

THE MUSLIM STANDARD

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"My parents' religion is that of the Muslims; ... their devotions are five times a day; they fast in the month of Ramadan, they pay the poor-due according to the Law; they fight for their religion, and they travel to the Hejaz (for the Pilgrimage, those that are capable). They don't eat any meat except that which they themselves kill. They do not drink wines nor spirits, as it is held an abomination to do so. They do not associate with any that worship Idols, or profane the Lord's name, or do dishonour to their parents, or commit murder, or bear false witness, or who are covetous, proud or boastful, for such faults are an abomination unto my religion. They are particularly (careful) in the education of their children, and in their behaviour, but I am lost to all these advantages since my bondage and I am become corrupt; and I now conclude in begging the Almighty God to lead me into the path that is proper for me, for He alone knows the secrets of my heart and what I am in need of."

Abou Bakr Siddiq alias 'Edward Doulan'.

MUSLIMS ENSLAVED

by Ilyas Mahmoud
(formerly Roy Ricketts)

"They could all read and write Arabic, and one of them showed me a Qur'an written from memory by himself—but written he assured me before he became a Christian. I had my doubts on this point. One of them, Benjamin Cochrane, a free Negro who practised with no little success as a Doctor in Kingston, was in the habit of coming to me on Sundays to give me information about the medical plants and popular medicine of the country, and a more intelligent and respectable person, in every sense of the word, I do not know... His history is that of hundreds of others in Jamaica... Cochrane says his father was a chief in Mandingo country; Plenty of books in Mandingo country, but not much schools; the great schools are farther up country. He began to learn to be a doctor in Mandingo country. He professed to be an occasional follower of one of the sectarian ministers here, and so did each of his two friends. I had my doubts thereupon. I expressed them to my wife who was present at this occasion and told her to prepare for a demonstration of Mahometanism. I took up a book as if by accident, and began repeating the well-known Mussulman creed 'Laa ilaha illa Allah, Mahommed rasul Allah' (There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the

TO BE SOLD & LET
BY PUBLIC AUCTION,
On **MONDAY the 18th of MAY, 1829,**
UNDER THE TREE,
FOR SALE,
THE THREE FOLLOWING
SLAVES,
THE
UNIVERSAL, about 30 Years old, an excellent House Servant, of Good Character.
WILLIAM, about 40 Years old, a Labourer.
MARY, an excellent House Servant and Nurse.
For full Particulars, Enquire of the BROTHERS, who sell.

TO BE LET,
On the best residence of the City, ending in the Food, Cloth, and Medical, &c.
MALE and FEMALE
SLAVES,
ALSO FOR SALE, at Eleven o'clock,
Fine Rice, Gram, Paddy, Books, Muslins,
Needles, Pins, Ribbons, &c. &c.
AT ONE O'CLOCK, THE CELEBRATED ENGLISH HORSE,
BLUCHER,

A Slave-sale bill, advertising public auction in West Indies

(Courtesy Radio Times Hulton Picture Library)

messenger of Allah). In an instant, I had a Musulman trio, long and loud; my Negro neophytes were chanting their names with irrepressible fervour; and Mr. Benjamin Cochrane, I thought would have inflicted the whole of "the perspicuous book" of Islam (The Qur'an) on me if I had not taken the opportunity for giving him and his companions a reproof for

pretending to be that which they were not."

Thus wrote Robert R. Madden who was one of six special magistrates assigned to Jamaica in 1833 by the British Government to administer the scheme of 'Apprenticeship'—the scheme designed to prepare slaves for 'freedom' while still largely maintaining the hold of the slave masters over them.

The writings of Madden, who got a knowledge of Islam and Muslims during periods spent in the Middle East, cast a flicker of light on an important aspect of the history of the West Indies, an aspect which even West Indian historians have done little research on. This aspect concerns the Muslim background of many of the slaves who were imported from West Africa to the Americas and the Caribbean, and the process by which they were de-humanized and de-cultured. They were uprooted from the vast regions of West Africa whose coastline extends for over 3,000 miles from the Cape Verde Islands to Angola. They belonged to many 'nations'—the Fulani, the Hausas, the Mandingoes, Yorubas, Karomantis, Ashantis, Fantis, Whiddahs and others many of whom have had large Muslim populations down to the present day.

The above quotation from Madden

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reveals several important facts about this Muslim background and about the process of de-Islamization. Some of these facts are:

1. that there was a sizeable Muslim population in Jamaica up to the 1830's comprising 'hundreds' of Muslims;
2. that these Muslims were highly literate people whose knowledge of Islam was great and who were able to read and write Arabic, there being some among them who knew the whole Qur'an by heart;
3. that these slaves were highly intelligent and respectable people, an image which contradicts the popular European notion that slaves were inherently degenerate and shifty;
4. that they came from a part of Africa that had a highly developed civilisation based on Islam. In fact, West Africa with flourishing educational and university centres in places like Timbuktoo and Bornu was enjoying a level of intellectual life when Europe was still going through its 'Dark Ages';
5. that they were forced by the European slave masters and missionaries to convert to Christianity and adopt European names and habits;
6. that in spite of this conversion, they maintained a deep personal attachment to Islam, acknowledging its benefits and its superiority over Christianity. This is borne out by the statement of Abu Bakr Siddiq alias Edward Doulan (see inset). It is also emphasized by Madden who said elsewhere: 'Few, very few indeed, of the native African who have become instructed in their creed (emphasis mine) or superstitions, which you please, have given up their early rites and observances for those of the religion of the country they were brought to. But this they do not acknowledge because they are afraid to do so.'
7. The Muslims in Jamaica lived under constant threat of terrible punishment if they practised their faith. And it may be true to say that these Muslims, subjected to unprecedented on slaughts, adopted slave names and the culture of their surroundings only as a means to make their plight easier.

In spite of the above observations, it would be wrong to conclude that the Muslim slaves in Jamaica adopted the soft and easy option of assuming alien European names and habits. There is evidence that they were prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice to obtain their

FORCED TO BECOME CHRISTIANS

freedom and dignity. Once such piece of evidence in these gruesome years was the so-called 'Great Slave Rebellion' of 1834 and the part which Muslims played in it.

Just before the outbreak of this rebellion, a WATHIQA (Arabic for 'document', in this case a sort of underground pamphlet) was in circulation amongst the Muslims in Jamaica exhorting them to be true to their faith if they wished to go to heaven. That document had to be destroyed in haste having turned up in Manchester from Kingston some sixty odd miles away. That the Muslims may have played a leading and prominent part in the uprising is not surprising and is also borne out by parallel researches now being done on slave communities in the Deep South of North America and in places like Brazil.

That 1834 rebellion was put down. But the spirit at least of the Muslims was not entirely crushed. Their mood and the things which mattered to them most at that deeply unsettled time was shown when a group of them decided to let known to Madden what their views regarding religion was. It was the 2nd. October 1834. They chose the subject of the Life Hereafter which would seem to indicate that they no longer cared about the punishment their masters were likely to further inflict on them. Their letter to Madden said in part:

'This Day of Judgment, that we consider light and simple, we will find to be a very sorrowful—a dismal and mournful day; whatever punishment we are to receive, we have not the power to say one word for ourselves...

