CONFERENCES

		No. of countries represented	
22-25 Sep	1969	Summit in Rabat	24
23-25 Mar	1970	Foreign Minister's Conference, Jeddah	22
26-29 Dec	1970	Foreign Minister's Conference, Karachi	23
20-22 Apr	1971	Conference on Islamic News Agency, Tehran	15
1- 3 Jun	1971	Conference on Islamic Cultural Centres, Rabat	20
21-23 Jun	1971	Conference on Draft Charter, Jeddah	22
7- 9 Feb	1972	Conference on Islamic Bank, Cairo	18
29 Feb- 4 Mar	1972	Foreign Minister's Conference, Jeddah	30

Charter. They wanted deletion of reference to Islamic religion and Islamic solidarity. Turkey is a secular state, Indonesia feels barred by *Pantjasila* and Lebanon too pleads constitutional secularity. Under her Constitution the President is always a Christian so it will not be possible to express adherence even to common creed. The Charter thus speaks of "common belief" but that too does not appear to solve the difficulty. Besides *Pantjasila*, Indonesian circles also feel that emphasis on Islam may provide a leverage to the Islamic parties in their country. At the same time, there is a dilemma that refusal to associate Indonesia with the world Muslim community may produce unfavourable domestic reaction. They presented another draft but did not press and have instead registered their reservations; they may take part but would not pay.

Turkey too has the same problem and the same reservations but there is no desire to go out of the Islamic community and she wants time to study and decide as to possible areas of cooperation. Lebanon is in the same fix and despite an Iranian effort to help, the problem is there. When the Lebanese delegate Dr. Adel Ismail pleaded inability to pay the Conference contribution the Jordanian delegate Mr. Amin Shanqeeti, said that while the Lebanese could spend a fortune on prostitutes and night clubs, they grudgingly pay a small contribution to the Islamic conference. All this produced a counter-move from Mauritania and certain other African states that those who preferred to call themselves secular as against Muslim should better be excluded from the Islamic Conference. The Charter was later modified to enable them to participate as associate States if they so desired.

It would be unrealistic, however, to speak too much about the success of the Islamic Conference because as yet things are so fragile in the Muslim world that a *coup* or a change of a regime in one or two countries may put the whole clock back. The Conference opened with the recitation of *Suratul Hashr* whose theme is how the designs of the enemies recoil on themselves and instead the *ummah* emerged more strengthened. Could this be significant?

American Opinions on the Middle East

IMPACT Report on Peter Mansfield's impressions

Mr. Peter Mansfield, author and broadcaster, who has just returned from America after completing various teaching assignments gave a talk in the Grand Committee Room of the House of Commons (28 March) on American opinions on the Middle East.

He expressed his surprise at the profound lack of knowledge about the Middle East in America. Most students in the school where he taught seemed to think that the problem began in 1948 and the single fact of which they were most aware was the landing of American marines in Lebanon in 1958. There was a lack of knowledge and interest in the First World War and they were ignorant of Woodrow Wilson's important role in the peace settlement.

At another school not a single child knew what the religion of the majority of Arabs were. Two asked, "Were they Jews?" There was an astounding ignorance even among final year students in university.

Travelling through America the overwhelming impression he had was one of an empty country and the thought kept coming to him that the entire population of the Jewish world could be settled into a corner of this land without anyone taking notice of it.

The ignorance was compounded by the insularity and provincialism of the American news media. There is a great dependence on local news papers, he said, and these rely for international coverage on news agencies and syndicated columnists. Although there are some outstanding newspapers like the *Washington Post* and *The New Yorker* which give in-depth coverage, the news on the bulk of the media is very scrappy indeed. Radio and TV in America in which commercials are an intrinsic part (even of the news) made him feel nostalgic for Britain and for "Auntie BBC".

The Americans are unaware of the limitations of their news media. The belief and conviction that one lives in a free and democratic society makes one feel that any 'news' given was 'fact' and this makes one overlook and even become unaware of distortions.

Mr. Mansfield then went on to list and describe the factors favouring Zionist forces in America. The first of these was the ubiquity of active Zionists. Although only 2½% of the population are Jews, they make up 10% of the school teachers and in some faculties represent up to 30% of the staff composition. He reckons this presence to have a much greater influence in the framing of American policy and thinking than the financial power wielded by the Jews.

Among the Jews in America, he said,

it is estimated that there are about 100,000 Israelis many of them settled in Los Angeles who are disillusioned with what they found in Israel. But although they reject Zionism they are still supporters of Israel. He posited the view that the Jewish furore over the alleged persecution of Jews in Russia was a means of getting Russian Jews from Russia to America via Israel.

Jews who are critical of the Zionists and Israel are often shunted off the field. At a conference of Quakers who are working for peace in the Middle East a young radical Rabbi was given more than a cold shoulder when he voiced his alarm at Israeli racist attitudes towards Arabs and said these were comparable with Wallace's attitudes to blacks in America. There were few people who were ready to contradict the Zionists whose letters, for example, in papers remained unanswered and contributed to the view that Arabs were all rabidly anti-semitic.

The direct political influence of the Zionists is very great, Mr. Mansfield felt, but it is possible to exaggerate it. In American elections for example where money forms an essential part of the set-up people are not surprised that an aspiring candidate should be backed by a particular lobby as for example Jackson by the Florida Jewish community.

The Arabs are unable to yield the same influence as the Jews because most of them are assimilated to the American way of life. Since the majority are Christians it is very easy for them to assimilate and to intermarry and they take very little interest in Middle Eastern affairs. But an Arab lobby is being developed in America.

Another factor which helps the Zionist cause is the primitive Protestantism of some Christians who place a heavy emphasis on the Old Testament. The sermons of Billy Graham belong to this genre. On one revivalist radio programme a questioner asked how could it be possible to fit in all the world's Jewish population in the present boundaries of Israel. The Christian preacher replied that this would present no problem since according to the Bible the borders of Israel would extend from the Nile to the Euphrates.

Mr. Mansfield showed the curious paradox of how the survival of anti-semitism benefits the Zionist cause. For example people with guilt feelings about their treatment of individual Jews—like refusing them membership in a golf club—feel that they have to expiate for this by helping out Israel financially.

Another factor is that Americans identify the Zionists with the early Americans who were enterprising "pioneers who

caused the desert to bloom".

Although the counterbalancing factors to the above were so few and so weak as to lead to pessimism and even despair yet these factors were there. Among the new generation and liberals there is a whole new attitude towards America's responsibilities abroad. The Vietnam war has made a great difference. If you are totally anti-Vietnam you cannot be pro-Israeli. This group tended to see Israel as a cocky and bristling Prussia of the Middle East and, being disillusioned with militarism, they are not likely to make Dayan a hero especially as it was learnt that he went to Vietnam to advise the Americans there.

A second factor is the assimilation of American Jews as exemplified by the number of mixed marriages and the decreasing number of children who are being brought up in the Jewish faith. There are rabbis who are prepared to solemnise these marriages and the trend is causing alarm in Israeli government circles.

Another factor is the decline in anti-semitism among Americans. This is contributing to the assimilation and is also worrying Israelis and Zionists. To counteract this trend there are organisations like the Jewish Defence League whose Rabbi Kehane preaches that the Jews are facing a holocaust and who is using fascist methods to train Jews and whip up feeling. A new campaign is being planned for Jews in South America.

Mr. Mansfield feels that there is hope that America would realise where her real interests lie in the Middle East and this was not with Israel. Enlarged markets for America in the Middle East and the likely necessity in a decade or so for America to get about one fifth of her oil supplies from the area should make the development of some more pragmatic policy possible. By 1985 it has been estimated that about 57% of oil used in America would have to come from outside and about half of this from the Middle East with the lessening importance of Venezuela's oil.

Mr. Mansfield feels that he might be overoptimistic about changes in Americans' attitudes towards the Middle East, just as he was in the early days of the Nixon administration. It turned out that Nixon gave more in arms and planes to Israel than did Kennedy. But it is still possible that America should drop Israel in the same way as Taiwan was ditched. The American people are sick and fed up with foreign involvement and if something on the Middle East should come out comparable to the revelations of the Pentagon papers on Vietnam then anything dramatic could happen. But it would take someone of exceptional courage to do this.

