

„O mankind, surely we have created you from male and female, and made you tribes and families that you may know one another.”  
(Quran 49:13)

# PROGRESSIVE ISLAM

*A monthly publication dedicated to the promotion of knowledge concerning  
Islam and modern thought.*

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## LAND REFORMS AND THE DESTINY OF THE MUSLIMS

If we cast our eyes on the annals of human history, we shall find that the rise and fall of every society, was always connected with the rise and fall of its social, economic and agrarian systems of organisations. Consequently, an ill society is always attended by a disharmonious and malodious system of land tenure. As Ibn Khaldun pointed out, civilization and culture grew and developed as a result of a settled way of life. This in turn was possible when man started to obtain his livelihood by means of agriculture. And this again depended on how the land is divided, cultivated and cared for.

*In other words, culture agriculture and the system of land-tenure are the three interdependent variables of all social development. The one cannot be changed without effecting the others. Consequently, if the system of land tenure is disharmonious and malodious, its effects on the others would also be felt.*

This in turn would also create other effects on the various aspects of social activity. The whole social equilibrium would be upset, since the various factors of social life are interrelated and interdependent to one another in a dynamic way.

*The most important factor in every society is the way the great majority of its members obtain their livelihood. In the countries where dwell the people of Islam, agriculture is the most important source of livelihood. What the heart is to the body, so is agriculture to the society of the Muslims.*

This judgement is relative to the present stage of development. It could of course be that after some decades the importance of agriculture,

taken in the widest sense of the word, would be overshadowed by that of industry and trade. But the fact remains that as it is now, the great majority of human beings in Muslim countries depend on land for their livelihood.

### THE URGENCY OF LAND REFORMS

*A great deal of the lands still belongs to the few. The majority of the people who depend on lands for their livelihood at the moment, due to various causes and circumstances, are labouring under an oppressive system of land tenure.*

Those who should like to know more about this, could very well consult the book of Doreen Warriner 'Land and Poverty in the Middle East'. Those who happen to be on the spot need not consult any book to know the oppressive and life diminishing effects the present system of land tenure is causing for the miserable and deserted peasantry of Islam. In some areas the landlords have a private prison to punish a peasant whom he thought deserving of it. In another the landlords refused to build roads for fear that the peasants would leave them for better employment. These are two of the in-

#### OFFICES AND AGENTS OF P. 1

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numerable examples of deliberate oppression on the Muslim peasants.

*There is only one way out for them, that is, to let them have the lands and provide them with adequate means of cultivating the soil and protecting them from the presence of an oppressive mediating class of landowners.*

This would bring about a total reform of the land system.

*We consider this as the most vital and urgent problem which the societies of the Muslims have to solve. Land tenure and its attendant socio-economic relations, is the touchstone to a just Islamic social order. There never was, and never will be, a just social order, if it does not contain within itself a just and humane system of land tenure and its socio-economic ramifications. If we preach this, it is not because we neglect the other human factors of great importance in social life. We preach this because the Quran imprints upon our minds that spirit and matter are not two antagonistic entities but complementary aspects of God's creation. Higher forms of life as the Quran teaches, originated from lower ones. Thus matter is a necessary condition for the development of the spirit. It would then be conceivable that for the good spiritual development of man, a proper and satisfactory material basis is needed.*

The fact that Zakat is made a condition of faith and righteousness in the religion of the Prophet, denotes how the whole psychological make up of the Islamic faith is actuated by the belief in the complimentary relation between mind and matter.

*We need not follow the Marxist emphasis on matter to the degree of one-sidedness. It is not in the emphasis on matter that we disagree with the Marxists. It is in their denial of the mind as being of primary importance that we part company with them. Nevertheless we do agree with them that, whatever one might be, a good material condition is necessary to lead a good spiritual life. We shall acknowledge our indebtedness to the Marxists for emphasising this aspect of human life at a time when it was almost neglected.*

In this the works of Abdul Rahman Ibn Khaldun would help us more to appreciate the emphasis on the material welfare of man as a condition for his higher spiritual development, for Ibn Khaldun too, like the Marxists, perceived the importance of material welfare and modes of livelihood in the higher development of man and society.

*Thus, whoever neglected or deliberately set an obstacle towards a reform of the land system in Muslim countries must be regarded as a criminal of the first magnitude for on it depends the solution of many a problem.*

## THE EFFECTS OF A MALADIOUS LAND SYSTEM

Illiteracy, under nourishment, ignorance, criminality, the rush of migration to the towns and cities, early marriages, educational neglect of the children, constant pecuniary indebtedness, all these problems could be traced to the oppressive system of land tenure. I do not deny the presence of other causes, but the fact remains that the system of land tenure which had been laid on the yokes of the Muslim peasants now, is the fount of most evils and maladjustments confronting Muslim societies, with some rare exceptions.

## THE ISLAMIC LAW AND LAND REFORMS

*There is nothing in the laws of Islam which could prevent the efficient execution of land reforms now. What does exist, is a group of learned Muslim men who are unaware of the problems or who do not see its real significance in the proper perspectives of the age.*

The principles of Islamic law relating to land tenure are, judged by modern standard, progressive. So were the land reforms, carried out by Caliph Omar in the half of the 7th century. (See D. da Santillana in 'Legacy of Islam' and Abdul Rahim in 'Principles of Muhammadan Jurisprudence').