'We see plainly that every nation has a book towards the Almighty...The Nation of Mandingo condemns no books whatsoever, but we do not agree with the

readers of them; no nation has a leaf that tells the readers of them to do evil; every book tells the readers that they must endeavour to avoid badness and not let the vanity of this world take up all their attention, the vanity of this world is only two or three days high living! We die tomorrow and leave all things behind us, for we cannot carry anything away with us. We must remember our first coming into life; those who commanded the world and carried all before them, they are now dead, and have carried nothing away with them. So we must expect that we will die, and be as they are. All those that are in authority the Almighty made them so...

'But those that will oppress the poor, at the great day they will go through a long severe punishment. God will condemn them to a never ending torment, such as King Pharoah suffered in a raging fire for his evil deeds to the children of Israel...'

The writer of that letter was known by his slave name of William Rainsford who came from Mandingo country from a place called Sancran where all the people it is said were noted for their 'refinement in learning'. The others who signed the letter were Benjamin Cochrane whose real name was Musa, Benjamin Larten and Edward Doulan whose real name was Abu Bakr Siddique (after the successor or Khalifah to Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace).

Now there is hardly a trace of that original Muslim presence in Jamaica. The fact that the Muslim presence was so totally removed from Jamaica, as indeed from other West Indian islands, shows how thorough were the European slave masters and Christian missionaries in committing what is now acknowledged today as cultural genocide.

It is thus a strange feeling to consider that being a Jamaican nowadays and being a Muslim at the same time is not at all a welcome combination to a lot of people and is always greeted with an awful air of surprise. The Europeans are surprised because they assume that you should be Christian and not Muslim and the Jamaicans are rather suspicious that you should be thus, even though at the present time Muslim communities are springing up all over the island and individuals are rediscovering the soul-stirring legacy of some of their distinguished forefathers.

MULTINATIONAL CORRUPTION

THE UGLY FACE OF DEVELOPMENT

Investigations following the Watergate burglary fiasco, into the political and other donations of major corporations revealed that there were some 'strange' recipients apart from politicians. Listed under various heads like 'consultancy payments' were huge transfers of funds to middle-men and other 'fixers' to gain contracts or maintain monopolies.

United Brandts was alleged to have paid millions of dollars to the President of Honduras so as to stave off an export tax on bananas. (United Brandts is the biggest banana exporter in the world). This was revealed when the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC), the body which polices the stock exchange in the United States, investigated the company's accounts following a suicide leap by its president, Eli Black.

In other investigations, Gulf Oil, Lockheed Corporation and Northrop have been implicated. Vast bribes have been given to gain defence contracts by Lockheed, Northrop and McDonnell Douglas. Middle-men like the well-known Saudi businessman, Adnam Kashoggi (until now the model of an entrepreneur par excellence) have been alleged to have pocketed millions of dollars in 'consultancy' fees and as —all thinly disguised euphemisms for bribery.

Among the recipients of these bribes, highly placed officials in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Kuwait and Iran have been named.

Other corporations have gone even further. Investigations into the operations of the CIA revealed that the ITT corporation had actively participated in the subversive activities in Chile, which eventually led to the overthrowing of the Allende government.

These revelations pose several important questions. Firstly, since the work and contracts of major defence contractors like Lockheed and McDonnell Douglas are closely vetted by the US Defence Department the tacit approval of the Pentagon to those pay offs is highly probable. Secondly, although it is common knowledge in informed circles that most big corporations indulge in such practices, why then was this particular time chosen for the revelations?

Although it is difficult to give definitive answers one may begin by stating that under US law it is not illegal

to give 'bribes' to overseas personnel. It was only when the US shareholder was not told of the 'bribes' in the corporations' accounts that legal proceedings could be taken. This could easily have been done in a low key revelation in the business news sections of the newspapers. It is possible that by projecting an image of having investigated and stopped such practices the main motive is to stage off investigations of current practices and other more sinister payments, particularly in the now lucrative markets of the Middle East. Also, by claiming that their own house had been put in order, the US corporations may gain more business by triggering off investigations into competing corporations from other countries.

On the side of the recipients the effects are even more damaging. It is common talk among technocrats working in the Middle East, for instance, that a bid for a project is seldom accepted on technical superiority or price competitiveness. Political haggling and other pay-offs often mean an inferior design being accepted.

Even worse, many officials, spurred on by lucrative pay-offs have put up money for projects which are either unnecessary or totally unsuited to the requirements of their countries. Many of the multitude of defence systems now being erected come into this category.

KENYA COUNCIL DEMANDS MUSLIM PERSONAL LAW

Muslim organisations in Kenya have decided to establish a broad-based central coordinating organisation with a view to representing and catering for the interests of the country's over one and a half million strong Muslim community.

A meeting recently called by the Supreme Islamic Council congratulated the Government of Kenya for following a policy of promoting amity between all religions and ethnic groups in the country and showing respect for the religious and cultural rights of the minority communities. The meeting however pointed to the contradictory situation with regard to Muslim personal law which is an inseparable part of the Islamic religion. While the Constitution guaranteed full freedom of religious belief and practice, the statutory position was not quite so. As an interim measure, the meeting requested the appointment of Qadis (Muslim judges) at the district

level, particularly where the Muslims constituted a significant part of the population.

ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY FUND

The Islamic Secretariat's standing committee of the Islamic Solidarity Fund which met in Jeddah earlier this month has finalised the statutes of the fund. The Committee also charged the Islamic secretary general Mr Ahmad Karim Gai and its chairman Shaykh Saleh al Suqair to formulate the criteria for disbursing aid to Islamic centres and bodies all over the world. The fund sanctioned a grant of 100,000 dollars to Gabon and recommended a preliminary allocation of 1.5 million dollars each for establishing universities in Uganda and Niger.

Spain Gives Land For Mosque

The Spanish Government has decided to give a plot of land to the Muslim community of Madrid to build a Mosque.

However, negotiations are still going on between the Spanish government and Muslim organisations regarding the restoration to Muslims of the famous Cordoba mosque. The dialogue also covers the return of the mosque in Toledo.

ISLAMIC COUNCIL

FOR GUINEA

Guinea is to have an Islamic Council to coordinate and consolidate Islamic activities in the country. A decree to this effect was issued recently by the president Sekou Toure.

The Council shall comprise 50 members all of whom will be nominated by the president on the basis of their Islamic scholarship as well as their absolute faith in Islam and their loyalty and dedication to the national interests.

The broad aims of the council are to protect and preserve the Islamic principles, purify the Islamic law of its local accretions, to build and maintain mosques and to advise the government on Islamic affairs.

COMMON AFRICAN LANGUAGE

The All Africa Teachers' Organisation (AATO) has proposed to the Organisation of African Unity to adopt one of the three major African languages — Hausa, Arabic, Swahili — as the continent's lingua franca or common language.

* Is there something wrong with democracy itself, that it should want to be preserved by totalitarian methods? *

INDIA: The Democratic Myth

It would have been far better if Dr. Barakat Ahmad, India's High Commissioner in Trinidad, and the 'Trinidad Guardian' had remained silent on the 26th anniversary of Republic Day in India. Did they really expect people to believe that in spite of the suspension of basic human rights and freedoms, the massive arrests and imprisonments, the confiscation of newspapers and property and the dissolution of State legislatures, that India still remained a 'democratic' state?