Automated warfare—spin-off from the Vietnam war

G. U. SIDDIQUI

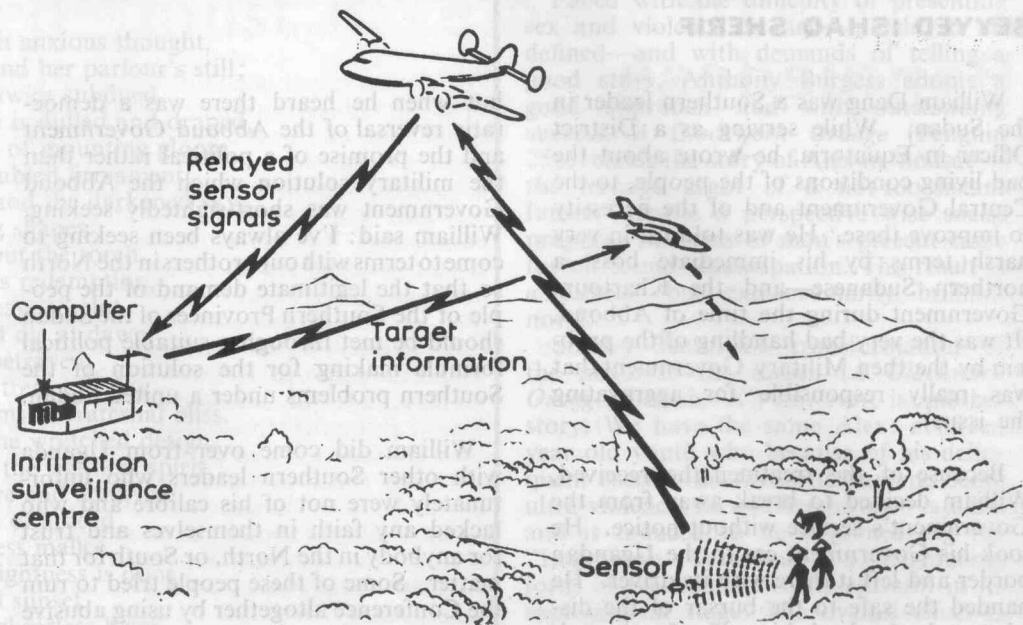
As American forces withdraw from Vietnam, the country is being turned into an "automated battlefield" with the increasing use of automatic warfare techniques in place of those of conventional warfare. With these techniques in hand the war can be continued with comparable, if not more, destruction, with the minimum use of men. The 30 March issue of *New Scientist* describes some of the techniques now in use. The automated battlefield operates on three levels. First, there is a network of electronic sensors, distributed on the ground or positioned above the battlefield, in the trees and on board aircraft or helicopters. Secondly, an automatic control and command centre receives and processes information from sensors. Thirdly a network of weapons—rockets, bombers, buried and tele-commanded mines—react automatically to the orders of an officer at the Control Centre or even directly to orders given by computer.

The electronic gadgets used in attacks against the Ho Chi Minh trail are revealing. Acoustic, seismic and thermal sensors were dropped to remain suspended on the trees by their parachutes; others got buried in the ground, leaving only an aerial above it, looking exactly like a tropical plant. At first the signals transmitted by the sensors were received by an aircraft, later a pilotless aircraft took over the role of retransmitting the data to the Nakhom Phanom base in Thailand. There, two computers processed the data and the information was immediately transmitted either to the bomber base or to local field commanders or even to telecommanded mines on the battlefield. The base at Nakhom Phanom is, according to some observers, one of the largest; it is also linked directly to the Pentagon by satellite.

Sensors, sensitive even to infinitesimal quantities of ammonia, can detect human perspiration from a considerable distance. Minute variations in the earth's magnetic field, for example, caused by a soldier carrying a weapon or a peasant carrying a spade, are detected with an instrument called MAGID. This device is so sensitive that it can even detect a can or a metal button.

To observe enemy movements, sector commanders have large numbers of sensors and a computer at their disposal. When the sensors report activity, the duty officer asks the computer to display the activity area on a screen. Based solely on sensor reports he can instruct his computer to send data direct to another computer on board a pilotless aircraft which gives the plane its course and automatically releases bombs at the proper time.

This type of warfare was first aired in public by General William Westmoreland



Operation of the automated battlefield

(Courtesy New Scientist)

in October 1969. At that time he described how in the battlefield of the future, enemy forces will be located, tracked and targeted almost instantaneously through the use of data links, computer assisted intelligence evaluation, and automated fire control. With first round kill-probabilities approaching certainty, and with surveillance devices that can continually track down the enemy, the need for large forces on the ground will be less important.

The article also describes some of the anti-personnel weapons used, developed and sophisticated over the past few years using the inhabitants of Vietnam as human guinea pigs.

By the beginning of 1970, for example, some three million kilograms of CS gas had been used in South Vietnam. There are now probably more than ten million bomb craters in the area. These craters prevent the cultivation of rice and filled with water they breed mosquitoes and other insect carriers of disease. In 1968, the US army having realised that forests provide cover for guerrillas, has been making increased efforts to destroy these forests. Up to 1969, 75 million litres of defoliant was sprayed covering 2.6 million hectares, affecting seriously the ecology of the area. The area when cleared of forests is eroding with the secondary effect of flooding.

Other means of clearing the jungle include the 'superbomb', code named BLU-82/B. The power of the explosion produced by this device is surpassed only by nuclear bombs. The bomb explodes just before touching the ground. Normally the resulting radial explosion does not dig a crater but uproots and blows away the trees and other obstacles in the very heart of a very dense jungle creating a perfect clearing of

the size of a football pitch. The resulting landing space can be used immediately by helicopters. The explosion of the bomb is so powerful that all animal, plants and human life within a radius of approximately 3,200 feet is annihilated by the shock wave.

The new anti-personnel weapons are more diabolical in design. The basic idea is the Cluster Bomb Unit (CBU). A mother bomb contains a certain number of daughter bombs. After having been dropped from the aircraft, the CBU opens at an altitude varying between 800 and 1200 metres and disperses its contents over a large area. Some CBU's are equipped with a spin-off motor, so that the bombs are injected in all directions. Another type—fragmentation bombs, weigh 425 grammes and contain 300 small metal balls. The balls are ejected at high velocity and pierce the flesh, perforate the organs and badly mutilate the victims. It is often impossible to take all the pellets out of the body. Some of these bombs have a delayed mechanism, so that they explode only after the alarm is over, when the casualties are being collected.

Another example is the Gravel Mine. It is wrapped in a 3 in. square of brightly coloured cloth sewn into doll's dresses. The mine contains plastic pellets which fragment on explosion and are undetectable by X-rays in human bodies. According to an Air Force Major, Gravel will blow a man's foot off but it will not blow a hole in a truck tyre.

The use of these weapons has clearly turned out to be more efficient than conventional bombing and the development of the automated battlefield has given warfare new and terrible proportions.

In his person, I mourned the whole country

SEYYED ISHAQ SHERIF

William Deng was a Southern leader in the Sudan. While serving as a District Officer in Equatoria, he wrote about the bad living conditions of the people, to the Central Government and of the necessity to improve these. He was told off in very harsh terms by his immediate boss—a northern Sudanese—and the Khartoum Government during the time of Abboud. (It was the very bad handling of the problem by the then Military Government that was really responsible for aggravating the issue).

Because of the treatment he received, William decided to break away from the Government's service without notice. He took his Government car to the Ugandan border and left it there with its driver. He handed the safe to the bursar of the district and absolved himself of responsibilities. Many people in his position might have made use of the money for the purpose of the rebellion.

In Uganda he collaborated with the rebel movement but he represented a far more moderate stand. His aim was to bring home to the Government in Khartoum the necessity that something quick should be done and that the Southerners should have a greater say. Some of the worst elements in Northern society—both officials and merchants who were arrogant and short-sighted—treated the Southerners very badly.

In 1964 when the 21 October revolution broke out against the military government of General Abboud, contact was made with Southern leaders in Uganda with the view to implementing the initiative taken by some of our most brilliant political thinkers amongst whom one might mention Sadiq Al Mahdi and Hasan Torabi. The initiative was launched by these politicians at a Round Table Conference to which African countries and all Southern leaders—whether rebel or not—were invited to participate.

William Deng had already collaborated with Joseph Oduhu in writing a book condemning northern policy in the South

but when he heard there was a democratic reversal of the Abboud Government and the promise of a political rather than the military solution which the Abboud Government was short-sightedly seeking, William said: I've always been seeking to come to terms with our brothers in the North so that the legitimate demand of the people of the Southern Provinces of the Sudan should be met through a suitable political formula making for the solution of the Southern problems under a united Sudan.