## TYPE OF REFORMERS

Every far reaching reform must be caused by a group of sincere and farsighted reformers. Thus we are again introduced into the problems of the elite of society. In several Muslim countries there is already a scheme of land reforms but that sincere far sighted group of reformers who possess both the will and the courage to get the schemes of land reforms through, have not yet come into existence as to make themselves effectively felt. There are one or two attempts in recent times but these have not yet affected the Muslim community as a whole.

*Bearing this in mind, it is the duty of every Muslim concerned with the welfare of his community to see that a sound and human planning is introduced into his particular country. Not only this, more still, he has to strive with all the might at his disposal, for the creation of a certain group of planners in order to make whatever is planned out, effective and real. This he could do by beginning with himself. He must be able to perceive problems confronting his society. He must be able to classify the problems according to their degree of importance. He must endeavour the realisation of the proper solution discovered for those problems. Last but not least, he must be able to ensure himself that all these social and individual activities connected with the planning of his community are rooted in a*

*firm conviction that whatever thought and activity which could be expected to produce human and beneficial results for mankind, must ultimately have their roots in an integral and virtuous character.*

As Al-Ghazali put it, one cannot expect clean water from a dirty container. Thus one cannot expect a truly good and humane planning if the planners themselves are not moulded in the values which become the objectives of the plan itself. Our putting into the foreground the urgency

of land reforms have brought us into the problem of planning and the planners. We could now discern the absolute interdependence of land reforms, planning and the creation of the planners.

*The reason why schemes of land reforms have not yet succeeded in the societies of the Muslims is because the right type of planners are not yet at the helm of affairs. It is up to us to raise them to the seat of authority so that a better form of planning comes into existence.*

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# THE NECESSITY OF RELIGION

*H. E. Dr. Mohd. Hatta's conception of the role of Islam in human life.*

On the 31st of January 1955 the editor of Progressive Islam was granted an interview by H. E. Dr. Mohd. Hatta, vice-President of Indonesia. The interview dealt with Dr. Hatta's opinion on the social and philosophical significance of the Islamic faith. Dr. Hatta himself is a devout Muslim whose thoughts and opinions of Islam are deeply rooted in their realisation in his own life and experience. It is for this reason that we find it of great interest to know Dr. Hatta's opinion on some of the significant aspects of Islam.

## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ISLAMIC FAITH AS COMPARED TO OTHER SYSTEMS OF LIFE.

Dr. Hatta found the Islamic teaching regarding the Unity of God, Tauhid, and the method of education, inculcating the belief that God is above everything and that a Muslim fears only God, as the characteristic of the Islamic faith. He believes that a Muslim experiences the feeling of being near to God, thereby feeling not alone. In the education of a Muslim the attributes of God, like love and justice, are implanted into the hearts of the believer, so that he develops the habit and attitude of doing good to his fellow beings. These attributes could be found in the surah al-Fatihah, which is frequently repeated in the five daily prayers. The aim of prayer, Dr. Hatta believes, is to bring back into consciousness the idea of doing good, lest we forget it.

## WHY A RELIGIOUS FORM OF LIFE IS TO BE PREFERRED TO A NON-RELIGIOUS ONE.

Dr. Hatta sees religion as a system of life which gives a strong normative foothold. Ethical norms he believes, are necessary in human life. Without ethical norms human action would re-

sult in chaos and confusion. Man, being not as perfect as an angel, is in need of guidance. Ethical norms serve this function. Although Islam allows free will, nevertheless certain ethical norms are preserved for the interest of human welfare. As to the question, why non-religious systems of life like stoicism could not fulfill this function, Dr. Hatta replied that the values of such systems of life are fallible as compared to those of religion. Although in its desire to seek a foothold and guidance a non-religious system of life is the same as a religious one, yet religion possesses an infallible realm of values as compared to non-religious forms of life. But this does not mean that they do not contain any truth. The difference between religious and non-religious forms of truth lies in their degrees and not in their whereabouts.

## THE MUSLIMS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS WESTERN THOUGHT AND SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS.

In reply to the question as how the Muslim should regard Western thought and scientific achievements, Dr. Hatta said that every Muslim must have an open heart and mind for all kinds of knowledge, that he may use them for the good of man. Islam, according to Dr. Hatta, teaches the Muslim to seek knowledge everywhere. The aim of seeking knowledge is to provide welfare for man's life in this world. According to sura al-Fatihah, Man, the World and the Universe belong to God. The world is made as an abode for man. Therefore he ought to preserve the world as good as possible. Whatever goodness that is preserved in the world ought to be transferred to the succeeding generations. For this purpose knowledge is necessary.