Barakat Ahmad, in his published message, justified Indira's draconian measures by saying that 'some groups and elements of widely differing persuasions joined together to paralyse the country's political and economic life (and) to create confusion and foment chaos and disorder. He claimed that confidence has now been restored and reaffirmed his 'belief in democracy'. Obviously, there are many who believe but do not practise.

The Trinidad Guardian, justifying Indira's putting herself above the reaches of any law said that 'she is the only person able to weld the multi-separatist nation at this time' and went on to sanction the view that undemocratic methods may be necessary to preserve democracy. Does this mean that there is something wrong with democracy itself, that it should want to be preserved by totalitarian methods?

However confusing it may all sound, the Indian Government is going ahead with its suspension of freedoms, the latest being those guaranteed under Article 19 of the Constitution. These relate to freedom of speech, assembly, association, movement and profession, to live in any part of India and to own property. The previous suspensions since the declaration of emergency related to

the right of equality before the law, the right of life and personal liberty, the right to know the charge against oneself and, if arrested, to be presented before a court within 24 hours.

Meanwhile, how do non-official Indians view the developments in their country? M. Yacoob, an Indian citizen, at present in California USA, gives his impressions below

A LIBERATING THOUGHT

I for one would resist the impulse to enhance my point of view through rhetoric but the fact remains that India is a country where democracy is a myth, where socialism means false promises and where secularism is yet another idol in the Indo-Aryan pantheon.

The recent leap towards totalitarianism, the grievous implications of which are bound to be faced by every Indian sooner or later, was only indicative of the altruism that injustice, like justice, itself was not divisible. A polity which has sort of specialised in suppressing the country's over 200 million Muslims and the Scheduled Castes cannot in the final analysis be just to the remaining sections of the population.

Given amity and sensibility on the part of the respective leaderships, the sub-continent can play a great and constructive role in serving the world community, but as an Indian I feel disgusted at the megalomaniac behaviour of our leadership. More than anyone else it hurts India itself.

Just now Mrs Gandhi seems to be too concerned about the type of leadership and ideology the people of Bangladesh should or should not have. How are we Indians supposed to react if a foreign power similarly and overtly felt

concerned about the nature and shape of our internal political organisation? If the people of Bangladesh appear to have developed any distaste for our overbearing friendship then it is we who have to reflect upon and reconsider our own attitudes and policies. Although those who have followed Indian involvement in East Pakistan/Bangladesh are not at all surprised to learn that contrary to assertions our interest there was never altruistic or even secular.

I happened to be in India during the 1971 war to 'liberate' Bangladesh. On December 19, a victory rally was arranged in the city of Hyderabad to celebrate that liberation. It was supposed to have been a victory of secularism over religious and fanatical communalism but the slogans on the lips of the Telegu processionists were: Down with Muslims, Don't trust the Muslims. Bewildered I looked at the faces of the officials and the policemen accompanying the procession but to find there only grins and smiles.

The feeling I then got and which has since been strengthened by subsequent events is that in the first instance India itself needs to be liberated of the narrowness, bigotry and hypocrisy imposed upon it by its upper caste leadership.

women compared with those who do not breast feed and in India, Taiwan and Korea postponement of from eight to 12 months...In women who are not breast-feeding, menstruation resumes on average three months after delivery.

Excluding China, these translate into a worldwide estimate of 35 million annual couple years of protection...In contrast the total number of couples

continuing to be protected by contraceptive methods provided by family planning programmes (official and voluntary) in the same area was calculated to be 27,000,000 in 1974.

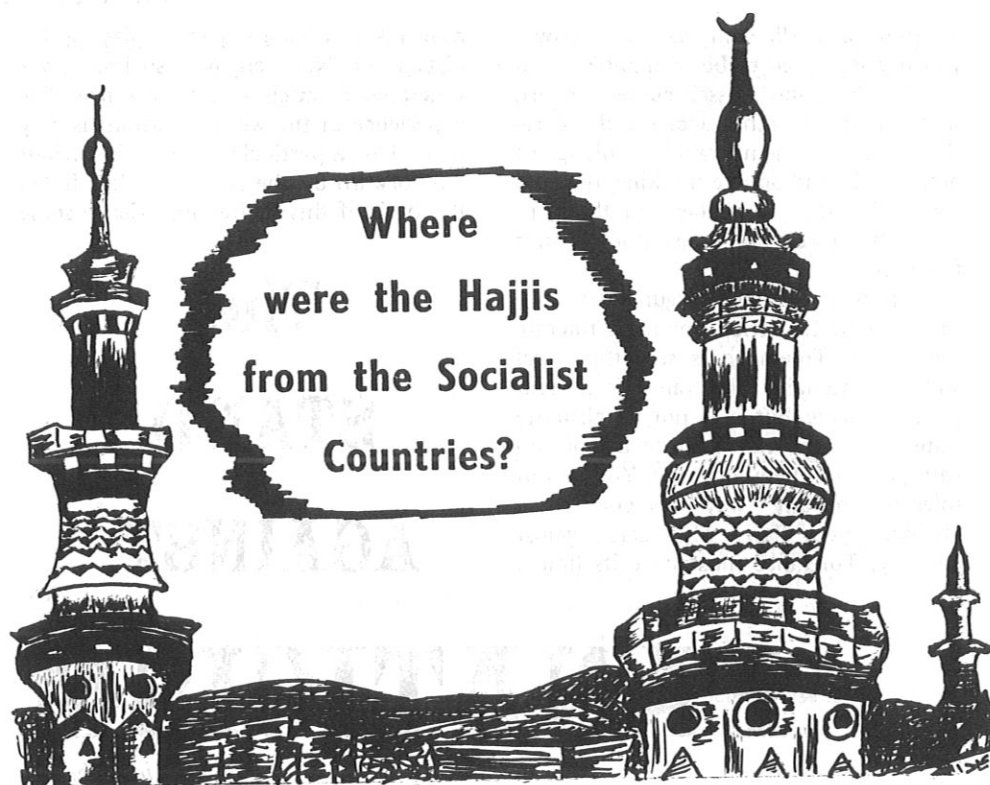
(See Franz Rosa, 'Breast Feeding: A Motive for Family Planning, The People, Quarterly Journal of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, London, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1976).

BREAST FEEDING

THE NATURAL WAY

The eroding practice of breast-feeding is one aspect of 'modernisation' or pseudo-modernisation' which even that otherwise crusading moderniser, the family planning lobby, has now come to recognise as 'unfortunate'. Only recently it has been able to discover the overwhelming significance of breast feeding in natural spacing and conversely, the increase in birth rate with the introduction of bottle feeding.

'Rural studies in Java, Bangladesh, Rwanda, Nigeria and Senegal have shown a postponement of resumption of fertility by more than a year in breast feeding



'And proclaim unto mankind the Pilgrimage. They will come unto thee on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every deep ravine, that they may witness things that are of benefit to them... (The Qur'an, 22 : 27).