William did come over from Uganda with other Southern leaders who unfortunately were not of his calibre and who lacked any faith in themselves and trust for anybody in the North, or South for that matter. Some of these people tried to ruin the Conference altogether by using abusive language against the Northern delegates but the latter had the good sense not to react. William Deng came out very clearly as a frank, outspoken negotiator who would not use any dishonest political manoeuvre to get to his goal but believed in an open-hearted exchange of views. He became the leader of S.A.N.U.—Sudanese African National Union—a party which was fought by Communists and kindred groups because it stood for Sudanese national unity which did not play up to Egyptian or any other interests. He believed that he should make the case of the South understood by other Arab countries because the Sudan couldn't stand apart from them, and from the rest of Africa either. To him it was a matter of course that an understanding of the peculiar problems of the South should in the end persuade Arab Governments to respect the neutrality of the Sudan and to make no attempt at dragging Sudan from its particular vantage point to join in an extra-territorial Arab Federation (which was being broached at that time).

Sadiq Al Mahdi and William Deng made an impressive pair of politicians who symbolised in some ways the unity of the Sudan. Both came from very distinguished families in their respective parts of the country. Both were highly educated and born leaders. A German journalist has said that had William been a Northerner he might have been the leader of the whole Sudan. He was one of the most devoted men I have met among politicians. He pursued his goal with a singleness of purpose which was quite unique. When Sadiq Al Mahdi came out with his political formula for national unity, the parties of privilege and favoured positions made an unholy alliance with the Communists to break up the plan and by conspiratorial

acts dissolved the Constituent Assembly which was by constitutional law not to be dissolved except either by its own decision that it had performed its assignment and should be dissolved to give place to an ordinary parliament or provided that it had accomplished its task within a fixed time.

William came out with Sadiq and others and formed the Union of New Political Forces which aimed at steering political forces away from either the preponderant influence of sectarian leaders or the line adopted by Communists and people of kindred persuasion, including the Nasserists who were keen to undermine justice, the rule of law and Sudanese tradition and work under the inspiration of foreign governments. This movement for national unity was fought by both the Right and the Left—the Right because it was afraid for its privileged and favoured positions and the Left because they were interested in a kind of situation that would enable them to seize power with the help of people who were of like persuasion in the army and elsewhere.

William Deng was assassinated after his election to the Second Assembly despite the fact that the illegitimate elections themselves were organised to exclude any people of either the stature or persuasion of William Deng. He took a car driven by a Northerner and was actually accompanied by three Northerners and two Southerners for a tour to thank and encourage those who stood by him during the elections.

A lot of bullets—over fifty—were used in this assassination which not only took the life of William himself but of all his companions, Northerners and Southerners alike. To my mind, William's assassination was tantamount to losing at least half the battle for the South, because William has the natural charisma and ability to speak plausibly and sensibly to both Northern and Southern audiences.

I remember distinctly when he spoke in rather halting but absolutely lucid Arabic and when he spoke in impeccable English, and in Dinka. That is why my sadness over the death of William was so great because in his person I was mourning the whole country. It moved me to write the following poem which ends with a prayer that our faults should be redeemed and our self destruction annulled by a hopeful resurrection of our spirit and strength. The future as I see it for the Sudan appears gloomy, but one should never lose heart nor abandon faith.

Sadiq al Mahdi is a former Minister of the Sudan. At present he is under 'house arrest' in a house that belongs to the government in Port Sudan.

Dr. Hasan Torabi, an international lawyer, has been in prison in Khartoum since the early days of the present military regime. His book "Salaat—Imad ad-Deen" (Prayer—Pillar of the Religion) written while in prison was published last year. He has written another book in prison which the government has not allowed to be released.

To the dear memory of our distinguished compatriot the late William Deng Nhyal

A LAMENT

The Southern Cross is pale with anxious thought,
 The Northern Star is dimmer and her parlour's still;
 For her steadfast brightness is twice subdued,
 And the crescent moon of hope is dulled and draped,
 In a mournfully moody mantle of mounting gloom.
 'Tis the reddish gloom of a troubled firmament,
 Where the starlight is sinister, and the darkened sky,
 Is a closed horizon of brooding shapes.
 A traitor's breath has snuffed out the torch,
 The rising light of our country's redemption,
 When precious blood should cease to clot,
 And venomous thoughts should die at dawn.
 But the brightness of dawn is betrayed,
 And beclouded are the pearly streaks of day,
 Aye and befouled are our dreams of fraternal bliss.
 A thousand times accursed is the wretched design,
 A thousand aeons benighted is the sightless spirit,
 That could, with Satan, conspire and contrive,
 The flight of this poisoned dart of a deed,
 This most senseless act of aimless malice.
 It was one fell blow and the brightness is done
 The cheerful glow of a peaceful sunset
 Is drowned in a sudden sea of cheerless black.
 Now our sadness is an unbroken stream,
 And dead straight is that brackish flow,
 Know they not, the spirits of our country's vanguard,
 That the valiant William was with us once and now,
 His gentle spirit is in the tranquil realm reposed
 Where worry and the fretful thoughts must cease,
 For the time of extreme unction is decreed,
 To free the dead and fetter the living.
 A gentleman and a brother have I lost,
 And my saddened land is bereft of a hero and a head,
 His thoughtful life was all dedicated,
 Once, like the Corsican eagle of yore,
 To his homestead and the isle, beloved of the brave.
 But his larger spirit had been confinements foe;
 When broader vistas were revealed:
 A truer patriotism solidly based,
 On the bedrock of fact and firm.
 Thus our William came to know,
 That the concept of race was a shadowy thing
 A dying figure that foreign fancies forged.
 For only individual men truly did live,
 In the fated framework of a culture's web.
 That the heights of social hegemony
 Were the works of thoughtful men:
 And indeed, nothing like nature's hazards,
 Nor the straight lace of blinkard dreams,
 Nor the dimmed notions of a somnolent dance.
 Let this be the humble wreath that devotion brings
 To the great peace maker in my ruffled home
 Where innocence can wear the mask of guilt
 And the dulled conscience of crime
 Would seem to don the white dress
 That dross and grime are astutely veiled.
 Beat your drums and beat 'em loud,
 Beat them gently, beat them low;
 For the dread nightmare is a fact,
 It no longer is a thing of fancy.
 Due to over-heating of the brain,
 Oh how cruel is the bidding of farewell now
 For a truly great Sudanese is dead,
 Yet we pray and sincerely hope
 That his spirit, with us all, does abide.

Film Review

AVERSION THERAPY?

Faced with the difficulty of presenting sex and violence as 'art'—a field so ill-defined—and with demands of telling a good story, Anthony Burgess adopts a good approach—and with outstanding success. *A Clockwork Orange* (Penguin 25p) relates the story of Alex in 'nodsat'—the teenage argot of a not-too-distant future. Here is a perspective wise social prophesy in terms of man's present craze for all round emancipation. The result is a difficult but extraordinarily brilliant novel.

Stanley Kubrick's transformation of the novel to the screen (*A Clockwork Orange*, British, 'X') however, is another story. We have the same Alex: a fifteen year old youth who because of his delinquent excess—his favourite pastime being ultra-violence, sex and Beethoven—is jailed and is induced to be a guinea pig for "Ludovico's Technique" a frightening form of reclamation treatment still in its experimental stage. The overall effect is very different from that of the novel. The real social message of the novel is mercilessly slaughtered. What emerges is a big question mark on the validity of aversion therapy. The novel, on the other hand, in addition to this has a powerful social message: it is trying to predict the emergence of the New Barbarians, a generation which would disregard all human values and with it the knowledge necessary for guiding and leading the human animal. In the shaping of Alex parental neglect has played a predominant part. And here lies the core of the message. In the film all this is overshadowed by gaudy scenes of violence done sometimes in slow motion and sometimes in the form of a ballet and florid ornate and explicit scenes of rapes. Ironically, this glorifying of violence and sex goes against the very nature of the novel! The scarism in the novel is appropriate and hard hitting; the visual humour comes out rather superannuated. One can only conclude that such complete emancipation from the use of the imagination of the audience will produce pestiferous results which leave the eyes only to weep with!