# THE HUMANISM OF MOHAMMAD

## ABDUH

by Dr. Osman Amin

*Dr. Osman Amin is professor of philosophy at Cairo University. He is author of a number of books on Islamic and Western philosophy written in French and Arabic. His books on the religious and philosophical thoughts of Mohd. Abduh, originally written in French, is wellknown and recognized to be a leading work on that subject. The English version is entitled: 'Mohd. Abduh'. Translated by Charles Wendell, Washington 1953.*

Mohammad Abduh is one of the most remarkable figures of modern Islamic history. He is also the greatest Egyptian reformer and sociologist. On his death in 1905, he left numerous disciples and many works of real interest and inestimable value. He was, and still is commonly given the fine title "Al-Ustaz Al-Imam" (The Master and Guide). And this title alone showed the influence which this Egyptian thinker had upon his contemporaries. However, he remains little known: on the one hand, the passions of factions and schools have for over half a century distorted his true personality, on the other hand, a superficial knowledge of his thought has given rise to erroneous interpretations which everything in the Master's work combines to contradict, as everything in his life tends to refute.

Invited to write of recent trends in Islamic philosophy, I have not hesitated to give importance to the personality of Mohammad Abduh, whose ideals, I believe, should inspire and guide Moslems in this troubled modern world. Certainly I do not pretend, in the limited space I have, to portray Mohammad Abduh completely, to present every detail of his life and work; but this article will realize my modest aim if it succeeds in throwing some light on a figure who remains for us, his adepts, forever alive and present before our eyes.

### *His life and work.*

Mohammad 'Abduh was a pure Egyptian. Belonging to the race of fellahin who had cultivated the Nile Valley for thousands of years, he was born in 1849 at Mehallat Nasr, a little village in the province of Behera. He studied first at Tanta, at the Mosque of "Al Ahmadi", where he lived for three years without showing

any interest in the instruction there lavished upon him. Discouraged by the teaching methods of his time, the young Abduh would undoubtedly have turned his back on the school but for the beneficial intervention of an uncle, the Sheikh Darwish Khadr. This sage knew how to awake in his nephew the feeling and taste for mysticism, and he remained for him for the rest of his life a spiritual guide and a director of his conscience.

"All my cares vanished," Mohammad Abduh wrote later, and I thought of nothing else but to perfect myself in science and to improve my conduct. I had no one to guide me towards this new object of my desires but the Sheikh Darwish Khadr who had first liberated me from the prison of ignorance in opening to me the doors of knowledge. He had broken for me the chains which had bound us when we repeated blindly all that we were told, and had brought us back to true religion. This Sheikh was for me the key to happiness, if there is happiness for me in this vile world. It was he who revealed to me my natural inclinations of which I had myself been unaware."

The great event of the youth of Mohammed Abduh was his entry in 1866 to the University of Al-Azhar. But he only spent two years there, without profiting greatly from the courses he attended. "They overloaded the memories of the pupils with a jumble of very complicated grammatical knowledge and of theological subtleties made to cramp the spirit and to prevent its development" observed Dr. Mohammad Sabri.

During his stay at Al-Azhar, 'Abduh went through an inner crisis. One could see him then devoting himself to his ascetic exercises and trying even to isolate himself and shun the world.

But he escaped from this mystical crisis thanks to the advice of the same uncle, Sheikh Darwish. Yet a great personality was going to exercise on him a profound influence and show him the road which he had to follow. I refer to Gamal El Din Al Afghani. This remarkable man was already for Oriental peoples the champion of religious and political freedom. Admiring his zeal and his fine talent, a large group of young men had gathered round him in Cairo, as previously at Constantinople, he had generously conveyed to them his fount of varied knowledge, communicated part of his critical spirit and something of his courage. Courage was certainly needed at that time to express oneself freely. In the dim moral and intellectual state there existing in the sphere of the Azharites, the teaching of Gamal El Din had a striking effect.

Ernest Renan speaks of this great educator in the following terms: "His liberty of thought, and his noble and loyal character made me believe, while I conversed with him, that I had before me, brought to life again, one of my old acquaintances, Avicenna, Averoes, or such another of those great free thinkers who had represented for five centuries the traditions of the human spirit."

Nowhere else did this extraordinary man exercise as profound and lasting an influence as in Egypt. He is one of the first creative minds who worked to develop the national spirit in our country. The elite of Cairo rallied around him, and under the spiritual direction of this exceptionally magnetic master, Mohammad Abduh decisively turned his back on ascetic practices and developed a taste for an active life involving the study of sciences such as philosophy, mathematics, morals and politics which naturally did not figure in the programmes of Al Azhar. 'Abduh tried to liberate himself from the religious traditionalism which was then very strong. The disciple thirsted for science and truth, and dreamt of justice and good. He does not fail to show his enthusiasm for Gamal El Dine in his first work, *Rissalat Al-Waridat* (Treatise on mystical inspirations) which appeared in 1874.

Certainly, Mohammad Abduh owed to his master a new spirit in the comprehension of classical Arabic works. He equally owed him the taste for Western works translated into Arabic. But what held above all the disciples of Gamal El Dine was the awakening of national feeling, the love of liberty and the ideas on the constitutional regime. At the same time, Abduh actively interested himself in the political relations between East and West and he admitted the necessity for a complete modification of the political and social life of the East. In 1876, he began writing in journals articles on various subjects of

general culture: one feels that he still had difficulty in breaking loose from the technique and spirit then in favour in Azharite circles.