HAJJ FIGURES 1395/1975

Afghanistan	5,800	Mauritius	204
Algeria	55,010	Mauritania, Islamic Republic	914
Bahrain	1,928	Niger	685
Bangladesh	3,580	Nigeria	92,593
Britain	1,187	Pakistan	45,027
Brunei	431	Palestine	1,445
Cameroon	1,005	Philippines	1,154
Chad	965	Qatar	974
Central African Republic	390	Senegal	3,832
Dahomey	419	Sierra Leone	337
Egypt	51,230	Singapore	1,152
Ethiopia	1,889	Somalia	3,112
France	795	South Africa	1,815
French Somaliland	124	South Yemen	5,508
Gambia	590	Syria	31,209
Ghana	2,703	Tanzania	580
Greece	487	Thailand	654
India	18,863	Tunisia	7,683
Indonesia	55,617	Turkey	136,115
Iran	74,095	Uganda	3,031
Iraq	10,368	United Arab Emirates	3,857
Ivory Coast	1,771	Upper Volta	1,540
Jordan	17,331	Yemen	113,899
Kenya	598	Yugoslavia	1,048
Kuwait	8,808		
Lebanon	1,208	Other African Countries	692
Liberia	61	Other Asian Countries	410
Libya	52,718	Other European & American Countries	1,657
Malaysia	15,735		
Mali	2,719		

Statistics of people performing the pilgrimage to Mecca each year often provide some very revealing facts about the varying conditions—political and economic—in which Muslims find themselves in various parts of the world.

Figures for the recent Hajj published on this page show that a total of 894,593 persons from outside Saudi Arabia performed the Hajj. Of these, 594,593 were male and 299,980 were female. Including Saudis, the total figure was well over a million.

Large numbers of pilgrims from places like Turkey and Nigeria were encouraging. Especially in the case of Turkey, the figures show a growing revival of Islam despite more than a half a century of insistent secularization. The Nigerian figures reflect the traditional strength of Islam in Africa north of the Equator and also a growing economic prosperity. Affluence was also revealed in the presence of the Iranians who by being prepared to pay vast sums for accommodation and facilities contributed to the difficulties of other pilgrims. The increasing numbers from Egypt showed a more liberal policy under Sadat as compared to Nasser's era when Islam and Muslims experienced some of the worst repressions in this century.

The comparatively small number of people from Bangladesh is indicative of the torments which these people have been experiencing in the recent past.

There were other places where because of economic difficulties quotas were introduced. Ghana was one of them and there was even the suggestion that Ghanaians instead of going to Mecca for pilgrimage could go to places more nearby like Timbuktu which was once a flourishing centre of Islamic learning.

The number of pilgrims from the new Muslim communities in Europe and the Americas are slowly increasing. 78 went from Trinidad and Tobago.

But the most glaring absentees were the Muslims from the socialist countries like the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, Albania, Bulgaria and so on. Both the Soviet Union and China each have Muslim populations larger than any single Middle Eastern country. The absence of pilgrims from these places show the degree of repression that is taking place and the almost total absence of any freedom to practise religion. Albania, for example, which was once almost 100% Muslim, has been carrying out a systematic policy to destroy all mosques in the country. The only flicker of light in this area of darkness can be seen in Yugoslavia which has been experiencing a slight thaw in socialist rectitude.

Fanaticism is a much used and abused term, and not merely by contemporary writers and speakers. The exploitation of this term goes back rather deep into history. It has been used to silence political opponents. It has been used to dub different religious groups as protagonists of violence, rightly or wrongly. It is one of those terms which have always been used by different groups of people. As such we should be very clear as to what it means.

There are three basic points which are to be kept in view. Firstly, I would treat as a fanatic one who is not open to reason, who is not prepared to think and argue, who instead of the logic of argument would employ the arbitrary use of authority. Secondly, the problem of violence is very central to an appreciation of what fanaticism is. Using those means, those methods, those techniques which create disorder, disaffection and —such methods can be called an integral part of the paraphernalia of fanaticism. Mere use of force is not violence. Even a policeman uses force but this is not violence unless he transgresses certain limits. Parents, elders, even friends may use some force but that is not violence. Violence is that use of force which violates certain accepted principles. This brings me to my third point. Very fundamental to fanaticism is the violating of those values which have been accepted by humanity as its fundamental code of behaviour—the rule of law, principles of justice, natural justice and social justice.

DOUBLE STANDARDS

Now the problem is quite a tricky one. To stand for one's conviction is not fanaticism in the sense of the word as it is commonly used. To believe in certain values, to live for them, to work for them, to strive for them is not fanaticism. We are living in a strange world of double standards, what George Orwell described as 'double thought' and 'double talk'. It is really strange that if a socialist stands for his cause, this is considered revolutionary fervour. If a Muslim works for Islam this is fanaticism! If a democrat goes to the extent of saying, as not one but many intellectuals in the West have said, that those who want to change the democratic system through democratic means are rebels and actually perpetrate violence, this is not considered fanaticism. When in Kenya, through the process of direct

election, a parliament came to power which was alleged to be communistic, no one but Bertrand Russell comes forward to say that we cannot accept a democratic vote against democracy! In this age of double talk and double thinking, to stand for one's ideals, to believe in them, to have the force of conviction is not fanaticism.

It is a very facile argument that in the name of toleration one must tolerate everything. Tolerance is something real and very valuable. Tolerance is a great cultural virtue but it is not an absolute value. You do not tolerate the person who parks on the wrong side. You do not tolerate in any way someone who infringes your law, who acts against decency. Tolerance must have its limits.

And this is what distinguishes idealism from fanaticism. Conviction and bigotry are not the same thing. A man with a conviction also believes, but he believes on the basis of reason and argument and he is prepared to argue out his case. A bigot is not prepared to listen to anything which goes against his views.

IDEALISM AND FANATICISM CONFUSED

It is unfortunate that many western writers, even top scholars, and the order of the column writers, have been in the habit of confusing these two and they have been calling our idealism, fanaticism, and calling the word fanaticism, idealism. For the last 400 years or so, western writers have been accusing Islam of being fanatic, or being intolerant, of being a religion propagated through the sword and so on. Actually, this charge was originally raised in respect of the behaviour of the Christian Church in medieval times. It was during that period that Islam emerged as a revolutionary force.

When the western world came into contact with the Islamic world, they conveniently shifted this allegation from the doors of Christianity to the doors of Islam. And the irony is that Christian writers, missionaries as well as orientalist

have taken a leading part in playing this dirty game. Now religion as such has never generated fanaticism or intolerance. The experience of the western nations is very limited to a particular type of behaviour put forward by the organised Church. On the basis of this limited experience some

The STAND AGAINST

FANATICISM

Khurshid Ahmad

thinkers have generalised that this is the attitude of religion as such.

No one can dispute that the behaviour of the Christian church in medieval times was in certain respects a very ignoble one. There have been some exaggerations, but even if one makes allowance for these, Christianity as it grew in Europe adopted a highly intolerant attitude towards its own fold, not to speak of others. It is known that the Jews, whatever may have been their ingratitude to the people who gave them protection, were the most haunted people in the entire Christian world for more than a thousand years and if they could seek refuge anywhere, it was in the Muslim world. Muslims extended to them all possible protection, legal, political, economic, social and religious. Christianity's attitude towards its own adherents had also been highly intolerant. The Church demanded a kind of conformity which is not in keeping with human dignity and human nature. It imposed upon them thought-control and other religious and social humiliations. The history of the Inquisitions shows that hundreds of thousands of people were persecuted simply for holding opinions which did not conform to the view of the Church. I accept all these as facts of history but would ask on the basis of this limited experience how just and how

THERE IS NO COMPULSION IN RELIGION. TRUTH STANDS OUT CLEAR FROM ERROR.