Still in the future we have the *Omega Man* (Director: Boris Segal, US 'A'). It happens in March 1975. A Chemical and Biological War between Russia and China into which—inevitably—the US is dragged. When it concludes Naville the scientist is the sole survivor. Well, there are others but not quite in human form: albino mutants who regard Science and Technology as evil; the cause of the destruction of the earth. All in all, an action packed movie which is terrifying to think about and which apart from any entertainment value leaves a big question mark on violence and art.

Ziauddin Sardar

A reading of letters from Bangladesh

Shafullah

As the days go by in Bangladesh the unrest and problem of law and order becomes more and more acute. Recently Comilla and Rajshahi witnessed communal riots and Khulna saw the 'humane slaughter' of non-Bengalis. In Dacca some suffered assassination as a result of in-fighting in the Awami League. Even Shaikh Mujib has now accepted that the groups of armed men and some units of Mukti Bahini are causing disturbances and attempting to establish a parallel government. He is facing opposition not only from pro-Maoist and pro-Moscow groups but also from his own party-men in his effort to make Bangladesh the "Switzerland of Asia". Added to this is the problem of putting the war-torn country back to anything resembling the normal.

While the word 'collaborator' provides enough sanction to take anybody's life, the men who actually supported a Federal pattern for Pakistan are undergoing no end of sufferings. These political opponents are indiscriminately molested, tortured and herded in small cells like animals. While local jails are filled with thousands of political leaders, scholars and prominent citizens, the real criminals walk freely without being questioned.

Among the prominent men arrested and tortured are Fazlul Qader Chowdhry, Former Speaker of the National Assembly, Shah Azizur Rahman, Ex-Deputy Leader of opposition in National Assembly, Khwaja Khairuddin, President of East Pakistan Muslim League, Moulana Masum, President of Islami Sangram Parishad, Maulana Abdul Khaliq, Secretary-General Jamaat-e-Islami, Mr. Moslehuddin, Leader of Pakistan Democratic Party, Maulana Mohammed Siddique, President of Jamiat ul Ulema Islam, Mr. Faruque Edit or of Daily *Sangram*, Dr. Deen Muhammad, Reader at the Bengali Department, University of Dacca, Dr. Mustafiz, Reader at Dacca University, Principal Najibullah of Bogra, Dr. Sajjad Hossain, Vice Chancellor of Dacca University and Dr. Hasan Zaman, Director of Pakistan Council, Dacca.

They are all 'sons of the soil' and are suffering for upholding political and ideological views different from the ruling Awami League. The fate of many more people is unknown.

Many of these men who were earlier said to have been under arrest are now declared as having absconded and their properties

confiscated. The eye-witness accounts and letters smuggled out of jails give a pathetic and horrifying picture of the way these men are being treated. An eye-witness report describes how Dr. Sajjad Hossain, Vice Chancellor of Dacca University met his fate. He was arrested by the Mukti Bahini just after the Indian Army took over Dacca. He was publicly humiliated by being roped and dragged around the city of Dacca. He was bayoneted but not killed. Today he survives as a disabled man. Another eye-witness report tells how Maulana Athar Ali, leader of Nizam-e-Islam Party was killed. He was beaten, bayoneted and hanged on a tree and was left there to die. Dr. Waqar Ahmed, Director, Technical Education, was dragged from his house and brutally killed by the Bahini.

Letters from Bangladesh describe how opponents, their children and wives are haunted by Mukti Bahini. One letter says: "The word 'revolution' seems to have sanctioned every action in disregard to previous laws and norms." Another letter written by a political leader from jail describes the pathetic condition of these men: "The local jail with about 3,000 men romping about where the standard accommodation is for 1,050 only. So you can feel the price of space, living space . . . we are 100 in one room, sufficient hardly for 30, a good number of Principals and Professors of Colleges and the local University, Advocates, local leaders, etc. . . . It is over 100,000 in jails and camps by now, besides thousands killed, maimed, robbed, looted and burnt. Extortion is the national pastime, a new experience and a new realisation." The writer is shocked over the silence of the world press and democracies who were very vocal earlier. "We suffer degradation because we were honest, upright, and outspoken . . . simply because, we could not and did not fall in line with them." These so-called 'collaborators' are facing tortures and death because they thought that the dismemberment of Pakistan would not necessarily result in the emergence of Independent Bengal. These men never condoned the rulers of Pakistan for their injustices to the then East Pakistan. Pressed now from all sides, Shaikh Mujib should be in a better position to appreciate the element of justification in their case. He may need the support of many of them in the uphill task of reconstruction that he faces now.

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What Mohammed "must have been like"?

Mohammed by Maxime Rodinson, translated from French by Anne Carter, *Allen Lane The Penguin Press*, London, xx plus 361 pages, £3-50

Rodinson's original in French was published in 1961 and the appearance of an English translation 10 years later signifies more than a routine continuity of European interest in "Mohammed and the Mohammedan World"; it also represented a Marxian shade of interest in the world of Islam. The frame-work of the study is provided by the Marxist theory of the social causality of the lives of individuals. Rodinson claims to "have tried to show how, in the case of the Prophet . . . two series of causes—those related to the person, the family and the early milieu, as well as those issuing from the society at large, converged . . ." (p.x). How is one supposed to make an objective study of a subject which by very definition is claimed to be totally independent of all mundane casualties? An appropriate and scientific approach in such a case would have been to start by taking the "hypothesis" at its face value and proceed to "disprove it strictly on the basis of facts. Rodinson, however, chooses to embark on the study from a position of *ipso facto* subjectivity.

Before proceeding to examine the book on the basis of facts and scholarship it may be useful to familiarise oneself with the "series of causes . . . related to the persons . . . as well as those emanating from the society" in respect of the author himself. The biographical note on the jacket of the book says: ". . . born in Paris in 1915; his father was one of the founders of the Jewish Workers Trade Unions in Paris. He received his primary education in Paris, then worked as an errand boy before taking advance studies in the Ecole des Langues Orientales Vivantes and at the Sorbonne . . . After serving in the (French) army in Syria during the war, he stayed for seven years in the Lebanon working as a teacher in a Moslem high school and as an official in the French Department of Antiquities for Syria and the Lebanon . . . He had joined the Communist Party in 1937 and he became acquainted with the Communists and the Left in these regions . . . from 1950 to 1951 he published *Moyen-Orient*, a political monthly on the Middle East. Since 1955 he has been Professor of Old Ethiopic and Old South Arabian Language in the Ecole Practique des Hautes Etudes at the Sorbonne. He left the Communist Party in 1958, but has stayed in the Marxist Left

as a freelance writer and theoretician . . ."

Although, sketchy no doubt, the note does serve to underline certain elements of social causality. Returning to the book itself, one cannot but be astounded by a remarkable indifference to facts and historical objectivity.

Truth is the very first casualty and it seems the author does not mind even inventing "facts" to suit his scheme. For instance in regard to the harmless incident about Aisha, wife of the Prophet being accidentally left behind by the caravan, Rodinson would add: "It was said that she had been seen talking to Safwân on several occasions before that" (p. 200). This is a simple invention, as no historian has mentioned this. Another falsification in the same genre: "Zainab met (the Prophet) in the state of undress and asked him in" (p. 205). This is despite the fact that all the historians have said that she was perfectly clad. Some have mentioned even the colour of her robe, and that instead of asking him in, she had said that her husband, Zaid, was not present.

It is said that at the arrival of a revelation the Prophet "was seized with a violent shuddering and lay unconscious for an hour" (p. 74). This too is without basis. It was rare for the Prophet to be lying on his back while a revelation was received; at times he was standing or even eating. He did become motionless for an instant, but never lost control over himself; if he was holding a piece of meat in his hand at the time he would hold it as before. His return to the pre-revelation state was instantaneous.

On page 69 the Islamic religion is termed a "sect". Of which religion?

Intellectual honesty apart, Prof. Rodinson's knowledge either of the Arabic language or geography of Arabia, also leaves much to be desired. In the bibliography (p. 344) he would cite a 2-volume work*, but dismiss it as being "by a Muslim with vast knowledge but no critical sense at all". Elsewhere he would assert that the classical works of Ibn Hisham and Ibn Sa'd were constantly on his table. On the other hand, one can show that there are plagiarisations from the first named book, and as regards the utilisation of sources there is no evidence at all.

