

## Men After Mohammed



**"Moslems on the March,"** by **F. W. Fernau** (translated by **E. W. Dickes**. Alfred A. Knopf. 312 pp. \$5), is a survey of the political and cultural heritage and aspirations of the people who dominate the area from North Africa to India. Below it is reviewed by **Richard N. Frye**, associate professor of Middle Eastern Studies (Iranian) at Harvard and head of the University's Middle East research and training program.

By **Richard N. Frye**

**B**EFORE World War II a book on the Middle East published in this country was a rarity; but after the discovery of the Old World by the Americans there was a diarrhea of words about our foreign policy in Asia. Unfortunately, or rather one should say impatiently, we are still being told about the background for our new relations with North Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East. F. W. Fernau's "Moslems on the March" is a good background work.

Even in our institutions of higher learning we have only begun to appreciate the complexity of culture and history of areas such as the Middle East. If we really want to understand that section of the world we will have to devote much more time, training, and resources to the special problems of some 200 million inhabitants of the variegated Moslem world. We must advance beyond the briefing stage.

Mr. Fernau, a German student of the modern Middle East, writes of the Moslems as one might have spoken of the "Christian world" several centuries ago. It is difficult to concur fully with him when he speaks of Africans, Indonesians, and Tatars of the Soviet Union in one breath, as all Moslems with common ideals and aspirations. Yet it would seem there is more of a common feeling among them than we have in the West. The Moslems outside of the Middle Eastern core land perhaps stand in the same relation to those in the core, as Russians do to Western (Christian) civilization.

It is one of Mr. Fernau's theses that the Moslems are now undergoing bourgeois social revolutions comparable to the revolutions of 1830 and

1848 in Western Europe. The present unrest in the area he attributes to three factors: nationalism, the renaissance of Islam, and a demand for change in social conditions. Let us further examine these points.

Ibn Khaldun, who has been characterized as the first sociologist, wrote of the "irrational solidarity feeling" which held the Moslems together in the Middle Ages. This was not based on race, language, or national feeling, but on a common culture and way of life engendered by a common religion. When the French Revolution started nationalism in Europe it was not without effect on the Middle East. After all, the soldiers of Napoleon promulgated ideas of *liberté, égalité, and fraternité* in Egypt, though there was little visible reaction from the population of Egypt. The idea of *la patrie*, however, did take root in the age-old land. In Turkey, on the other hand, the Central European concept of nationalism—*das Volk*—came on a wave from the Balkans, where in the nineteenth century the Rumanians discovered they spoke a Latin tongue, the Bulgarians recovered their glorious past, and finally the Turks began to speak of Turkish blood and race. In the Middle East these two nationalisms mixed with the traditional Islamic beliefs, and with a new movement to bring the traditional beliefs into harmony with the modern world in a renaissance.



—Scott Long, Minneapolis Morning Tribune.

"A-Huggin' and A-Chalkin'."

The industrial revolution followed nationalism, and the Moslems are now trying to meet the challenge of the machine age. It is the impact of the machine rather than the impact of the West which should be stressed. Today the peoples of the Middle East are backward because they have so few machines, for machines have become the test of civilization. Can Islam, and all that it implies, survive in the Atomic Age? Perhaps it can, for the peoples of the Middle East are very conscious of history, and they may be able to learn from the errors of the West. Repudiation of their past by the Russian Communists has not been without effect on the Moslems. And there is the example of Turkey, for the present return to religion is not a blow against the remarkable democracy achieved there. Rather it is a realization that there must be a religious sanction behind law, government, and society if democracy is really to work. For everyone is committed to democracy; even the Communists pay lip service to it. But a difference between the free world, which includes the Middle East, and Communist society is just this—a religious basis of state and society.

**T**HE demand for a change is widespread throughout Asia, and social and economic change will come there as elsewhere. The feudal landlords will go; this is the inexorable trend of history. The strong religious basis of Islamic society, however, must continue throughout the change; only thus can the Moslems really master the machine. In their change the Moslems need not fear the West; we can and should be partners, with understanding and appreciation of our respective cultures. If Soviet Communism is inimical to the basic beliefs of the Judeo-Christian civilization to which we in the West belong, then it is also the enemy of Islam.