—*The Qur'an.*

reasonable it would be to generalise that all religions are and must be intolerant and fanatical.

Not one, but many historians say, and very rightly say, that this blood-thirsty attitude of Christianity (in medieval times) does not owe itself to the original teachings of the prophets. If you study the politico-cultural history of Europe you would find that the genesis of this attitude is to be found in the Greco-Roman Empire. The Greek type lies at the roots of the following civilisations which emerged in Europe. The modern West imbibed that very attitude. Toynbee, Russel, all of them thought that the intolerance and fanaticism of Christianity owes itself to this particular Greco-Roman type. Others had never been so intolerant or so fanatical before.

A DIFFERENT OUTLOOK

In Islamic history you will find an outlook of a different nature. When the Romans conquered any country, the first thing they would do is mass massacre. When the Muslims conquered any country, they would give guarantees of life, property and honour to all the non-belligerents. Even in war, a Muslim is not allowed to kill an old person, a woman, a child, those who are crippled or disabled. Only when sword is wielded, must iron be met with iron. Not only that, even trees are not to be cut and crops are not to be burnt. The entire Islamic history does not know of the concept of mass massacre.

For indications of western practice, there is no need to go far back. When in 1945 the fate of Germany was being decided by the victorious powers the plan was that Germany should not be allowed to exist at all but be divided into four and assimilated by the Allied powers. And now they complain about the problem of West and East Berlin! The Supreme Command also planned that conquered Japan would never come to life again, but the plan was thwarted by the changing tides of world diplomacy. That is how they treated in victory. In contrast, look at how the Prophet of Islam entered Mecca as victor. Everyone was offered complete amnesty. When Caliph Umar

entered Jerusalem he was not even prepared to pray in a Church for fear that those who came after him may treat the place as a mosque and take it away from the Christians. But when the city of Jerusalem was taken by the Crusaders there was total massacre of the population. How did they behave in Spain? Not a single Muslim was left unexecuted or unexiled. It was the same in Sicily where all the mosques were demolished.

Even in the 19th and 20th centuries the same practice was adopted. There was Greece where the entire Muslim population was either eliminated or driven out and in parts of the Balkans where Muslims were in a clear majority, not only their political position was annulled; even their physical existence was not tolerated...

A SIMPLE QUESTION

Concerning the allegation that religion engenders intolerance and fanaticism, I would like to pose a simple and logical question: If religion had been responsible for this, once religion was done away with and the reign of secularism and materialism established, should there not have been real peace and tolerance in the world? But is it really so? What is the record of modern nations who are never tired of talking about peace and tolerance? Can we forget that when Paris was ringing with the slogans of liberty, equality and fraternity what the French forces were doing in Africa and South East Asia? (Here I may add that if there had been any instances of law suppression or doing injustice in Muslim history, this arose from those who believed in so-called liberalism or modernism and the object of oppression was often those who stood for the orthodox, pristine, unadulterated and unchanged teachings of Islam). When the glorious democracy was taking shape in Britain, what was being done by England and English forces in India, China, in Latin America and in African countries? Even today some are not prepared to tolerate those the colour of whose skin is different from their own. They are not prepared to tolerate those who believe in different values. They are not prepared to

tolerate those who live in other countries, or according to their terminology, belong to different nationalities. European soil is soaked with blood spilled in the name of nationalism in wars over the last 150 years. In only two world wars of the twentieth century, more persons have been killed than in all the wars of the nineteenth century. Is this a century of peace and tolerance or the century of wars and intolerance, of violence and bloodshed?

But that is not the only area. The modern age has developed ingenious ways of inflicting violence upon people. This civilisation is not prepared to tolerate other cultures or civilisations in any form. They have tried to force people into slavery through brute power. If Islam was spread by force, by what was imperialism spread? Modern civilisation has done physical torture, not in one country but in whole areas. It is known that in Russia and Germany torture had become the way of life and it is not unknown even to Britain and the United States. There is psychological demolition of personalities and a living death is inflicted. People are uprooted from their cultures and left without values like straws in the waters... This is done through the instruments of education and the communication media, with the youth of the Muslim world (in Asia, Africa and elsewhere) and with other nations.

Look at the intellectual world. As far as Islam is concerned, up till now the modern West has not accepted to call us by our proper name. They would call Islam, Mohammadanism, and a Muslim, a Mohammadan. The prophet Muhammad would be called by any name—even derogatory ones. And this you would find in their most scholarly works. In other fields also, the examples of such intellectual intolerance are not limited. Therefore, can one say that the age of secularism or irreligion has in any way produced equity and tolerance? If not so, of what use is the allegation that it is religion that breeds intolerance. Specifically in the case of Islam, this allegation cannot stand.

Islam definitely has certain commitments. It is commitment which makes a man great. Once this is said, it

HOW CAN SUCH A DELICATE THING AS BELIEF OR FAITH BE FORCED?

does not mean that we want to force this commitment upon others, through arbitrary power or violence. Had this been so, God Almighty was powerful enough to turn all people to the Islamic way, but He did not. He has revealed the truth and He has given man the opportunity and the freedom to choose. Can you visualise any freedom greater than this—that you are free to accept your Creator or refuse to accept? This is the way of God and once you accept this you would find that the use of violence cannot fit into this scheme. That is why in the Qur'an, God says;

There is no compulsion in religion. Wisdom has been made distinct from the untruth.

The two roads are open and man is in a position to choose. Moreover, in Islamic Law, acceptance of a thing under duress is void. How can belief or faith ('Iman in Arabic)—such a delicate matter—be subjected to this treatment. It no longer remains Iman if it is forced. Now we are discussing the problem on a very different plane. The animal plane on which others think over it is far below the rational plane, the spiritual plane on which Islam discusses the problem. The very concept of 'Wisdom is made distinct from the untruth' is a revolutionary concept. The great Muslim commentator Imam Razi in discussing this verse of the Qur'an says that the rationale of 'There is no compulsion in religion' lies in the following statement 'Wisdom is made distinct from the untruth. Once you appreciate this you can understand what beauty lies therein

Islam presents the concept that all human beings are equal and we are equal because we are all creatures of God with no distinctions of colour, race or country, or tribe or clan or anything else. You would find that fanaticism is generated in the last analysis either from any of these false prejudices, when you try to group humanity into certain water-tight compartments. You cannot change the

colour of your skin, you cannot change your place of birth. If you believe in any of these standards, then rational fusion of the human race is not possible and you become intolerant towards others. In Islam, the rational fusion is possible for whatever tribe you come from, from whatever race you come, whatever colour you may have, whatever territory you might be born in, whatever language you speak, you are one, you can be one. You belong to one family. You are one brotherhood...

ISLAM
IS
THE
RELIGION
OF THE
MIDDLE PATH

Psychologically speaking, another source from which fanaticism comes is an inferiority complex where an untruth masquerades as truth, where it cannot meet its enemy on the plane of logic and argument. In Islam no such psychological complex is there. One of the reasons why the Muslim society has always been a tolerant society is because of the confidence generated in Muslims by these values of Islam.