In 1877 he obtained the diploma of "Al Alimiya" which conferred on him the title of "Alim" and the right to teach the various branches of Islamic Science. He first earned his living giving private lessons. Following this he gave courses at Al Azhar on theology, logic and moral philosophy. In 1879, he was made teacher of history at the high school of "Dar El Oloum" and teacher of literature at the School of Languages. He assumed his new tasks while continuing to give his courses at Al Azhar.

At the same time, Mohammad Abduh devoted himself to the journalistic activity recommended by Gamal El Dine. The Arabic press is known to have had its centre in Egypt, since its origin. At the beginning of the reign of Khedive Tewfik, Abduh was made an editor of "The Official Journal". He soon became the chief editor and, with his impetus, this transformed publication had a new significance. It is there that appears the orientation and effort towards religious and moral reform which characterizes the work of Mohammad 'Abduh.

Then supervened the coup d'état of 1879 which precipitated the fall of the cabinet of Nubar Pacha and some European Ministers, the first consequence of the nationalist movement which was beginning to develop.

Another more serious consequence was the revolt of the Egyptian army against the Turko-Circassian officers. It developed into a revolution which resulted in the occupation of Egypt by British troops in 1882.

After Urabi's failure, Mohammad Abduh, accused of complicity with the revolutionaries, was condemned to three years of exile. He went to Syria in 1883. His first stay in that country was not for long: Gamal El Dine, on returning from India, invited Abduh to rejoin him in Paris.

At the beginning of 1884 Abduh embarked for France. In Paris, the master and the disciple founded a society and review called "Al Urwah al-Wuthqa" (The Indissoluble Link), a political weekly devoted to panislamism and the defence of the Orientals, particularly against the occupation of Egypt by the British. "Al Urwah" was the first Arabic journal to appear in Europe, to be conscious of such a mission and to defend it with energy and eloquence.

In Paris Mohammad Abduh worked zealously at editing the review of which the office

served equally as a meeting place for all kinds of Orientals residing in France. (Indians, Egyptians, Syrians, Persians, Afghans.) This first stay of Mohammad Abduh in Paris did not seem to have permitted him to familiarise himself with Parisian life, or even with the French language.

At the beginning of the summer of 1884, he parted for England as a representative of his review. His friend Wilfred Blunt gave him a warm welcome and lent him his valuable aid in drawing public opinion through the English press and making it interested in the Egyptian cause. He presented Abduh to a large number of English politicians, among others Randolph Churchill, father of Winston Churchill. Mohamed Abduh next returned to Paris to take up his work again. But the banning of his review in Islamic countries as a result of English machinations saw his field of activity restricted, and the review ceased to appear.

Mohammad Abduh then returned to Beirut in 1885. He was given a post as teacher in the Sultania School. It is there that he gave his famous course on theology which served as a basis for his future Treatise on the Oneness of God (*Rissalat al-Tawhid*). But he did not occupy himself only in teaching. He founded with the aid of certain persons an association which had as its aim the drawing together of the three great religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam; this new activity having apparently been interpreted in Turkey in a political sense unfavourable to the interests of the Caliph, the Sultan took steps to persuade the British Government to pardon Abduh and to invite him to leave Syria as soon as possible.

It is thus that Mohammad Abduh returned to Egypt in 1888. He was appointed, in succession, judge at the native court, then councillor at the Court of Appeal. He now concentrated his efforts towards the awakening of Egypt by the spreading of knowledge, by moral education and by the adaptation of the traditional social institutions to the demands of contemporary life. Nominated a member of the Administrative Council of Al Azhar, he displayed great activity in order to renew and raise the material, cultural and moral standard of this old Islamic university. His influence there was rapidly felt as a result of the liberal doctrines he professed. He instituted courses in secular sciences such as history, geography, natural history, mathematics and philosophy, sciences which were not taught at the Moslem university. Made in 1899 Grand Mufti of Egypt, Mohammad Abduh gave this religious post a hitherto unknown prestige. In this capacity he took three decisions (Fatawa) in which were clearly shown his tolerance towards

other religious beliefs and his effort to reconcile the fundamental principles of Islam with the demands of modern times. During the same year, he was made a member of the legislative council; this new charge enabled him to show his qualities as an orator and reformer.

Mohammad Abduh was one of the first founders of the "Islamic Benevolent Society" whose aim was to spread instruction among, and to give moral and material aid to the poorer classes. He also founded a "Society for the Renaissance of Arabic books" for the publication of the masterpieces of the classical authors. In another sphere, he worked for the reform of the religious court. His report which remains a basis for the reforming of the judicial procedure in the personal status tribunals, gained a large audience.

The Grand Mufti had a lively intelligence and being of a wide curiosity, he was conversant with the principal works of the European thinkers. He had precise ideas on men's conduct and he knew how to give sure and clear judgments on events. He completed his varied culture with numerous voyages in Africa and in Europe and he was often pleased to say that he needed to make these voyages "to renew himself"; in this he shared the opinion of Michel de Montaigne.

Mohammad Abduh had numerous friends in the East and the West. He carried on a correspondence with certain European thinkers, among others W. S. Blunt, Gustave le Bon, Edward Granville Browne, Herbert Spencer and Tolstoi. Orientalists did not omit to visit Egypt to attend the courses on exegesis which the Grand Mufti gave at Al-Azhar.