The word "sulb" in Arabic means back or backbone; on p. 86, he would translate it as 'loins'. The expression "saffahta al-ahlâm" means "thou hast declared stupid those who are sagacious", but he renders it (p. 105): "made light their dreams" which makes no sense. The

* Muhammad Hamidullah, *Le Prophète de l'Islam*, Paris, Vrin, 1959.

Empty Quarter in South East Arabia is named (p. 11) as rab'al-khâli; the word is rub'al-khâli'.

On p. 328 there is a map in which the author situates Hudaibiya at about 20 miles north of Mecca, whereas the locality is in the western suburbs of the town, about 10 miles on the road to Jeddah and is now-a-days called Shumaisi. Hira is the name of the famous cave where the first revelation came, and it lies on the top of the Jabal an-Nur (mountain of light), but Rodinson calls it (p. 69, 70, 71) Hill of Hira and Mount Hira. There is no such mount in existence. The Black Stone in the Ka'ba is said to be a meteorite (p. 39) though geologists have verified it to be a stone. "Well" of Dhu Qar (p. 65), is in fact a lake.

For a non-technical and popular reading the plan of the book was reasonable enough: the time and place, the biography: birth, beginning of the mission, foundation of a State, continuation of the work after his death. A balanced study could have produced something readable and profitable, but a reader is

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What Mohammed "must have been like"

simply puzzled to come across such assertions that the permissive Mazdak was a "Communist reformer" (p. 6) or that "the Bedouin had not much time for religion" (p. 16) while it is known that all the while from morning till going to bed the bedu conducted himself in accordance with his superstitious beliefs. On p. 12 the date palm is described as "the mother and aunt of the Arabs"; a harmless error of course, but it shows a certain lack of scholarly meticulousness. It is well known that the date palm has been termed as the aunt of men, because, as it is related, after creating Adam, God created date-palm from the remaining clay.

This casualness about facts and events, however, does not end here. We are told that: "In about the year 500, a Byzantine emperor made an alliance with an "Arab family called Ghassan, nomads from the east of what is now the kingdom of Jordan" (p. 27) but according to Ibn Habib, that actually happened three centuries earlier during the time of the Emperor Decius. "The poet Imr'ul Qays" (read: Imru'ul Qays) is mentioned as a famous ruler (p. 30). However, it was his father who was a ruler in Yemen, the poet himself led the life of a wandering refugee.

While the sources do not mention food, but only water from the well of Zamzam, the author says: Abdul-Muttalib supplied the pilgrims with "food and water" (p. 41).

Mention is made about 'Abdullah, the Prophet's father having "another wife" besides Amina but Rodinson contradicts himself in the next paragraph by "another

version of the story" (p. 42). The fact remains that 'Abdullah had no other wife except Amina.

One can go on quoting and correcting numerous instances of disregard to facts but that is hardly necessary.

The problem here related not to slips or errors but to the very design and methodology and in this regard the following two quotes from the foreward make an interesting reading.

On page xii Prof. Rodinson asks "readers whose background is Muslim not to rush to condemn my ignorance or ill-will if they find that I contest or ignore data which they consider well attested and historically acceptable . . . (because) . . . a scientific study demands a critical attitude towards source material. I have never rejected explicitly or implicitly any accepted version of the facts without compelling reasons."

But compelling reasons apart, Prof. Rodinson does not seem to recollect what he said on the preceding page x. There the aim is defined as to "produce a book that is readable (and) mainly narrative." "It is a risky proceeding", he admits but as "a biography of Mohammed limited only to absolutely unquestioned facts could amount to no more than a few dry pages", he had no option except "to present a probable, and now and then a highly probable, picture of what that life must have been like; to do so one must use some information from sources of whose veracity we have little proof".

Nothing could be more truthful and more honest than this.

A. M. Nuruddin.

Briefing

● *Islamic Literature, Lahore*, the monthly journal edited by Sh. Muhammad Ashraf has ceased publication as a result of difficulties created by the secession of East Pakistan from where, according to the editor, the majority of contributors and subscribers came. The journal was started in 1949 following the independence of Pakistan and, but for a break between 1958 and 1965, continued publication until December, 1971.

● *New Times*, an English daily of Islamabad, Pakistan, announced indefinite closure because of "grave threats posed to the life of workers" by members of the ruling People's Party.

● Libya has banned all Arabic and foreign magazines which carry pictures of naked women.

● *Attitudes of Young Immigrants*—a survey of young immigrant males conducted by Marplan for *The Times* and which was first published in the paper in February 1971. Now it is written up more fully by Peter Evans. Available from Runnymede Trust, 1 Tudor Street, London EC4Y 0AD, 25p.

● *A Survey of English Courses for Immigrant Teachers* by Julian Dahin from the Centre for Information on Language Teaching, State House, High Holborn, London WC1, 60p.

● *Immigrant Pupils in England: The LEA Response* by H. E. R. Townsend, £2.30. Report of the National Foundation for Educational Research, First stage of a research project on the topic. In many ways an eye opener.

● *Race and Law* by Geoffrey Bindman and Anthony Lester, suggest some sweeping changes in the scope of Race Relations Act and the provisions for its enforcement. Penguin £1.

● *Drink Offences* is published by Christian Economic and Social Research Foundation which reports that drunkenness among teenage boys and girls is increasing. In a simple check in four large cities the Foundation found that in 1970, of 584 people under 18 who were convicted of drunkenness, 226 were 16 or under. From CESRF, 12 Caxton Street, London SW1, 10p.

● *Directory of Alternative Media Periodicals*. Includes over 1,000 alternative/underground/little press/serial publications (newspapers, information sheets, magazines) published in Britain. It is divided according to subjects which include minority groups, politics, spiritual, literary and visual subjects. From Smootie Publications, 67 Vene Road, Brighton, Sussex, 75p.

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DOCUMENTATION

Charter of the Islamic Conference

In the name of God the Merciful and Compassionate

The Representatives:

The Kingdom of Afghanistan, Algerian Democratic and Popular Republic, Federation of Arab Emirates, State of Bahrain, Republic of Chad, Arab Republic of Egypt, Republic of Guinea, Republic of Indonesia, Empire of Iran, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, State of Kuwait, Republic of Lebanon, Libyan Arab Republic, Malaysia, Republic of Mali, Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Kingdom of Morocco, Republic of Niger, Oman Sultanate, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, State of Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Republic of Senegal, Republic of Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Somalia, Democratic Republic of Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Republic of Tunisia, Republic of Turkey, the Yemen Arab Republic, meeting in Jeddah from 14 to 18 Moharram 1393 A.H. (29 February—4 March 1972).

Referring to the Conference of the Kings and Heads of State and Government of Islamic countries held in Rabat between 9 and 12 Rajab 1389 (22-25 September 1969);

Referring to the First Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Jeddah from 15 to 17 Moharram 1390 (23-25 March 1970) and the Second Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Karachi from 27 to 29 Shawal 1390 (26-28 December 1970);

Convinced that their common belief constitutes a strong factor of mutual approach and understanding between Islamic countries;

Resolved to preserve Islamic spiritual, ethical, social and economic values, which will remain one of the important factors of achieving progress for mankind;

Reaffirming their commitment to the UN Charter and fundamental Human Rights, the purposes and principles of which are basically established for fruitful cooperation amongst nations;

Determined to consolidate the bonds of the prevailing brotherly and spiritual friendship among their peoples, and to protect their freedom, and the common legacy of their civilisation founded particularly on the principles of justice, toleration and non-discrimination;

Resolved to increase human well-being, progress and freedom everywhere; and,

Resolved moreover to unite their efforts in order to secure universal peace which ensures security, freedom and justice for their peoples and all peoples throughout the world.

Approve the following Charter of the Islamic Conference:

Article I

The member States establish an organisation to be named "Islamic Conference".

Article II—Objectives and Principles

(A) Objectives:

The objectives of the Islamic Conference shall be:

1. To promote Islamic solidarity among member States.
2. To consolidate cooperation among member States in the economic, social, cultural, scientific and other vital fields of activities, and to carry out consultations among member States in international organisations.
3. To endeavour to eliminate racial segregation, discrimination and to eradicate colonialism in all its forms.
4. To take necessary measures to support international peace and security.
5. To co-ordinate efforts for the liberation of the (Muslim) Holy places and support the struggle of the people of Palestine, and help them to regain their legitimate rights and liberate their lands.
6. To create the suitable atmosphere for the promotion of cooperation and understanding among member States and other countries.