ENDS CANNOT JUSTIFY MEANS

Another point is that Islam is very unique and firm in asserting that ends cannot justify means. A source from where fanaticism and intolerance have most often come is the mistaken belief that ends justify means. This means that to achieve even good ends you could resort to evil means. The principle that Islam has enunciated is that "Good and bad are not equal. Replace evil by good". If you fight falsehood with falsehood it is falsehood which prevails. If you replace vice with vice, it is vice which triumphs. If you change evil by evil, it is evil which is victorious. Islam says that evil is to be

eliminated by good. If you pursue this technique then only would you be able to fill the earth with goodness and justice, and peace and fellow-feeling. Islam has struck at the roots of fanaticism. If you reflect upon the system that Islam has given, you would find that fanaticism has no place in it but idealism is the life blood of it.

In the Qur'an, it has been mentioned that the mission for which the Muslim nation has been created is to call people to goodness, to forbid evil and bid truth and right. It is to be a message and an offer. It is not forcing people under goodness. In this pursuit you are to have two things: one is that you have to meet oppression, you have to meet tyranny, you have to meet obstacles. You have to meet those who would not allow you to operate. As far as the wrong ('munkar') is concerned, you are permitted to eliminate it. But as far as the truth and virtue ('ma'ruf') is concerned, it is not to be enforced by power.

That is why you would find that wherever Muslims went and whatever lands they conquered, they never forced the people to convert. What greater example can I quote than the example of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. There the Muslims ruled for 900 years and when in 1947 it was partitioned, the Muslims were in a minority. Of course, during that period I must admit that they failed also in preaching. But that is a different matter. But they never forced others to their own way of life. Thus we find that jurists and commentators have said that using force to eliminate obstacles has been permitted, but once this has been done, you cannot use force to make anyone accept your religion.

This is the position of Islam. You can very easily see that Islam has clearly discriminated between idealism and fanaticism. It has done everything to generate in us real idealism, noble idealism, virtuous idealism, and to protect us from the evil influences of fanaticism. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has said that Islam is the religion of the Middle Path. The Qur'an has called the Muslim nation 'UMMAT AL-WUSTA—the people of the middle, the people who maintain balance and equilibrium in all their affairs. Adhering to idealism, protecting yourself and avoiding the extremes of fanaticism—this is the Middle Path and it is this path which Islam invites to all humanity.

GET WISE SISTERS! It is now time to stop being hoaxed and to stop conning yourselves. It is now time to address yourselves to the reconstruction of your images and the improvement of your position in the society.

For too long, women have been portrayed, and have portrayed themselves as mindless bodies—an image further strengthened by their participation in 'beauty' shows. At these flesh competitions, YOU, Sisters, do not only abandon your moral principles, but willingly destroy your self-respect for a brief moment of false and worthless glory. Sisters, the 'beauty' emphasised at these gatherings is of a very shallow and temporary nature, a mere flash of youth which is helpless before the debasing sickle of Time. One day, that firm, smooth skin which you now exhibit with pride will be replaced by the wrinkled, parchment-like sagging membranes of a worn-out person, your charms will be hidden beneath the debris of Age, and your white toothed smile will give way to a toothless grin. What will you do then? Wake up, Sisters, to the exploitation of your physical resources by the perverted minds of those who smile in your faces and stab you in the back!

For too long, sisters, you have been content to accept the images of yourselves handed down by misguided males. The end result is that you are discriminated against and victimised in all walks of life—mere sex objects, deeply rooted in your full-length mirrors, trying out your poses for the next beauty show. Sisters, many of you are so busy trying to be 'sexy' that you no longer try to be human; the fashionable leanings towards nudity have stripped you of all modesty...

It is deplorable that sections of the Press and the film industry have been greatly responsible for the destruction of your morals. They have played down your roles as responsible wives and mothers, educators and human beings, as heiresses to the highest destiny of God's Creation and the most valuable asset to humanity—the corner-stone of the family unit which is the basis of any civilised society. Instead, you have been depicted as rank materialists, sex-symbols, beauty ornaments and fickle, lead-headed

Lo! Men who surrender unto God, and women who surrender, and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey and women who obey, and men who speak the truth and women who speak the truth and men who persevere in (righteousness) and women who persevere, and men who are humble and women who are humble...and men who guard their modesty and women who guard their modesty, and men who remember God much and women who remember—God has prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward.

—The Qur'an, 33 : 35).

The Stripping of Woman's Dignity

sex-crazy fiends who would (and are expected to) strip themselves for worthless trinkets at the drop of a hat. And sisters, you sheepishly bow your heads and try to act the parts cut out for you, to the detriment of yourselves and the rest of society.

Sisters, when your morals went down the drain, the fabric of the society went with them—a factor which your destroyers may have failed to consider. Look around you; those starving, dirty, illegitimate kids are the result of your 'new morality'; they are partly your responsibility. You have to care for them and to train them to be upright men and women; to give them a sense of value that will protect them from the hurts which you have suffered. What have you to offer? Will you tell them the same old lies you were told? Will you allow your young daughter to be exploited by unscrupulous men? Will you allow your son to be the wretched man who fools innocent young women?

Know that the condition of a society can be judged by the behaviour of its women. If they are morally stable that society is strong, if they are morally unstable then that society becomes the playground of every conceivable evil. Sisters, that's how valuable you are. YOU are the anchor of the society, not the root of degeneracy as you are made to believe. It is you who will have to deal with the problems of society. In order to do this you will need knowledge, knowledge of your true purpose of life, of your true capabilities, of your real role in the society, of right and wrong, of the reality of things, especially of the presence of your Creator and your relationship with Him and the rest of humanity.

Yes, Sisters, you will need re-education about yourselves. Do not allow the Press or the film-makers to fool you into being the tools of perversion, into being used by unscrupulous men for the fulfilment of their unnatural desires. Do not fall for the hollow glitter of a beauty queen title, not when you need to find a solution to the multitudinous problems which plague the society today. Look at these problems and ask yourselves if you are not contributing to them by your fashions, your life styles and your attitudes. THEN ASK YOURSELVES IF THIS IS WHAT YOU WERE CREATED FOR...

by Muhammad Sayyid

SAYINGS OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (upon whom be peace)

'Indeed every religion has a special characteristic and the characteristic of Islam is modesty and shyness.'

'Modesty and faith are joined closely together, and if either of them goes, the other goes also.'

'If God the Great and Sublime desires to destroy a servant, he takes away modesty from him.'

PARTICIPANTS AT T&TMYO SEMINAR TOLD

"DEVELOP READING URGE"

The Trinidad and Tobago Muslim Youth Organisation (T&TMYO) started off the Muslim New Year 'with a bang'. On 2 Muharram (Sunday 4 January) it held an open seminar at ASJA Girls College, San Fernando on 'The Role of Education in the Islamization Process'. The President General of ASJA, Shafick Rahaman, opened the seminar which was attended by some 80 persons including 25 ladies.

The main objectives of T&TMYO's seminars are to disseminate Islamic knowledge, to foster feelings of brotherhood among Muslims and to plan for the needs of the Muslims, in particular the youths, in Trinidad.

