

THE PRINCIPLE OF NATIONALITY

GESCHICHTE DER NATIONALEN BEWEGUNG IM ORIENT. VON HANS KOHN.
Skizzen. Berlin-Grunewald : Vowinckel-Verlag. M. 24. 1928.

IT is always the aim of this Review to place missionary movements of to-day in their contemporary setting and to understand them and estimate their significance in the light of the great historical movements of the present time. To this purpose the book under review is one of the greatest aids. It is written by one who is not a Christian, and only incidentally mentions missions and their outcome, but it brings out the close relations which exist in the thought-processes of the Near East and of the lands between that and India.

Each of the twelve chapters is in itself a comprehensive statement of and comment on history: Reforms and Renaissance in India; Pan-Islamism; the Religious Renaissance in India, Great Britain and the East; the Russian Revolution and the East; the National Movement in Egypt; Turkish Nationalism; the New Arabia; Changes in Persia and Afghanistan; the Awakening of India; the New Self-consciousness in India—the chapter titles show that the book does not deal with unrelated, single subjects. On the contrary, it is of the greatest interest to see how the author makes British policy, on the one hand, and the Russian revolution, on the other, answerable for the genesis of nationalism in the East.

He arranges his statement, then, in accordance with the mental process by which at the present time in the East, as in the West, religion as a settled principle is being thrust aside by nationalism, while behind nationalism there is already rising up the new, strong, growing idea of socialism. He cites Arnold J. Toynbee:

Recent history has been a *reductio ad absurdum* of the principle of nationality and has made the western public begin to see that there are limits to the application of it. The historical interest of these limiting cases lies in the doubt which they cast back upon the fruitfulness of the principle. The historian is led to speculate whether the inoculation of the East with nationalism has not from the beginning brought in diminishing returns of happiness and prosperity. Given the previous breakdown of indigenous institutions and the irresistible ascendancy of the West, he must admit that it was inevitable. But he will possibly judge the movement to have been not so much a political advance as a necessary evil.

Dr Kohn closes with a glance towards the future :

At a time when political nationalism in Europe is already beginning to lose in exclusive value and become regarded as a myth suitable to one stage in history, it is building strongholds in Asia. Nevertheless, it has been the means of creating, for the first time in history, an approach to a single political and social world conception, comprehending the whole of mankind. On this foundation is based the possibility of a victory over the present state of affairs, shared by all men, in the direction of a new humanism, as foreseen by the liberated spirits of all races whether in the East or in the West.

To this work, which is written from the fullest knowledge of facts, is appended a most comprehensive bibliography, which bears witness to the amazingly wide reading of the author ; and a really fine index makes it possible to find references both to individual and to related statements, which are treated in different places on account of the construction of the book. In a new edition I should like to see the addition of another few pages in which could be given documentation for the astonishing number of isolated facts.

M. SCHLUNK

TÜBINGEN

ARABIA AND ITS PEOPLE

IBN SA'OU'D OF ARABIA : His People and His Land. By AMEEN RIHANI. Illustrated. Maps. London : Constable. 21s. 1928.

ADVENTURES IN ARABIA : Among the Bedouins, Druses, Whirling Dervishes and Yezidee Devil-Worshippers. By W. B. SEABROOK. Illustrated. London : Harrap. 12s. 6d. 1928.

AMEEN RIHANI, a Syrian by birth and an American by adoption, has written what is at present an authoritative book on Arabia. In 1922 and 1923 he visited the chief rulers of Arabia with the hope of promoting a pan-Arab union, and subsequently published in Arabic his history of *The Kings of the Arabs*. The present work is an account of his visit to Abdulaziz ibn Sa'oud, then Sultan of Nejd, later also King of al-Hijaz, whose future position is not yet apparent. Ibn Sa'oud cordially welcomed the conception of an all-Arabia kingdom (p. 236), and definitely rejected the idea of any other than himself as the head of it.