It is just, to remember the part which he played in the formation of the Egyptian University, a part which is too often forgotten in Egypt. However, a French politician had already noticed it by 1911. "Sheikh Abduh", wrote Germain Martin, "Conceived the plan of creating in Egypt, beside the impressive university of Al Azhar, a Moslem University where sciences would be taught by modern methods. Thus the old Arab civilization would be regenerated by the continuous contribution of the results achieved by Western Scholars in science, literature and the arts."

Mohammad Abduh died on the 11th of July 1905, at the height of his activity, without having had the time or the means to carry out his projects of reform. His death was a public sorrow. He lies in the cemetery of Al-Afifi in Cairo.

(To be continued)

# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

by J. W. Syed, M.A.

Man is the best friend and also the worst enemy of man. Much blood has been shed on earth; many pages of human history have been written with the blood of a martyr or a tyrant. And the poet and the prophet has ever addressed the question:

Oh cease: must death and hate return?  
Cease: must man kill and die?

The United Nations and its Universal Declaration of Human Rights are practical answers to the above question. The United Nations owes its existence to the desire of the democratic Nations to win peace and to make the world safe and secure for the ideals of Democracy. The future of civilised humanity depends upon its capacity to restore the dignity of Man and his Rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the crowning achievement of the United Nations and is a landmark in the intellectual and moral evolution of mankind. The French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the American Bill of Rights were isolated national expressions of man's struggle for freedom and justice, but the United Nations' Universal Declaration is the first universal and international declaration of the dignity, equality and freedom of all men and nations. It embodies and represents the conscience of civilised humanity and its common faith in the ideals of democracy.

*What makes the Declaration a historic and an epochmaking document is the fact that it has been signed and proclaimed not by an individual, or a group of individuals or a nation, but by the representatives of fifty-nine nations, belonging to different races and religions, but united in the defence of human dignity and decency.*

The Universal Declaration proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights; it enumerates almost all the basic rights of man and woman, such as the right to life, to honour, to liberty and equality, to work and employment, to social justice and security, to education, and to equality before the law. It is a historic step in the direction of peace and

justice because it has focussed the attention of all the nations on the imperative need of respecting and observing fundamental human rights and freedoms if they really want a peaceful and prosperous world. But the great and difficult problem is that of implementing the Declaration, of transforming ideal into reality.

The French Declaration and the American Bill of Rights had one great advantage over the Universal Declaration: they were adopted by Assemblies which had all the necessary power, legislative, executive and judicial, to give effect to them. But the United Nations is not a world government, and is, therefore, powerless to make the nations observe and implement the Universal Declaration of Rights. The Declaration is at best a recommendation to the Member States of the United Nations to incorporate in their national Constitutions the rights which have been laid down in the Universal Declaration. It is a mere Declaration; it is not an International Bill of Rights, nor is it a Covenant. The Declaration creates no binding obligations for the Member-States of the United Nations; there is as yet no provision for the implementation and enforcement of the Declaration. In its preamble, the Declaration is defined as „a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations”; a call is made upon all men and nations to „promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance both among the peoples of Member-States themselves and among peoples of territories under their jurisdiction”.

The problem of implementing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is, in fact, inseparable from the problem of de-limiting the authority and sovereignty of the Nation-State, the Hegelian god.

*The creed of nationalism and the concept of national sovereignty are the greatest hindrance in the successful implementation of any universal charter of Human Rights. The Nation-State is regarded as the chief object of our loyalty, and it claims our absolute allegiance to the exclusion of other and even greater loyalties which man owes to God and to Humanity.*

The conception of arbitrary absolute sovereignty passed from the Prince to the People, the Divine Right of Kings has given place to the Divine Right of Nations. Formerly there was the Despotism of one, now it is the despotism of the many. Today there is no real Law and Morality between the nations. Nations, like the savage in the State of nature', are a law unto themselves.

*National pride and prejudice, and egotism prevent them from honouring universal and international ideals. There is no check or limit upon the Will of the Sovereign People and upon the actions of the modern secular State. And hence all the injustice and anarchy of our day.*

Actually it is the sovereign majority whose Will is omnipotent. As long as the world remains divided into absolutely sovereign political units, there cannot emerge a truly human outlook without which human rights and freedoms cannot be secured. As long as Nation-States and National Parliaments are regarded as omnipotent and internationally irresponsible, no charter of human rights can be effectively and successfully implemented. Only the Parliament of man can secure to man his rights.

*Modern political thought and polity, based as they are upon the separation between Politics and Ethics, cannot respect human values and honour human rights. Plato had expelled the poet from his ideal Republic in the interest of morality, but Machiavelli and his modern disciples have banished conscience and morality from the modern secular State. So far Power and Culture have been kept in separate compartments; unless Power is subordinated to Culture and Ethics, human rights can never be secured.*

The French Declaration of the Rights of Man failed to secure and establish those rights because the victorious revolutionary majority became power-drunk and trampled under its feet those very rights which had been proclaimed as the inspiration and goal of the French Revolution. Under a secular and Godless polity the majority feels no check from within or without upon its will and action. Nations violate all laws, human or divine, to serve their own selfish interests, they pursue their own selfish ends instead of co-operating for the collective human good and progress. All Godless and mammonish creeds are the greatest enemies of human rights.