As background reading to the seminar, a paper entitled 'Towards an Islamic Society' by Khurram Jah Murad (reprinted from 'The Muslim, London 1971) was circulated to participants. The article dealt with the characteristics of an Islamic Society, what went wrong with Muslim societies and where, the problems posed by western civilisation, the reconstruction of Islamic society and the importance of Jihaad and the role of the Intelligentsia.

One of the important points stressed in the paper is that the chief characteristic of an Islamic society is that it is an ideological society. 'This society is not based on any allegiance to any particular race, language, territory, or culture, but on an allegiance to a certain idea, the idea of Islam, the idea of submission to the will of God. This idea transcends all boundaries of language, region and race.'

It was a pity that there was no discussion on the paper for there is much in it that is informative and highly relevant to the Islamization process in Trinidad.

In introducing the theme, the project chairman stressed that it was the duty of Muslims to continue the mission of Muhammad (upon whom be peace); this could only be done by studying the Qur'an, Sunnah and the Seerah (life of Muhammad) and implementing the instructions given in them.

The main speaker was Alyasa Abdullah who spoke on 'The Role of Knowledge in the Islamization Process'. All knowledge, he postulated, was derived from three basic sources—Divine Revelation, History and Nature. Divine Revelation is the revealed Word of God for the purpose of instructing and guiding man in all spheres of activity. History and Nature were supplementary sources.

The speaker described the Islamization process as an evolutionary change in the direction of total transformation of man and the society in accordance with Divine Revelation. He emphasized that

Divine revelation was the only means which could effectively initiate and carry through this process.

The need to seek knowledge was pressing and references were made to the Qur'an where it is stated that Adam (peace be upon him) was given the knowledge to know the 'nature of all things' and the first Divine command to Muhammad (peace be upon him) was 'Read'. Through knowledge man could realise that he was originally created good and because he practised evil, mainly as a result of ignorance of Divine Revelation, sullied his natural state and fell into one of base animalism. It was therefore necessary that man exert himself in self-purification so that he may lead a virtuous and natural life. This is a process called in Arabic Tazkiyah. Prayer, fasting, Zakah (tax) and Hajj (pilgrimage) are compulsory forms of Tazkiyah while striving to purify oneself, but one has also to purify his environment. A caller to Islam would meet two hindrances—ignorance and vested interests. He would use 'Hikmah' (wisdom) to remove ignorance and 'jihad' (struggle) against vested interests.

Brother Alyasa ended by saying that knowledge which helped a person to understand and strengthen his relationship with God and his fellowmen was necessary for the building of an Islamic community. An elderly person mentioned after Alyasa's speech, 'How come ... we who have been brought up in Muslim homes know so little of Islam and take so much for granted!'

The next speaker, Brother El Farouk Hosein (an executive member of ASJA) spoke on 'Islam and Education' and paid attention to three main areas—Education of the Individual, Social Reform and World Peace.

The highlight of the afternoon session was the Group Workshops. Four major topics were discussed and it was encouraging to note that guidelines were prepared beforehand. A noteworthy aspect of the seminar was the increased involvement and participation of persons attending. Each workshop, under a chairman and recording secretary made recommendations, some of which were:

I. On Contemporary Trinidadian Problems and Challenges to the Islamic Concept of Education and Its realisation.

That an integrated educational system be evolved to replace the present one which is divided into religious and secular.

that Muslims be made aware of their culture—Islamic culture—as distinct from other cultures;

that Muslims should be aware of the 'all ah we is one' philosophy and its disastrous implications;

that their presence in the IRO should be seriously reconsidered;

that Muslims should not participate or patronise programmes like 'Mastana Bahar' which give false impressions of Islam;

that Muslim leaders should carefully study the Government's intended 'National Norm' on education and its implications.

II. On the Role of the Muslim Intelligentsia.

that Muslims especially those in authority should not say or do anything to compromise Islam;

the need for the establishment of a properly equipped Islamic library.

that Islamic standards and modes of behaviour be observed at all times;

increasing an awareness of Muslim communities in other parts of the world and their problems.

III. On the Role of the Mosque and the Family in Education.

that the role of masjids as 'community centres' for Muslims be emphasised;

that stereotyped 'book khutbas' be replaced with those that are relevant to the needs and problems of society;

that imams be trained for the above;

that all Islamic principles and training be applied to make the family a stable unity;

that Muslims should speak out against common-law unions and other practices destructive of the family unit;

that children be given proper Islamic training.

IV. On the Role of the T&TMYO in Education.

that a definite programme of work be drafted to impart Islamic training for its members;

that more lectures, discussions, seminars etc. be held and

greater involvement of members in the education of Muslim youths in maktabas, schools, mosques etc.

In his concluding remarks the project chairman urged participants to develop 'a reading urge' for Islamic literature. He also spoke on the necessity to maintain relationships among participants and other Muslims.

A person attending suggested that there should be a slogan for all Muslim seminars and suggested:

**LEARN ISLAM,
PRACTISE ISLAM,
PROJECT ISLAM.**

NEWS ROUND-UP

IMG'S EASTER CAMP

The Islamic Missionaries Guild are making plans to hold an Easter Camp at the Guild's Headquarters, the Islamic Centre, Mucurapo Road, Port of Spain. The building and the grounds of the Centre which have recently fallen into an advanced state of neglect are being cleared and prepared.

It is expected that many of the participants will come from Guyana..

ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE IN CALIFORNIA

Establishment has been announced in Los Angeles California, of an Institute of Islamic Studies with the object of setting up a chain of educational institutions for Muslim students all over the United States.

A model school, grades 1 - 8, will begin functioning in the greater Los Angeles area in September 1976. This will be followed by the setting up of elementary and secondary schools throughout the US with a comprehensive educational programme fulfilling the State requirements of general education as well as providing a comprehensive syllabus comprising the study of Arabic, the Qur'an, Hadith, Islamic history and Muslim culture.

A small beginning has been made already and the institute is now providing after-school Islamic education to Muslim students in some localities in the Los Angeles area. The institute, which is registered as a non-profit organisation has appealed for donations as well as loans so as to give it a workable financial base.

(Information: Saad al-Din Al-Azzawi, Project Director, Institute of Islamic Studies, 1544 6th St. 6, Santa Monica, California 90401, USA.

ISLAMIC EXAMS

The annual 'Religious Knowledge Examinations' of the Trinidad & Tobago Muslim Youth Organisation is to be held on Sunday 26th. April, 1976. Centres and supervisors will be announced later.

There will be four categories according to age:

Group I (under 13 years); Group II (13 to 15 years); Group III (16 to 18 years); Group IV (18 years and over).

All T&TMYO branches, jamaats, schools, maktabas, groups and other interested persons are requested to register for the

exams by 4th April. Copies of the syllabus and further information may be obtained from the Secretary General, 128 Caroni Savannah Road, Charlieville.

ASJA NEWSLETTER

The Anjuman Sunnatul Jamaat Assoc., the major Muslim organisation in the country, published the first issue of 'The Muslim Herald' which is intended to be a monthly newsletter.

The editorial of the four-page leaflet defined its purpose as the dissemination of Islamic knowledge in its pristine purity and to strengthen the spirit of brotherhood and love which exists among Muslims.

