

# Bulletin of the Near East Society



*British Information Services*

A scene on the Island of Cyprus  
(See Page Nine)

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# REPORT FROM THE NEAR EAST



Iran has listed two prerequisites for reopening talks with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development on management of the nationalized Iranian oil industry.

Premier Mossadegh specified that Iran was willing to resume negotiations on two conditions: (1) technicians who manage the oil industry must be from "neutral" countries; (2) the World Bank must manage the oil industry in behalf of Iran and strictly as an agent of the Iranian Government.

\* \* \*

Talks continue in Cairo as the British and Egyptians consider the issues involved in the bitter Suez Canal and Sudan dispute.

Britain has offered limited self-rule to the Sudan in a new constitution that would make the present British Governor General the Chief of State. The document would give the Sudanese their own Cabinet and Parliament. This proposed constitution ignores Egypt's proclamation last October making King Farouk ruler of the million-square-mile area. The British Administration in the Sudan, without consulting Cairo, submitted a draft of this constitution to the Sudanese Legislative Assembly. Prominent Egyptian leaders are of the opinion that the Sudanese "will never accept constitutional organizations as long as they are set up under the present British Administration".

The talks in Cairo proceed slowly as the British show their reluctance to make any sweeping commitments in advance of negotiations which the Egyptians insist must be on the basis of "evacuation and unity" with regard to the Suez Canal and the Sudan, respectively—or not at all.

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Syria's military regime apparently is setting out to do what Kemal Atatürk did in Turkey—create and favor a political organization that will mobilize the nation behind the regime's program. The military regime seized power in a coup late last year and recently it dissolved all political parties in Syria by decree.

Syria has had a series of coups d'état since 1949 and Syrian military and political leaders have been trying to work out a compromise government. The decree abolishing political parties is seen as a means to end the parliamentary forms of government which have existed since World War II in most Arab League states.

The main issue has been what type of regime should be organized to replace the old parliamentary one. At present Syria is governed under the authority of Colonel Fawzi Selo as Chief of State, without a cabinet. He is backed by the military and functions through various ministry secretaries.

A program of reforms, notably agrarian, that has been launched has evolved slowly into a challenge on

a nationalist basis to the ancient structure of Syrian society. As in neighboring Turkey, the main idea is to take the peasant out of his traditional existence and transform him into an active citizen. As in the Turkey of Atatürk's time, a campaign is being waged to eliminate foreign economic control and foreign influence on education.

Albion Ross writing in the *NEW YORK TIMES* of April 7 said: "The situation apparently is that the transition period during which the Government has been carried on under the authority of the military by the secretaries general of the ministries is coming to a dead end. The political machine necessary to formulate and carry out a program conforming to the desires of the present military dictatorship simply is going to be formed, with the intention of energizing and transforming the life and outlook of a somewhat reluctant and notably confused Syrian nation."

\* \* \*

Lebanon, according to reliable information, is in opposition to efforts to link the Arab League states to a future pan-Islamic bloc. Lebanon officially has a slight Christian majority, and the Lebanese Foreign Ministry has decided because of this fact to refuse an invitation to an Islamic consultative conference scheduled to be held in Karachi, Pakistan. During a recent visit to the Arab states, Sir Mohammed Zafrullah Khan, Pakistani Foreign Minister and one of the principal advocates of some type of pan-Islamic organization, said that the time had come to give practical political form to the Islamic movement.

Concerning relations with the West, propaganda in Lebanon has become more intense for a Mediterranean pact that would include the Arab states in place of the Western powers' proposed Middle East command. The basic argument is that a Middle East command would mean British-American domination.

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# Konya's Domes And Dervishes

BY RICHARD W. REINHARDT

*The author traveled in the Middle East in 1951 as a Pulitzer Traveling Scholar in Journalism from Columbia University, studying the press and politics of the countries.*

*Mr. Reinhardt is a graduate of Stanford University where he majored in international relations. He received a master's degree in journalism from Columbia University in 1950. He is now on the editorial staff of the San Francisco Chronicle.*

EDITOR.

Standing in Konya at the portal of the Dervishes' Mosque, tying a pair of shapeless leather slippers over your Western shoes, you are near to the heart of Asiatic Turkey.

Behind you, beyond the cobbled street that runs through town, rise the naked brown Pisidian Mountains, topped by a lumpy plateau which the Turks call "The Hat." Above you a single, slender minaret thrusts upward, framed to view by the branches of a flowering plum tree. Over the door is written in graceful Arabic script the unarguable verity of Islam: "There is no God but God."

You are at the edge of a great valley, flat as a plate and ringed with mountains, planted in cotton and grazed by almond-eyed goats. Ankara, with its modern offices and U.S. Army jeeps, is five hours north by bus. Adana, in the citrus belt along the Mediterranean, is eight hours south on the Anatolian Railway.

## ANCIENT SEAT OF EMPIRE

You are in an ancient seat of empire, a city of art and religion. But it is now essentially a place of decay, backwardness and isolation. The sharpest reminders of modern life are the carefully graded road from Ankara, the passing train and the bust of Turkey's great reformer, Kemal Atatürk, in a drab town square.

Everywhere are other reminders that Konya was once a brilliant capital and that it is still the fairest town of Asia Minor and the jewel of Turkish architecture.