*In the absence of a World Government, the next effective step which the United Nations can take is to actively encourage and support liberal-democratic forces so that totalitarianism may not threaten human individuality and dignity. The*

*liberal-democratic State is the great guarantee of human rights. The democratic State exists for Man and not vice-versa. In such a state man is regarded as an end and not as a means. State is but a collection of men, politically organised, who have agreed to bring the strength of all in support of the rights of each.*

The end of the State is to harmonise the individual wills and rights of all so that the Good Life may be possible.

*Man's greatest right is that he should be enabled to preserve his intellectual and moral integrity, and that he should not be persecuted and deprived of life, liberty and equality on account of race or religion, colour or creed.*

The whole problem of safeguarding human rights is, in fact, the problem of minorities and their right to a free and honourable life, and of the smaller and weaker nations to have political and economic freedom. If the United Nations is sincere in its Declaration of Human Rights, it is their moral duty to persuade the Imperialist Powers to liquidate their empires and set free the enslaved nations <sup>1)</sup> so that there may emerge a voluntary world society of free nations held together at least by enlightened self-interest, because no nation today can afford to stand aloof and live in isolation. Not only economic and commercial factors but also the currents of modern thought are working in the direction of intellectual and moral, political and economic integration of humanity.

*Communism, with its international aim and programme, is a standing challenge to all those who think in parochial ways.*

Any Declaration or Charter of Human Rights shall remain a farce and a mockery as long as any section of humanity remains under political and economic bondage to some alien power. Im-

## Notice

### NOTE THE CHANGE OF ADDRESS

#### CHANGE OF FORM

Due to the request of the general readers, the form of Progressive Islam has been altered to the present one.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

Replies to all correspondence received by the editor shall be delayed due to the fact that between the 1st of March and the 1st of May 1955, the editor possesses no home or office to carry out the work.



perialism and colonialism are a negation of democracy and a flagrant denial of fundamental human rights of freedom and happiness. No colonial power can agree to the implementation of any charter of human rights because it owes its very existence to the denial of those rights<sup>2</sup>). The existence of colonial exploitation side by side with pious declarations of human rights makes those declarations a huge joke or a vain utopian dream. All philosophies and systems which are based upon the theory of „the master-race“, upon the conviction of racial, national or cultural superiority can not allow the implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human rights<sup>3</sup>). But under the stress of world cooperative forces and movements Imperialism shall die a natural death. The challenge of Communism and national liberation movements are driving the Western and Eastern countries into closer relations and co-operative endeavours. The Imperialist and capitalist West is coming to terms with the emergent nationalism of Asian and African countries<sup>4</sup>); the 'Twain' shall ultimately meet to build up democratic One World.

The most effective method of implementing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is through education. Man is the creature of education and environment: Child is the father of Man. The educational systems of the various nations should cease to be merely "National"; education should be based on a humanist and a universal-fellowship. The States which are member of the United Nations must be called upon to re-orientate their educational systems in accordance with the ideals and principles of the United Nations' Charter. To create a new and more human humanity we must handle the child properly. His pure and innocent mind should not be allowed to be poisoned by wrong and narrow ideals of education which inculcate a false sense of national pride and glory.

*Education should aim at emancipating the human mind and spirit from all debasing and de-humanising ideologies such as Nationalism and Materialism.*

Nationalism is today an obsolete creed; it is a glorified survival of our tribal past. It is only a stage in the evolution and progress of mankind, but it is not the final goal of human progress. Human society being evolutionary and progressive, humanity has to advance a step further.

*Human rights have generally been violated because of national, racial, religious or cultural pride and prejudice, and intolerance.*

As long as educational systems of the different countries continue to be based on a consciousness of national exclusiveness, there can be no consciousness of the dignity and equality of man.

*If we may succeed in eliminating narrower human loyalties and replace them by loyalty to one supreme ideal of one God and one Humanity, and devise a system of education based on the universal ideals of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, humanity may be much nearer to the realisation of its fair visions and dreams.*

History books should lay greater emphasis on the common factors in human life and civilisation than on differences of life and manners.

*We should lay greater emphasis on human duties than on rights, Many revolutions had the Rights of Man as the battle-cry; and many philosophies have preached that man is born free and for happiness. But too much insistence on individual rights have resulted in egotism and anarchy. In fact, many crimes have been committed against man in the name of the rights of man, as happened in the case of the French Revolution. The best method of safeguarding human rights is to emphasise human duties. Rights and Duties are complementary, but the mere change of emphasis from Rights to Duties will change the whole aspect of the question. A duty fulfilled is a right implemented.*

To win the battle of human rights, we need the pen more than the sword, the writer more than the soldier.<sup>5</sup>) Ideas rule the world and its events. War or peace first starts in the mind. Hence and theory, any ideal and any declaration must first be implanted and implemented in the realm of the mind. And the realm of the mind is the province of the writer. Men and nations, more so the writer, should cease to worship the idols of race, nation, and dogma, and owe allegiance to the One who manifests. Himself through the eternal verities of Truth, Justice, Goodness and Beauty.