The first issue carried a brief report of the Muslim Teachers Conference held last December, some items of ASJA news and extracts of an address by Brother Waffie Muhammad at the Teachers' Conference.

We extend our best wishes to the editor, Brother Z.A. Khan, and the producers of the paper and hope that they may be guided to achieve the purposes which they have set themselves.

'The Muslim Herald' is for free distribution.

AMERICAN MUSLIMS VISIT

Four Muslims from America belonging to the Tabligh Jamaat, paid a two-week visit to Trinidad as part of a Caribbean tour. The brothers spoke to well-attended gatherings at mosques throughout the country and recruited much local support, getting brothers to commit themselves to Islamic propagation.. It is reported that they experienced some embarrassment at one mosque where the authorities disapproved of sleeping or 'camping' at masjids.

More 'Jamaats' are expected before June this year from South Africa and the United Kingdom.

Metropolitan Muslim Council in Toronto

Representatives of five Muslim organisations in Toronto, Canada, have decided to establish an ad hoc committee in order to promote a more active consultation between the various Muslim bodies and associations in Canada. The object is to create eventually a representative and effective Metropolitan council for Toronto.

PROCESSED FOOD & MEAT

The Council stated that all processed or other food which is mixed with 'najis' such as the fat, flesh or blood of the swine or a dead animal or an animal which has not been slaughtered in accordance with the method prescribed in Islam, is not consumable.

LETTERS

FROM CALIFORNIA

I found "The Muslim Standard" a great magazine. InshaAllah through the effect of your publication, may many strong-faithed Muslims grow up in Trinidad. On behalf of the "Nur" personnel, I wish you success in your endeavor and pray that you may be strengthened in the way of the Qur'an.

Please convey our salaams and best wishes to those around you.

Your Brother,
Dr. Osman Birge,
Editor, "Nur".

California, USA

BUILDING THE INDIVIDUAL

I am a member and strong supporter of the faith and have been doing reading and research.

The 'Muslim Standard' is a great piece to document and can go a long way in building the kind of morals and frame of mind which is very much needed in building the individual.

Yours faithfully,
Vincent Hernandez
Caratal Road,
Gasparillo.

CONCERN FOR MUSLIMS ... AND A CAUTION

I sincerely hope and pray that you will send us issues of "The Muslim Standard" as soon as possible. We here are Masjid Sajdah (Craterford Penitentiary) are always interested in reading news that concerns Muslims.

May Allah (Glorified be He) allow your publication to prosper as long as it does not stray from the guidelines of the Qur'an and Sunnah (example of Muhammad, upon whom be peace).

Wa Salaam,
Salih A. Rahim.
State Correctional Institution
Graterford, Pennsylvania, USA.

NO TIME TO PLAY

...I have a lot of time to play with during the day, but instead of playing with it, I am using it to develop my knowledge of Islam.

I have a Qur'an and commentary by A. Yusuf Ali and a book called 'Islam in Theory and Practice' by Maryam Jameelah.

I heard of your publication, "The Muslim Standard" and would appreciate greatly if I could receive a copy of each publication since I am eager to keep abreast of Islamic developments in my country.

Andy Thomas,
Port of Spain.

WHAT IS ILLEGAL RUM?

Early this month, top crime buster Randy Burroughs swooped on a Diego Martin home and seized among other things quantities of "bush-rum". And ever so frequently someone is arrested and charged for being in possession of the 'illegal' stuff.

Apparently alcohol is not wanted in this country, if we can judge by the arrests of these "bush-rum" makers, but something is fishy about the whole "clean-up" campaign.

How come liquor is advertised on radios, tv, in newspapers and books without any curb from our puritanical lawmen? How come the courts grant bar licences to citizens? What about the multifarious rum shops and bars, groceries and supermarkets which sell this commodity under police protection? In full view of the country stands the imposing structures of Fernandes Distilleries, Angostura House, the National Brewing Company and Carib Brewery which proudly boasts of its long years of contribution to the "social development" of the country. To this day, no-one has arrested nor challenged their owners although they produce more alcohol in one day than a "Dew" maker can in one Year!

What makes rum 'legal'? Is it the brand name? Is it the payment of a 'cut' of the revenue to the Government? Is it the fact that the Police drink it too?

Let us face facts. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. If the "bush-rum" makers get busted, then in all fairness, bust the national rum makers too!

DESTROYING DRINK

In five years up to 1974 drinking in Britain increased by 37 per cent. The Health Authority has a problem in treating its 400,000 alcoholics or hard-core drunks.

America with all her technological advancements seems unable to cope with the problem. An annual increase of 1,200 million dollars in alcohol consumption costs was recorded in three years before 1973.

Russians drank 28 percent more in 1974 than in 1970. Australians drank 22 percent more in 1975 than in 1971. Japanese drank 16 percent more in 1975 than in 1971. Sweden, West Germany, France and Italy among other countries have recorded an increase in drinking. In France alone, alcoholism is responsible for an annual death rate of 22,000.

Trinidad is no exception. Trinidadians are in the habit of apeing the 'norms and values' of the metropolitan countries and it is no wonder that alcoholism, as stated by Dr. Edward Moses, is a 'big social problem' especially since 'younger and younger people are drinking more and more' and 'drinkers are switching from beer to 'harder stuff'.

Statistics prove that in most countries alcoholism is mainly responsible for crimes, accidents and broken homes. Some psychiatrists put the blame for the drinking syndrome on 'increased affluence', 'world recession', 'pressures of modern living' or 'the new permissiveness'.

Many people do not share the views of psychiatrists but believe that alcoholism, together with other crimes, is a result of frustration stemming from lack of purpose and direction in life.

But Trinidadians continue to display a 'Carnival mentality' and 'live today and forget tomorrow'. This attitude is displayed from the top of the social order right down to the 'man-in-the-street'.

With Christmas just gone and Carnival around the corner, Trinidadians are gearing up for another bacchanal with all the media—television and radio—constantly portraying drinking as glamorous and desirable.

The country and the people suffer immensely as a result of this drinking. Alcoholism is too easy an avenue of escape from self-consciousness and responsibility. It is time that Trinidadians search their consciences for new direction, one which will develop sober and responsible personalities, stressing total abstinence from alcohol—as Islam, the natural way, requires.

MINISTERIAL INSPIRATION

A coconut vendor wrote a lengthy epistle to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Culture.

A school supervisor remarked how closely the style and contents of the letter resembled a speech which was made about two days before the letter was written by Sham Mohammed, Minister of Public Utilities and Secretary of the Strengthening of Islam Association (TIA) Education Board.

What is even more strange was the fact that the 'letter' was mentioned in the speech, before it was written!

Two teachers in the San Juan area are being investigated by the Ministry as a result of the 'coconut vendor's' letter.

Perhaps the Ministry (of Education, that is) would see fit to widen the scope of its investigation!

In these times
people must have standards

THE BEST STANDARD

THE MUSLIM STANDARD

WHAT WE AIM AT:

- o Establishing obedience to the authority of God and adherence to the example of His messenger, Muhammad, upon whom be peace.
- o Projecting Muslim standards of thought and conduct as the solution to problems.
- o Encouraging dialogue for the advancement of all.

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