(B) Principles:

The member States decide and pledge that, in order to realise the objectives mentioned in the previous paragraph, they shall be inspired and guided by the following principles:

1. Total equality between the member States.
2. Respect of the right of self-determination, and non-interference in the domestic affairs of member States.
3. Respect of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of each member State.
4. Peaceful solution of disputes that may arise amongst them through negotiation, mediation, reconciliation or arbitration.
5. Abstention from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity, national unity and political independence of any member State.

Article III—Organs of the Conference

The Islamic Conference is composed of:

- (1) The Conference of Kings and Heads of State and Government,

- (2) The Conference of Foreign Ministers,
- (3) The General Secretariat.

Article IV—Conference of Kings and Heads of State and Government

The Conference of Kings and Heads of State and Government is the supreme authority in the Organisation and holds its meetings whenever the necessity arises to consider issues of vital concern to the Moslem world and to co-ordinate the general policy of the Organisation.

Article V—Conference Sessions

1. (a) The Islamic Conference shall be convened once a year or when the need arises at the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs or their officially accredited representatives. The sessions shall be held in any one of the member States: (b) An extraordinary session may be convened at the request of any member State or at the request of the Secretary General, if approved, by two thirds of the member States. The request may be circulated to all member States in order to obtain the required approval; (c) The Conference of Foreign Ministers has the right to recommend the convening of a Conference of the Heads of States or Heads of Governments. The approval can be obtained for such a Conference by circulating the request to all member States.

2. The Conference of Foreign Ministers shall be held for the following purposes:

- (a) To consider the means of implementing the general policy of the Conference.
 - (b) To review the progress in the implementation of resolutions adopted at previous sessions.
 - (c) To adopt resolutions on matters of common interest in accordance with the aims and objectives of the Conference set forth in this Charter.
 - (d) To discuss the report of the Financial Committee and approve the budget of the Secretariat-General.
 - (e) To appoint the Secretary General and on the suggestion of the latter his three assistants are appointed according to equitable geographical distribution.
 - (f) To fix the date and venue of the coming conference of the Foreign Ministers.
 - (g) To show sympathetic concern for issues of vital importance to Muslims in general.
3. Resolutions or recommendations of

... Charter of the Islamic Conference

the Conference of Foreign Ministers shall be adopted by a two-thirds majority.

4. Quorum shall be formed by two-thirds of the member States in any session of the Conference of Foreign Ministers.

5. The Conference of Foreign Ministers decides the basic procedure which it follows and which could be followed for the Conference of Kings and Heads of State and Government, appoints a chairman for each session. This procedure is also applied in subsidiary organs set up by the Conference of Kings and Heads of State and Government and also by the Conference of Foreign Ministers.

Article VI—The Secretariat-General

1. The General Secretariat shall be headed by the Secretary General appointed by the Conference for a period of two years beginning from the date of his appointment; he may be re-appointed for another period of two years only.

2. The Secretary General shall appoint the staff of the General Secretariat from among nationals of member States, paying due regard to their competence and integrity, and in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

3. In the performance of their duties, the Secretary General, his Assistants, or the staff of the General Secretariat, shall not seek or receive instructions from any government or authority other than the Conference. They shall refrain from taking any action that may be detrimental to their position as international officials responsible only to the Conference. Member States shall undertake to respect the international character and the nature with reference to the responsibilities of the Secretary General as well as his Assistants and staff, and shall not seek to influence them in any way in the discharge of their responsibilities.

4. The Secretariat-General shall secure communications among member States and offer facilities for consultations and exchange of views and the dissemination of information that have common significance to these States.

5. The headquarters of the Secretariat-General shall be in Jeddah pending the liberation of "Beit ul Maqdis" (Jerusalem).

6. The General Secretariat shall follow up the implementation of the resolutions and recommendations of the Conference and report back to the Conference. It shall also directly supply the member States with working papers and memoranda through appropriate channels, within the framework of the resolutions and recommendations of the Conference.

7. The General Secretariat shall prepare the meetings of the Conference through close cooperation and in association with the host states on administrative and organisational matters.

8. (a) The Conference shall enjoy, in the territories of member States, such legal capacity, immunities and privileges as may be necessary for the exercise of its functions and the fulfilment of its objectives.

(b) Representatives of Member States shall enjoy such immunities and privileges as may be necessary for the exercise of their functions in relation to the Conference.

(c) The staff of the Conference shall enjoy the immunities and privileges necessary for the performance of their duties as decided upon by the Conference.

Article VII—Finance

1. All expenses on the administration and activities of the Secretariat shall be borne by the Member States according to the amount of their contributions in the budget as approved by the Conference.

2. The Secretariat shall administer its financial affairs according to the rules of procedure approved by the Conference of Foreign Ministers.

3. A Standing Financial Committee shall be formed by the Conference from the accredited representatives of the participating States, and shall meet at the headquarters of the General Secretariat. This Committee shall, in conjunction with the Secretary General, prepare and supervise the budget of the General Secretariat according to the regulations approved by the Conference of Foreign Ministers.

Article VIII—Membership

1. The Organisation of the Islamic Conference is composed of the States which participated in the Conference of Kings and Heads of State and Government held in Rabat and the Foreign Ministers' Conferences held in Jeddah, Karachi and signatory to this Charter. Every Muslim country is eligible to join the Islamic Conference on submitting an application expressing its desire and preparedness to adopt this Charter. The application shall be deposited in the Secretariat-General, to be brought before the Foreign Ministers' Conference at its first meeting after the submission of the application. Membership shall take effect as of the time of approval of the Conference by absolute majority.

2. The provisions concerning the participating states are included in the attached annex.

Article IX

The General Secretariat shall act within the framework of the present Charter and approval of the Conference whenever possible to consolidate relations between the Islamic Conference and the Islamic organisations of international character and to realise cooperation in the service of the Islamic objectives approved by this Charter.

Article X

(a) Any member State may withdraw from the Islamic Conference by sending a written notification to the Secretary General, to be communicated to all member States.

(b) As for the financial aspect, the state applying for withdrawal shall be bound by its obligations until the end of the fiscal year during which the application of withdrawal is submitted.

Article XI

Amendments to this Charter shall be made, if approved by a two-thirds majority of the member States.

Article XII

(a) This Charter shall not contain any matter contradictory to the Charter of the United Nations, and matters which infringe on the rights of member States or their obligations towards it.

(b) Any dispute that may arise in the interpretation, application or implementation of any Article in the present Charter shall be settled peacefully, and in all cases through consultations, negotiations, reconciliation or arbitration.

Article XIII

Languages of the Conference shall be Arabic, English and French.

Article XIV

This Charter shall be approved or ratified by member States or States participating in the organisation of the Islamic Conference in accordance with the current procedure in their respective countries. This Charter goes into effect as of the date of deposition of the instruments of ratification with the General Secretariat by a simple majority of the States participating in the Third Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Jeddah from 14 to 18 Moharram 1392 (29 February—4 March 1972).

ANNEX

1. The States which participated in the Islamic Conferences in Rabat, Jeddah and Karachi but unable, for constitutional reasons, to join the Conference as full members can participate as associate States.
2. The various resolutions and recommendations issued by the organs of the Conference shall have similar effect for both associate and member States within the limits expressly approved by the associate States.
3. It is expected that associate States would contribute to the budget of the Conference according to the scales decided by the Conference of Foreign Ministers.

WORLD OPINION WORLD OPINION WORLD OPINION WORLD OPINION

Cutting the Metropolitan umbilical cord

One of the great barriers to the economic development of African states has been the lack of what economists call an adequate continental "communications infrastructure" . . .

To this day it remains considerably easier to transport goods—or people—between African states and their former metropolitan powers than to transport them between each other.

Most developing countries are finding that the price they get for their raw material exports is falling relative to the price they have to pay for the manufactured goods they import. This is a major cause of balance of payments problems. One obvious solution—though not without considerable political difficulties—is to increase trade between African countries.

Until now intra-African trade has been hampered by the lack of an adequate continental transportation system and movement across the political and monetary boundaries formerly set by different colonial powers has been particularly difficult.