*Unless man recognises a Higher Being than himself and regards himself as lower only to God there can be no consciousness of the dignity of man and no respect for human values. As long as our thoughts and actions are inspired by the wrong", there can be no peace and justice in the world.*

We have to grasp the significant meaning of the sublime fact that God has made Man in His own image. We have to realise and the writer can help us to do so, that under the sack-cloth and the purple robe there is the same child of Adam. Universal respect for and observance of human rights is not possible without the intellectual and moral unity of mankind. This intellectual and moral unity of humanity cannot be achieved without demolishing all national frontiers and barriers in the realm of the mind and the spirit. Then alone the universal man can be born, the man who may see his brother in the Negro and in the German, in the Christian and the non-Christian. More than any other freedom man needs intellectual independence from the dictates of a class or a state; man's free intellect must refuse to obey any authority other than that of Truth, Justice and Beauty. The writer should emphasise the essential unity of human nature and the similarity of human joy and suffering.

We have to get rid of the common but dangerous illusion of an exclusive and unadulterated "National" culture.

*In the present age, when time and race have been annihilated, when the world has shrunk and dwindled into a single entity, there can be no cultural nationalism. Even in the past, ideas have crossed geographical barriers, have travelled over land and sea, but today particularly science and democracy have made the modern world culturally one.* <sup>6)</sup>

Civilisation has been built up and enriched by all nations. Real tolerance, justice and goodwill between men and nations is not possible without a world society based on a common culture and thought. The school, the film, the press, and the radio are powerful means of proclaiming the similarity of human motives and desires, of human virtues and vices.

As regards more positive and practical means of implementing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the first and foremost is the right of petition by individuals and states to the Commission of Human Rights or to an International Court of Human Rights. Unless individuals and states have the right of bringing cases of violations of human rights to the notice of some international authority, human rights cannot be safeguarded effectively. If an individual, or a group of individuals in a state, or the state itself commits a violation of a Convention of Human Rights, the national courts of that state cannot be expected to indict their own state or its

citizens; the accused one cannot be the judge. There has to be, therefore, an International Court to try all cases of violations of human rights. At present the Commission on Human Rights can only receive petitions against violations of human rights, but it has a power to take any action against those individuals or states who commit the violation of human rights. Some international legal machinery has got to be devised for effectively implementing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

*Muslim countries are in a peculiarly advantageous position to give a lead to other countries in so far as the implementation of the Declaration is concerned.* <sup>7)</sup> *The principles and ideals embodied in the Declaration are not a new thing for us; they are, in fact, articles of faith with us.*

Conceptions of the dignity and the worth of the human person, of liberty of faith and conscience are the essential part of our intellectual and religious heritage, a heritage which is entirely free from the evil of racialism.

*Islam being essentially and ideally democratic in its spirit, aims at the establishment of a society and polity based on the rule of law, justice, liberty and human dignity.*

And such a society and polity alone can respect and observe human rights. The Constitution of our new State can contain all the provisions of the universal Declaration of Human Rights; and we can build an Islamic State into a fully democratic state working for justice and way lies glory and honour.

1) The same could be said of slavery and oppression of a nation by its own ruling group. There can be no true human welfare if this type of evil is not abolished in the same manner and spirit as it is towards imperialism. See further the author's mention of this. ED.

2) The same applies to the afore mentioned ruling group. ED.

3) The same applies to class or group superiority. ED.

4) And also with its own human forces emerging in the West. ED.

5) This is relative to the situation. ED.

6) They are those aspects of culture connected with technical development and of course an interchange of influences. But this is not a cultural unity of the world. ED.

7) As far as Islam is concerned there can be no doubt. But one of the most life-diminishing and oppressive systems of land tenure is still to be found in countries where Muslims predominate, with very rare exceptions. So are their dominant groups which are probably the worst to remain now. The Islamic revolution must be first released at home before the Declaration of Human Rights can be implemented! ED.

# SARIKAT BURUH ISLAM INDONESIA

*The Moslem Labour Union of Indonesia*

*by: E. Rasjad.*

*Mr. E. Rasjad, an active Indonesian Moslem, is first secretary to the Sarikat Buruh Islam Indonesia (The Moslem Labour Union of Indonesia).*

The Moslem Labour Movement in Indonesia was founded on November 1947, first as a section of the Moslem party Masjumi, but the following year it was given the autonomy to stand by its own.

It organizes people from every branch of undertakings, such as plantation workers, industrial workers, harbour workers, sailors, shop and hotel workers, drivers, office workers etc., as well as government employees.

This Labour Movement is a Union. In other words, all workers are centrally organized by the Central Body. In its duty to face the same sort of workers, the Central Body is supported by its so called Sections, while in every territory or region a representative is appointed to coordinate and to conduct the locals which are in his own administration. Up to the present time this Labour Union has more than 180.000 members.

This Union is basically created to render the realisation of Islam as the Moslem Way of Life, and to check the desultory influence of the Communist Labour Movement, which has dominated and deceived the majority of labour by claiming themselves to be champions of the poor class. In practice they just made labour as their apparatus to reach political purposes, and to create more discontent among the people by having political strikes to weaken the economic potency of the country.