Rihani was captured from the first by the personality of Ibn Sa'oud. He became his honoured guest for four months. The book shows him to be a grateful friend. Without presenting an ordered

biography, he gives an attractive description of Ibn Sa'oud's life and character. He tells the story of the resuscitation of the Wahhabi movement and describes the present-day Ikhwan without restraint.

The account of conditions in Central Arabia—political, economic and social—is carefully written. The reader is left for the most part to make his own analysis and to form his own conclusions. It is a story of the marriage of politics and religion, of ambition and fanaticism, of desire for dominion and the pressure of economic necessity. Later events indicate that some of the statements made to the author are no longer true. The Shi'ahs of al-Hasa (cf. p. 235) now attend the Sunni mosques, and Wahhabi convictions are changing time-honoured customs of the pilgrimage. Moreover, the Ikhwan have been indulging in raids which Ibn Sa'oud officially repudiates. It seems that they are increasingly ruling their ruler and the end is not yet.

Probably no travellers in Arabia who have written in English have had Rihani's literary and linguistic equipment in Arabic for the double task of receiving and reproducing impressions and information. The result is a record of Arabian travel that is unusually intimate without being minute, and an account of Arabian life and character that is usually accurate without being complete. Nowhere is the tragedy of the Rashid dynasty of Haiel so well told. And yet it is easy even for an *ustaz* to make mistakes. It is stated that the sunset prayer must be said a little before the sun goes down (p. 92, footnote). The account of the battle of Jahrah (p. 352) is probably the version that the author received in Nejd. It could easily have been corrected and verified from Arab and other sources in Kuwait.

The book deserves careful reading and will yield a partial understanding of the present situation and tendency of affairs in Arabia. It has good illustrations, some of which post-date the text. It has the same missionary significance that is common to all travel books which describe conditions as they are, and a review in a missionary magazine may well quote the following (p. 141) :

AR-RIYADH—Monday—Christmas Day, 1922.

I have not the least doubt about it : a religion of love, and mercy, and tolerance, is better than a religion which is imposed by the sword.

The romance of Arabia had long cast its glamour over the mind of William Seabrook, and finally demanded expression in his experience of life. Then he sought knowledge of the land and the language

from university and Washington Street Arabs of New York. There and elsewhere he formed friendships with people of the places he planned to visit, and secured letters of introduction that meant the fulfilment of his dreams.

He then spent months with the Beni Sakhr Bedouin of Transjordan, as the guest of the chief shaikh of the tribe. The record of what he saw and heard of the daily life of those Arabs is exceedingly interesting and readable. He heard and preserved a number of true and modern Arabian tales that equal the mediæval *Arabian Nights* in interest and romance, if not in marvel. The rest of the book relates experiences and observations among the Druses, Melewi and Rifai dervishes in Syria and the Yezidees of Kurdistan. Here the author's friendliness and sincerity of interest took him far into the inner mysteries of the cults he describes.

Mr Seabrook's method of consulting living sources for material has given freshness and vivacity to the book. But there are some statements he would not have left on record if he had checked them through living or literary authorities. The translations of the Arabic phrases with which he flavours his narrative could easily have been made accurate. The statement (p. 136) that 'there are no flowers in the Arabian desert' is too incorrect botanically to be justifiable even as a rhetorical introduction to a thrilling story.

In the interest of literary and historical accuracy a remark made early in the book may be examined. Mr Seabrook says: 'Old Jeremiah's prophecy that the Lord would "roar from on high" and make Ammon "a desolate heap . . . no more remembered," had—fortunately for my convenience—been unfulfilled' (p. 25).

The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* states: 'It is quite impossible to say that anything Ammonite is now above ground' (p. 2521). Hastings' *Bible Dictionary* states: 'The Ammonites are referred to by Justin Martyr about the middle of the second Christian century as even then a very numerous people; but not more than a century later Origen speaks vaguely of them as of Moabites and Edomites, classing them all with the Arab tribes; and with this doubtful allusion they pass altogether out of history' (i. p. 83). According to the *Handbook of Arabia* Ammon to-day is peopled by Circassians and Arabs who are grouped into tribal confederations, among whom the Ammonites find no place.

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KUWAIT, ARABIA