We should communicate this idea to the Moslems, for if we continue our pragmatic, anti-ideological approach to Asian problems, which is to increase manpower or money in the face of an obstacle, then we shall fail. I suggest we must renew faith in ourselves and our beliefs before we speak to others, and when we speak it should be from the heart, not from the pocketbook.



—Israel Office of Information.

Roads for Zion —“an inevitability, considering the historic plight of the Jews.”

## Homeland of the Survival

**“What Price Israel,”** by **Alfred Lilienthal** (Henry Regnery, 274 pp. \$3.95), states the case against Zionism and points out the dilemmas that the creation of the State of Israel has created for U. S. foreign policy. Erwin D. Canham, who reviews it here, is the editor of *The Christian Science Monitor*.

By Erwin D. Canham

**U**NDER THE title of “What Price Israel,” Alfred Lilienthal presents the argument against Zionism. It is an important book, and its argument must be taken seriously. Mr. Lilienthal begins by pointing out the old considerations against a Jewish national state which were influential with many Jewish leaders throughout the world up to the last decade or two. He quotes Brandeis, Einstein, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., and many others who expressed their serious doubts. And he records the way in which Jewish leaders and people throughout the world were led by history, by humanitarianism, by pressures and convictions of various sorts, to support the irresistible drive which produced the State of Israel.

Whether or not it was a grave mistake to partition Palestine is now strictly a postmortem question. The deed is done and will not be undone. The real importance of Mr. Lilienthal's book points forward. It lies in the question he asks about claims of dual citizenship for Jews throughout the world, about the chances for co-existence between Israel and its Arab neighbors, and perhaps above all in this question: “Can Judaism survive as a religious force, divorced from Israel, proving that the nation-concept was merely a historic means of keeping a spiritual faith alive? Or will Judaism, having served its purpose as the handmaiden of nationalism, now have to fade away?”

Personally, I have no doubt of the strong survival of Judaism. But I found Mr. Lilienthal's discussion of the interaction of religion and nationalism intensely thought-provoking. He asks how much of Judaism as a religion is political and social cohesion (or clannishness) and how much is spiritual conviction. He says: “The need for spiritual revival of Judaism was never greater. By returning to active proselytizing and competing with other religions for the inner convictions of man, the American rabbinate could offer concrete

evidence that a vibrant Judaistic faith yet exists.”

And he also says: “In this one sense, the establishment of the State of Israel may yet prove to have been a providential blessing: now that those Jews who crave their separate nationhood can go to Israel, the last reason has been removed for the pernicious Jewish duality outside the Holy Land. Now each American Jew has been given a free choice to be either an American of Jewish faith, or a nationalist Israeli in his own Middle East State . . .”

**M**R. LILIENTHAL believes that Israel should cease to be the Jewish and should become the Israeli state. He says that to be normal the state of Israel “must solemnly withdraw all claims to the fealty of anybody but its own citizens.”

To most Americans the assertions of worldwide Jewish allegiance to Israel which have come from its political leaders certainly raise serious political problems and contradictions. We can understand the deep and special ties which may well bind any Jew, wherever he is, to the State of Israel. But can these be political ties? Can they have the faintest aspect of nationalism or allegiance as such about them? And can there be a spiritual or religious loyalty to a foreign state—or indeed to any state at all? Does not the American principle of separation of church and state enter the problem fundamentally here?

I do not personally share Mr. Lilienthal's anger at Zionism, or even deplore as he does the creation of the State of Israel. I believe it had become an inevitability, considering the historic plight of the Jews, the migration from Europe, and the weakness of the Arab world. But I feel his argument deserves serious respect as it concerns dual citizenship and the demands Zionism makes.

Moreover, looking ahead, it is hard to see any reconciliation between Israel and its Arab neighbors unless the Arab refugees at long last are cared for with full Israeli cooperation, unless Jerusalem is internationalized in accordance with U.N. decisions, unless there is economic cooperation, and unless the Israeli attitude becomes much more ready to support cooperation and adjustment. This is not to say that the Arab states have been faultless. For, to the contrary, their attitude on many issues is as archaic and indefensible as possible. But that is another story.

Meantime, American public opinion—and, above all, the thinking of American Jews—should turn toward healthy self-analysis and constructive reappraisal.