This danger had been realized by the first Cabinet after the transfer of sovereignty, of which Natsir was Prime Minister. It had passed a so called "Military Regulation", which forbade the strike of workers in vital undertakings, such as those relating to public utilities etc.

This in fact had been a blow for the Communist Union through this fact rest was provided for the tiring and suffering people, which many times have become the victims of their "mass action".

To meet the demand of labour as a whole this Regulation had been withdrawn the follow-

ing year after a change of cabinet, and a new Emergency Law came into effect. This Law basically considered the workers' right to strike, but before such action would be taken, a warning of three weeks should be given.

Furthermore this law provided mediators in every region in settling labour disputes, but finally if the threat either of a strike or lock out could be a danger for the stability of the economic condition as a whole a final and binding solution could always be taken by The Highest Committee for Settling Labour Disputes, representing various ministries relating to labour, social welfare, finance and justice.

Since its effectiveness this law had been opposed violently by the Communist Union. Meanwhile other free labour movements were growing up, showing that strike was not the only means to better our destiny.

The Moslem Labour Union like other existing labour movements all over the world, has the same tactic of action and recognizes all workers' right to bargain collectively with managers, maintain members, get more members, to obtain security for jobs, strikes, etc., in order to get its aim in promoting a higher standard of living, full employment, and the stability of social and economic condition and welfare for the whole of mankind, as it is our aim to take a share in creating world peace.

The Moslem Labour Union bases its struggle on mass action in order to change the economic structure of the country such that it becomes a benefit for society, free from interference and domination from foreign powers whether morally or materially.

To get this aim The Moslem Labour Union is doing an unceasing effort in gathering up more strength to create and train stronger bargaining units, propagandists, increases the number of membership, spreading out the local branches and organizing labour up there whether they are

Moslems or not, and fighting to get more members in parliament. All this is done to make mass action effective.

Mass action as we preach it does not necessarily mean a social revolution or violence to kill each other. Actions are taken through legal ways in opposing parliament to enact laws relating to social and job security, industrial peace etc. At the same time we try to make the employers conscious that their profit is due to labor and thus they must treat labour in a just way. Every unjust treatment should be opposed violently. More important still is to increase the capability of the workers themselves because law can only be effective if it is accompanied by the workers knowledge regarding their right and duty in a social order.

Mass action had been a teaching left to us by our Prophet when he was obliged to leave Mekka under the threat of the Kafirs in the beginning of Islam. The Prophet came back after gathering enough strength to preach to the ungrateful Arabs to worship just only Allah. The Prophet and his followers were ready to face every possibility. The Prophet gained victory by mass action. And so we do. Mass action means to us "to get ready for every possible event".

Speaking about membership, we consider it necessary to clarify that either a Moslem or a non-Moslem worker (Christian) could be a member of The Moslem Labour Union in order to maintain his right as a worker with a condition that every member should obey all rules and regulations of the Moslems. Every contravention would be subject to expulsion as a member in which one would lose all his right to claim protection as a worker from The Moslem Labour Union.

A curious distinction from the Communists is that we do not preach the class struggle. We believe that all human beings without regard to their position must work together to create peace whether politically or industrially. It is the duty of every human being to give all what he could to create peace and promote welfare.

Despite this, we admit that there are differences between labour and management objectives, which could come out as a dispute; and we admit that to solve a problem in an attempt to get a

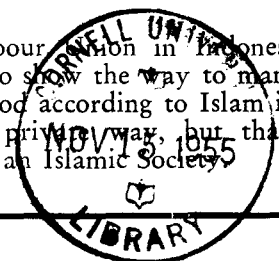
satisfactory solution through diversity of objectives is not an easy matter. The most important factor inherent to this problem is, that every injustice must be rooted out, and against every kind of injustice The Moslem Labour Union is ready to fight. Such action if taken is considered to be right because it agrees with God's rule which says that there is no fight, but just against evil. Such actions had been carried on several times in maintaining our right as labour, and had been ended by victories. In this particular matter we adopted the standpoint that claims or demands to get more wages or better condition must not be beyond the financial means of the management, if we do not want to risk the cessation of business which can cause unemployment. We recognize that maintaining the job is the most important thing for a worker.

As a labour union The Moslem Labour Union stands at the side of labour. Therefore the Moslem Labour Union is prepared to cooperate with any union anywhere as long as they will respect each other and not attack Islam.

Connection is made through letters and representatives whether with American, English, European or Chinese federations, but up till now the Moslem Labour Union is neither affiliated to the ICFTU nor to the WFTU.

A labour movement that is entirely based on Islamic principles is supposed to be the first one in Indonesia. An explicit reason for the growth of this labour union in Indonesia is first that the majority of the working people are Moslems who are still sensitive to their religion, and second, the reality that the great part of the million members of the Communist Union are not all communists. They join the Communist Union because of ignorance about the communists' particular political purposes.

The Moslem Labour Union in Indonesia is marching forward to show the way to mankind that worshipping God according to Islam is not just praying in a private way, but that we must fight to create an Islamic Society.



CORRECTION.

Vol. I no. 6 page 2. column 2.  
Monistic instead of 'monastic view of life and the universe.