The basic need for better continental communication was one of the main reasons for proposing the Trans-African Highway which, when completed will sweep from East to West across the waist of Africa to join the Kenyan port of Mombassa with the Nigerian port of Lagos . . . —"First Steps Along the Trans-African Highway" by Andrew Mack, *Daily Star*, Beirut, 21.3.72)

The more we are together the more we shall export

To the girls on holiday in Florida and California, a bikini is a minute piece of simplified beach wear. To exporters in Latin America, however, the bikini is the product of immense organisational effort and could be almost the symbol of hope for the Continent's future progress.

. . . All the Latin American countries are desperate to diversify their exports. They are striving to become less dependent on the fluctuating prices of unprocessed commodities, by developing and expanding their exports of manufactured goods. A major obstacle is the small size of the average manufacturing unit and a mass of research and technical aid have been devoted to devising and promoting these units into larger entities to make them more capable of breaking into foreign markets.

Columbia has been setting the pace in this activity and it is a new Columbian consortium which has just delivered its first order of 500,000 bikinis to a buyer in Miami. This consortium, is made up of 40 tiny independent manufacturers of women's clothing, all situated in the remote city of Bucaramanga, close to the mountainous borders with Venezuela.

No single factory can boast much more than 70 workers and, until one year ago, they were all devoted entirely to low volume production of many different items for sale in the home market. Soon after forming the consortium, in which each factory has one vote but a shareholding proportionate to its production capacity, it was able to land the bikini order worth about \$250,000.

The small central administration of the consortium was able to organise the work, so that one set of factories concentrated on making the panties, another set the bra sections. Designs were produced centrally to satisfy the buyer's requirements, and the individual factories were relieved of the headaches which go with the packing, documentation, despatch and credit arrangements for international trade of this kind.

. . . Successful consortia are beginning to make themselves known in other countries of Latin America. In the town of Franca, 250 miles inland from Rio in Brazil, scores of little shoemaking concerns have grouped their resources in order to quote for large-scale orders from East Europe. One of their orders was for 1m. pairs of shoes to be delivered to the Soviet Union.

During the last three years, five of Argentina's wine producing enterprises have formed a joint marketing organisation, Vinos Argentinos S.A. which is now sending tanker loads of wine to Europe, 620,000 litres at a time, breaking, for the first time on any scale, into the markets of Switzerland and Britain . . .

UGEPEX — University, Government and Private Enterprise for Exports, is another agency involved in export promotion. It taps the expertise and funds of Governments and universities in order to carry out market studies and production evaluations on a national and international scale on behalf of specific industries. When an export market target has been identified and matched with the potential of a country's manufacturers, then a series of meetings is held with a view to working out how best the individual enterprises might combine their resources in order to penetrate the market . . .

—("The Bikini Beachhead" by Sydney Paulden, *Financial Times*, 28.3.72).

Friends and enemies

British imperialism was and still

is one of the arch-enemies of the Arab peoples in their struggle for national liberation and the achievement of social and economic progress. The responsibility lies squarely on the shoulders of the British imperialists, for during their rule of some Arab countries they obstructed by every means the economic and cultural progress of those countries in order to make it easy for them to rob and exploit the Arabs. The nature of British imperialism, based on stealing and exploitation, has still not changed. It continues to drive London to commit further actions against the cause of the national liberation, independence and progress of the Arab countries. This includes its decision to deliver three British submarines to Israel, which, in London's imperialist plans as well as those of Washington plays the role of the striking force in the fight against the Arab national liberation movement.

—(*Radio Moscow* in Arabic on the British Foreign Secretary's visit to Israel, 21 March 1972).

Soviet Grand Design

A former Swedish diplomat and Soviet expert, in discussing the entire Russian Middle East riddle on the beach at Eilat several weeks ago, suddenly exclaimed, 'You know, in another ten years the Russians will have got all they want from the Arabs in sea and naval bases. They will then turn to an accommodation with Israel as part of an overall Arab—Israeli settlement which they can then arrange!' This eventually, against the historical background of Russian Middle East ambitions over the past two hundred years and their behaviour more particularly in this century — first espousing the establishment of a Jewish State in Arab Palestine and then befriending the Arabs in the subsequent conflict— would seem to merit some thought.

Quite clearly then, Soviet moves in the Mediterranean, Middle East and North Africa are aimed at far larger quarry than Israel. They are designed to eliminate the remaining vestiges of U.S. political and military assets in the area and thus to neutralize NATO as an effective political and military force. The next step is to achieve a position of control over Europe's and Japan's access to Middle Eastern and North African oil through conventional sea and air power based in friendly countries from India and South Yemen, through Syria and Egypt to Libya, Algeria and Malta. The final coup could be an accommodation with Israel, thus slamming the door on the last-remaining U.S. military ally east of Spain and west of Japan. The U.S. could be left with no non-nuclear options in this strategically key part of the world and the sea lanes carrying oil to Western Europe and Japan will be subject to Russian

interdiction. Without a military presence in Egypt, the Soviet Union could never have accomplished this grand design.

—("The Russians in the Middle East" by David G. Nes in *Middle East International*, March 1972).

Free and unfettered?

Independent Bangla is rediscovering its identity with its cultural heritage which is essentially Sanskritist and which remained suppressed during the last 25 years in the name of Islam.

Discarding the Urdu names which the common people do not understand, Bangladesh is introducing the Bengali terminology in writing and speech at all levels of its national life. For instance, the four gallantry awards for all ranks of Bangladesh armed forces, both regular and personnel of the Gana-Bahini (citizen soldiers), have been renamed. They are Vir Shreshtha (gallantry of the highest order), Vir Uttam (high order), Vir Vikram (commendable order) and Vir Pratik (gallantry certificate).

The Bengali Academy at Dacca, free and unfettered, has now seriously taken up the task of finding out suitable Bengali terminology for English words used in administration.

Being a riverine State, Bangladesh has appropriately adopted the white water-lily (called *Shapla* in Bengali) as its national flower. The flower is also called *Kumudini*. It is celebrated in Bengali and Sanskrit poetry as the beloved of the Moon God. Grown abundantly in ponds, tanks, lakes and canals all over the country, the flower is a votive offering to Goddess Manasa, the patron-deity of serpents, who is worshipped on the *Naga-Pancham* day in the rainy season in every Hindu household in Bengal.

The Primary Schools Teachers' Association of Bangladesh has asked for Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's Pratham Bhag (Bengali Primer, 1st Step) to be re-introduced in all primary schools where new primers, heavily loaded with un-understandable Arabic and Persian words, used to be taught to the embarrassment of tiny scholars . . .

If the process of re-discovering the people's ancient cultural moorings continues uninterrupted, it will bring the country closer to India, because in spite of religious diversity the basic culture of both the countries is the same. Bangladesh's national anthem and marching song are among Indian national songs. —("Bangladesh is rediscovering its heritage" by Kaka-Bhushundi in *Organiser*, Delhi, 4 March, 1972).

news brief • news brief • news brief • news brief • news brief

BANGLADESH. Mr. Kamaruzaman, Relief and Rehabilitation Minister, allocated another Rs.140m for relief programmes and is trying to obtain funds for the reconstruction of 6m houses. The shortage of food grains, he said, is only about 1.5m tons but much of the problem was caused by smuggling. ● 73 special tribunals to try about 10,000 'collaborators' including 50 women who are in Dacca jail. ● The Constituent Assembly to meet on 10 April and approve a draft Constitution. ● Under a Presidential order a member of the Constituent Assembly will lose his membership if he resigns or is expelled by the political Party which nominated him. The order of expulsion shall be treated as a conclusive evidence and no court or tribunal or any other body shall have the power to investigate such cases. Members shall draw a fixed salary of Rs.500 per month and an allowance of Rs.50 for each day spent on duty. ● Indian troops returned to Bangladesh within a week of their official withdrawal and were reportedly in action against Mizo tribes who are in rebellion against India. ● Sheikh Mujib announced measures to bring about "the internal social revolution" by means of scientific, social, and economic reforms involving nationalisation of all domestically owned banks, insurance companies, jute, textiles and sugar mills, a large segment of the shipping services and all absentee-owned property. ● Individual family ceiling of land holding has been fixed to about 33 acres. ● An 11-member economic survey mission from Japan is studying possibility of extending economic and technical cooperation.

BULGARIA. A 4-day international meeting of the representatives of the Arab students decided to set up a Federation joining all Arab students in the Socialist countries. The meeting was attended by delegations from the USSR, Poland, GDR, Romania and Bulgaria.

