

describes N. A. Smirnov's book as the "first relatively comprehensive account of Islamic studies in Imperial Russia and the USSR." Written from a Marxist-Leninist viewpoint the book offers the characteristic ideas of religion as part of the "super-structure" of class society. The present analysis brings out the full scope of the book, supplemented by a comprehensive Bibliography, listing the works quoted in Smirnov's original text.

Kritik und Dichtkunst. Studien zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte. By Gustave E. von Grünebaum, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1955, pp. 161.

Nine of the eleven articles published in the present volume were written in English by Professor Gustave E. von Grünebaum and published between 1941 and 1952, mainly in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* and the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. The two remaining articles were not hitherto published. Translated by the author himself they now appear in German with a comprehensive Index of names and technical terms. All the articles deal with Islamic culture and literature, mainly Arabic poetry. Uniting these articles in book form is amply justified by the uniformity of method and the interdependence of the problems discussed by the author.

University of Michigan Medical Bulletin, special issue, Arabian Medicine, vol. 22, No. 6, June, 1956.

Coinciding with an exhibition of rare Arabic medical texts, the University of Michigan has most commendably produced this special edition of its medical bulletin dealing with Arab medicine. It contains articles on Avicenna's Canon of Medicine, on the medical influence of Ibn Nafis, and on Ibn al-Haitham. There is also a vivid account of how Dr. Wells Thoms of the Arabian Mission of the Reformed Church at Muscat, Oman, acquired a copy of Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Najāt*, together with five volumes of his *Canon of Medicine*, as payment of medical fee by an impoverished pearl merchant who had been a patient. The book is now deposited in the University Library. Dr. Thoms' story and his rendition of some of the passages of the text make fascinating reading. The whole is a generous and imaginative tribute to the perspicacity of Muslim doctors and to the quality of their contributions to materia medica and ophthalmology in particular.

NOTES OF THE QUARTER

Rebuilding the Meccan Road of Hārūn al-Rashīd. Among interesting engineering projects in the Arab world is a revival of the celebrated pilgrim road from Holy Najaf in Iraq to Holy Mecca in the Hijāz. Hārūn al-Rashīd, who was a frequent pilgrim, first constructed the highway, some five hundred and fifty miles in length, between the two holy cities. He and Queen Zubaida alike used it. There were oases at various points along its route, formed by deeply sunken wells, whence water was drawn to be contained, for the use of travellers, in marble storage tanks. After some eight centuries of use, the road with its caravanserai fell into decay. The desert encroached and bandits multiplied. The two countries have now agreed to reconstruct the highway, each rebuilding the parts lying within its own territory. Some five or more years will be required and the cost will be more than forty million dollars. About a hundred artesian wells will be sunk to maintain water supplies. The modern builders will command resources from oil revenues of which their great Caliphal predecessor, for all his magnificence, could not have dreamed. But then there would have been no Aladdin's lamp! New pilgrims on the new road are not likely to occupy some three months of their lives in the journey, as was the case in 'Abbāsīd days.

Persian Translation of Encyclopedia. The Columbia-Viking Desk Encyclopedia is to be translated into Persian under the auspices of Franklin Publications and the editorship in chief of Dr Gholam Hussein Mossaheb, who is a former Under Secretary of Education in Iran. He will be assisted by a senior officer of the Ministry of Education and a distinguished advisory committee, headed by the President of the Iranian Senate. Financial assistance for the project has been given in equal amounts by Her Imperial Highness Princess Ashraf and the Ford Foundation. The translation, writing of new entries, printing and publication will all be done in Iran, under Iranian direction. Details in the American edition which are of slight or local interest will be deleted, to be replaced by material on Persian history, Asia and Islam, more suited to the needs of Persian readers. The venture is in line with the fine traditions of Franklin Publications in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Bengali and Indonesian. Intended for the non-expert, the Encyclopedia should be a great asset in Persian schools and Colleges, the more so since the initiative behind it has come imaginatively from Iranian sources.

Publication is awaited within two years and the price will be as low as possible, the editorial (though not the production) costs being covered by the sponsoring grants.