CHINA. A Tashkent radio commentary accused the Chinese regime of forcibly sending over 3,000 young students from the Muslim region of Urumchi to work in underdeveloped areas. This meant waste of talents as

well as denying these young persons the opportunity to complete their education. ● Success has been reported in Fuyun county, in "educating" illiterate Kazakhs who were organised to recall "past misery and think about present happiness". After 4 months of study many could read quotations from Chairman Mao published in the new Kazakh language. ● In Ipin region 320,000 copies of Marxist-Leninist works and 650,000 of Chairman Mao's works were distributed in the year 1971.

EGYPT. Baranis area on the Red Sea had been selected for building a new port which shall be linked by road with Aswan province. ● Russia is to build 2 or 3 cinemas in Cairo and Alexandria for the showing of soviet films. It will also buy up to 15 Egyptian feature films and 40 documentaries. ● Under an agreement signed in Cairo, the value of trade with China is expected to rise to £34m. ● East Germany is to sell 25 three-coach electric trains to run between Cairo and Hulwan. ● More Egyptian students are to receive Czechoslovakian scholarships to study Czechoslovakian art.

GUYANA. India has offered Guyana technical assistance and facilities for training of Guyanan engineers in telecommunications. She will aid the expansion programme and provide exchange equipment.

HUNGARY. A recent review of the crime situation in Budapest showed that although there has been no significant statistical change, offences and juvenile crimes have continued to increase. There were more prosecutions for idleness and prostitution, but still stronger measures were felt necessary to restrict the spread of venereal diseases.

INDONESIA. The Attorney General has ordered the destruction of some 10 tons of books, etc. on Communism, Marxism and Leninism seized earlier this year. ● Home Minister Lt.-Gen. Amir Machmud accused the local communists of using young women to lure government officials. He said that these women were prepared to become second wives to the officials. ● A plan has been announced to buy up to 60% of Chinese owned business and to sell their shares to Indonesians.

IRAQ. Russia and Iraq are to cooperate in fishing in the Gulf and the Arabian Sea. Russia will also construct a fishing harbour and lend two refrigerated fishing vessels to Iraq.

● A technical delegation from Hungary visited Iraq to discuss co-operation between the technical Universities in the two countries.

ISRAEL. The UN Commission on Human Rights has accused Israel of "grave breaches" of the Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians which "constitute war crimes and an affront to humanity". The resolution linked the Israeli policy in the occupied territories with the Nazi atrocities in the last World War. USA, Guatemala, Holland, and Zaire opposed the resolution, whilst Britain, Ghana, Italy, the Philippines and some others abstained. ● Israel Galil, Member without Portfolio told Knesset that Israel will not leave Gaza in any case. ● Minister of

Interior is to ask the courts to cancel the registration of a new-born "Black Israelite" girl as Jewish.

JORDAN. *Al-Balagh*, the Libyan paper rejected President Numeiri's call for an Arab Summit to study the situation arising out of the publication of King Hussein's plan. Such Summit, it said, would be a waste of time and no more fortunate than the previous ones. ● Yasir Arafat said in a Cairo Radio interview that the US visualised Arab areas as being divided into three sectors by 1990. There would be a scientific and industrial sector with Israel at its centre. The second would be the manpower sector from West bank and the Gaza, and the third sector would consist of the consumer lands from the adjoining Arab and African states.

KASHMIR. Russia has proposed "settlement" of Kashmir issue by granting her autonomy and having defence, foreign affairs and communication under Delhi's control. The scheme is said to apply to Indian occupied Kashmir and is claimed to have the approval of Sheikh Mujib also.

LIBYA. A Russian team of ophthalmologists arrived in Khalij province for the treatment of trachoma prevalent in the area.

MALAYSIA. Abu Dhabi will enter a joint venture to manufacture petroleum products in Malaysia and supply the raw material.

PAKISTAN. S. M. Khan, Foreign Secretary, said India has so far failed to supply the names of nearly 30,000 PoW and is refusing to repatriate the families of the PoW who have already been moved to India. He said while some prisoners have been put under solitary confinement others were subjected to public gaze, given electric shocks and provided with unsuitable clothing. Transfer of some PoWs to Dacca, he said, would be in violation of the Geneva convention because such transfers could not be made to a party which is not a signatory of the Convention. An agreement has been signed for the supply of Chinese goods under loan.

● Khan Wali Khan, leader of the National Awami Party, called for an immediate session of the National Assembly to know the details of President Bhutto's visits to the Soviet Union and China and the type of international obstruction standing in the way of Presidents' visits to India.

● Diplomatic relations with Bulgaria broken earlier because of recognition of Bangladesh, are to be resumed. ● President Bhutto told *Newsweek* that Pakistan was not interested in the Asian Security pact proposed by the Kremlin. He was opposed to any new defence treaty, but under the present circumstances, he said, it would be madness to abandon old commitments.

SAUDI ARABIA. Sheikh Mohamoud al-Harakan, Minister of Justice, told a visiting delegation of international jurists from Europe that while the UN adopted the declaration of Human Rights in December 1948, the Qur'an laid down the Human Rights in more clear and categorical terms some 14 centuries ago. ● The Ministry of Agriculture proposes to con-

struct another water desalination plant in the Gulf to serve the towns of Dammam, Al Khobar, Qatif, Safwa and Sihat. The plant is estimated to cost SR 112m and produce 7.5m gallons of water per day.

● Tenders worth 13.6m have been awarded for the construction of 10 secondary, intermediate and primary schools in the country.

SOMALIA. During the second phase of the scientific socialism campaign three projects were completed in the Upper Juba. The projects included the construction of a clinic, a theatre and a garage.

SOVIET RUSSIA. Sergey A. Shevchenko, Director of International Economic Organisations Department at the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Trade told the Cuban agency, Prensa Latina, that the present crisis in the international monetary system can only be solved through going back to gold standard. At present USA or about 10 rich countries discussed and made decisions at the cost of the developing countries. He said they were going to tell the UNCTAD that no one currency or a group of currencies can form a stable basis for international trade. This can only be on the basis of gold and one way or another we shall have to achieve this.

● A "Radio Peace and Progress" broadcast for Africa said that in recent years American and British imperialists have been turning South Africa into their centre for conducting subversive activities against Arab unity.

SUDAN. Sudan has asked financial and educational assistance from the Arab countries to help reconstruct its southern region. ● A group of Chinese engineers and agriculturists has arrived to help in the construction of Wadmedani-Gedaref highway and help with rice cultivation in the southern region.

YEMEN. China is carrying out investigations for building a hospital in Taiz.

YUGOSLAVIA. The Executive Committee of the provincial conference of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Kosovo considered the small pox situation in the country and confirmed the action taken by its last year against participation in the pilgrimage to Mecca.

PEOPLE

Mikhail Aleksandrovich Sholokhov conferred Order of the October Revolution for literary services in the Communist upbringing of the Russian working people. ● Sant Fateh Singh, the Sikh leader, announced retirement from active politics. ● Prof. Henryk Jablonski, 62, elected President of Poland. ● Gavin Young, of *The Observer* Peter Hazelhurst, Delhi correspondent of *The Times* named international reporters of the year. ● Zuhair al-Mufti is the new Jordanian Ambassador in Washington.

VISITS

President Podgorny to Turkey. ● Yasser Arafat to Riyadh and Belgrade. ● President Bourguiba to Geneva for a fortnight's rest. ● President Giri of India to Bangkok. ● A. H. Peerzada, Pakistan's Minister of Information to North Vietnam, China and North Korea. ● Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Minister of Political Affairs in Pakistan to Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta and Tokyo. ● Col. Ala Han, Burmese Foreign Minister to Malaysia. ● Abdul Kader Hateem, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Culture to London for the opening of Tutankhamun. ● Adam Malik, Indonesian Foreign Minister, announced intention to visit Pakistan later this year. ● India's Foreign Minister Swarn Singh to Moscow. ● Prime Minister Mintoff of Malta to China.

OIL STATISTICS 1971

Production (million metric tons)

World 2,465

Muslim countries 1,117

(Arab countries 761)

Rate of increase (percentage)

World 5.5

Muslim countries 9.1

(Arab countries 4.1)

Principal Producers

(million metric tons)

Saudi Arabia 235

Iran 227

Kuwait 158

Libya 132

Future trends: World demand in oil has recently been increasing at 7% per annum. If this trend continues the demand over the next decade is expected to double and rise about eight-fold by the end of the century.