Academic Freedom in Turkey. Towards the end of 1956, serious tensions developed in University circles in Turkey because of the extremely sensitive reaction of the Government to what in many countries would appear to be entirely legitimate attitudes of academic analysis and constructive criticism. The present Government seems

loathe to recognise the intellectual independence of University Professors. The Dean of the Political Science Faculty in the University of Ankara resigned in December after, it is said, being challenged by the State over his exhortation to his senior students to maintain an objectively critical attitude to State policy. He was also accused of deploring the Government's policy over professorial promotion. There would seem little doubt to the outside observer that the Government has behaved towards the academic world with a lack of respect for its integrity and its right to be untrammelled in its exercise of intellectual leadership. Those who justify the State's indirect control of thought accuse certain academicians of irresponsibility. But this remains a dangerous vindication of repressive attitudes, since intellectual responsibility in leadership is only engendered where it is trusted. Mischievous or distorted criticism of economic policy might legitimately be suppressed on the ground that alarmist and disruptive rumors masquerade under the form of academic criticism. But this does not seem to have been the case in the recent tensions, one interesting and novel aspect of which was the way the students rallied to the support of their Professors, even at the cost of their academic standing and perhaps of their careers. May be in this aspect of the situation is the best ultimate promise for a vigorous academic self-respect and for a governmental attitude less sensitive and inquisitorial.

Official statistics, meanwhile, indicate that of some thirteen hundred new books in Turkey during the first half of 1956, nearly five hundred were devoted to sociology, political science, education and economics. There were 327 works on the applied sciences and 215 of a literary nature. Only forty works appeared in the field of theology and religion and twenty-five on philosophy. The arts had sixty.

The Canal and the Traffic of Ideas. It is not normally the custom of this journal to attempt political comment. For one good reason it only appears quarterly and politics moves much faster than that! Moreover, its obligation is to the areas that underlie the surface of events. However, there are occasions when the politicians embroil and bedevil us all. October/November, 1956 would command a place in "Notes of the Century." Perhaps it is just for that reason that it is so hard to do its significance justice in Notes of a Quarter.

One of the few hopeful things about the Anglo-French veto of the rule of law at that time and of their aggression against Egypt, is a negative one, the hope, that is, that it may prove, in retrospect, to have been the last wild spasm of an attitude that found it hard to die in the days when it could no longer succeed. Asian and Arab nationalism are in no mood or shape to be handled after the manner of the age of Palmerston. Nor are the Governments that sought to pursue such a tradition, to the alienation of the sympathies of their most discerning citizens, in any position of diplomatic freedom to make a success of such a policy. The hard facts of economics and of 20th century power patterns were against their venture and it should have been the work of statesmanship, if not of moral integrity, to recognise these facts. In this case, as not seldom elsewhere, honesty and humility and integrity, would have been the truest realism. Instead we have

had a painful and shattering revelation of the inability of governing Anglo-French opinion to appreciate the nature of the mid-20th century world and the authentic form of national greatness. It remains to hope that in the hard, inexorable retrospect of this folly the surviving Palmerstonians will consent to reconcile themselves to the facts of their generation. For that, in Shakespeare's words: "It is not, and it cannot come to good," has from the first moment been the crystallly evident truth of the Suez miscalculation. And "miscalculation" is the kindest word, because it keeps to the realm of mathematics. We have been led by people who did not know how to add and subtract in today's world.

They have, however, only too painfully multiplied tensions and divided counsels. Blocked assets and a blocked canal are one thing. There are many other intangible blockages which will take more than salvage vessels to dislodge. Asia and Africa have received a savage jolt: the best traditions of British policy have been betrayed: religious tensions have been sharpened: the hopes of inter-religious expression compromised. Years of patient and studious concern for positive relationships have been thrown away in a gamble. The men of impatience have laid new burdens on the men of patience. Distrust has been sharpened, fundamental solutions to the grievous problems of the Middle East set back and perspectives distorted in befogging clouds of propaganda. Even the inquest on the affair cannot be a cleansing and refreshing process as long as it is conducted with reservations of pride or self-vindication.

Ecclesiastically the Christian movement in West Asia is in sharp jeopardy. Those who talked of 'loosening' a stalemate may find that they have loosened an avalanche, which may engulf those who disown them but must live with their consequences. Maybe one of the sanest pleas arising out of this melancholy and desperate event is that of Surah vii. 156: "Will You destroy us for what the foolish among us did?" But if the answer is favorable, there lies ahead the hard task of repudiating wisely and repairing unweariedly.

Al Azhar and Oriental Studies. The Jamādi al-Ūwīlā, 1376, issue of the Al-Azhar Journal, pp. 457-463, contains a sharp denunciation of western orientalism from the pen of Muḥammad Rajab al-Bayūmī. He accuses scholars and professors in this field as being merely "the eyes of their governments" and argues that there is no really objective and scholarly quality about their researches, since the motive is not disinterested. The article is followed by a half-page section in which the Journal moderates to some degree the asperity of its contributor's views by pointing out that, while western orientalism has in truth been vitiated by animosity of religion and self-interest of politics, there are orientalist and orientalist and that some have risen above the deplorable level.

Miscellanea. A group of Turkish educational experts recently completed a study tour of the United States, the purpose of which was to gather information about teaching methods and administration in the various types of educational procedures, with special emphasis on vocational and trade schools.