Entering the mosque, you are at once in the precincts of two groups most responsible for building Konya—the Seljuk Turks and the Mevlevi Dervishes.

The Seljuks were one of numerous Turkish tribes who thundered out of Central Asia in the Middle Ages to harass the collapsing empires of the Arabs and of the Byzantine Greeks. Raging from

Baghdad to the outskirts of Constantinople, the Seljuks won themselves a huge, loosely-joined kingdom on the Anatolian plateau. Through several centuries their territory hung together, shaken by conspiracies, feudal civil wars, royal murders, disputed successions, Crusades and Mongol invasions.

When Crusaders recaptured Nicaea from the Turks in 1097, the Seljuk capital was moved to Iconium, an ancient Greco-Roman city. The Turks called it Konya.

For nearly two hundred years the Seljuks ruled their contentious empire from Konya. Early in the 13th century the city had a "Golden Age" under a powerful emperor named Ala ed-din Kaikobad.

Ala ed-din raised magnificent mosques and palaces. Jurists, poets and historians flocked to the city. Camel caravans brought spices of the Indies, silks of Arabia and carpets and tiles of Persia into the covered bazaars. Artists and dervishes, the ascetic "monks" of Islam, came from Persia and Bokhara, driven before the invading Mongols.

For a few decades, Konya was the crown jewel of the Middle East. Then the Seljuks, too, fell to a stronger foe. Eclipsed by the Ottoman Turks, they faded from history as mysteriously as they had appeared. The Ottomans went on to conquer Constantinople, most of eastern Europe and the Middle East. Their empire endured over 600 years—until the first World War finally tore its rotten fabric to pieces and, under Atatürk, a new Turkey emerged in the image of a Western state.

For most of the Ottoman era, Konya had gradually declined.

It was during these intervening centuries—between the Seljuk eclipse and the rebirth of modern Turkey—that Konya was primarily a city of dervishes.

Mystics, fanatics, scholars—but above all, dramatists—the dervishes captured the religious fancy of devout Turkish Moslems. This mosque in Konya was

A single minaret and a Persian tile dome framed by a flowering plum tree's branches in Konya (top). The portal of the mosque of Mevlevi Dervishes (center). From an old Moslem cemetery the Aziz Mosque is seen beyond the saplings (bottom).



Richard W. Reinhardt



the dervishes' "Tekke." It is one of the loveliest buildings of the city, with its strange pointed dome of aquamarine Persian tile and its lone minaret. In reality, it is two mosques, built side by side. One is Seljuk, the other, Ottoman. The Mevlevi Dervishes used to dance in both.

In the Seljuk chamber hangs today a painting of the dervishes dancing a religious ceremony. They whirled in circles, flinging their arms above their heads in fantastic postures. Rhythm from a drum, the whining melody from a wooden flute: the dance, a prayer.

At the climax, the dancers formed a ring, holding in their hands a great sixty-foot-round necklace of wooden beads. Every bead carried a prayer, as do the beads of a Christian rosary.

A powerful chant grew as beads passed from hand to hand and supplications rose to the one Almighty God Who rules alone. For centuries the ecstatic eyes of Konya watched the dervishes whirl across their Persian carpets.

Today, the Mevlevi Dervishes dance no more in Konya. Their "Tekke" is a museum of Seljuk and Ottoman arts: old hand-lettered copies of the Koran; screens, fans and water-bowl pipes; tapestries from forgotten Khanates of mid-Asia; and the great wooden necklace itself with which the dervishes once danced.

#### ATATÜRK OUTLAWED DERVIHSES

After World War I, one of Atatürk's first acts as dictator of Turkey was to outlaw dervishes. In centuries of theocratic rule, the fanatical dancers had become more than mere religious esthetes. They were powerful secular leaders, with influence on all phases of human conduct. In Atatürk's Turkey, church and state were to be legally separated. The Mosque of the Mevlevi Dervishes of Konya became a museum.

Konya, however, was always a religious city, and religious it has remained. Whether standing before a dervish's tomb, marked with its gold satin turban, or wandering down some muddy side-alley to a mosque that is crumbled to haunting ruins, you are conscious of the religious atmosphere of Konya.

Mecca and Jerusalem are not too far away to counsel in a whisper. The loveliest monuments of the town are religious

buildings: the Dervishes' Mosque, the Aziz Mosque, the Mosque of Ala ed-din, the Seljuk tombs and the Islamic "colleges."

Seeing Republican Turks, who cannot legally even wear the Moslem fez, entering a mosque, you recall other men who have prayed in this boney Anatolian valley: Ottoman Turks, bowing toward Mecca under the great whitewashed dome of the Aziz Mosque; Seljuks in the Mosque of Ala ed-din, with its low roof and half-timbered braces; Byzantine Greeks in Christian basilicas; occasional raiding Arabs, kneeling in the white robes of the desert, asking strength to carry the sword of Islam into a world of unbelievers; imperial Romans, bleeding a young calf to Jupiter; pagan Greeks crying out to the Olympian Zeus.

#### ST. PAUL VISITED KONYA

Saint Paul came three times to Konya when it was the Roman city of Iconium, probably in the years 47, 50 and 53 after Christ. Iconium is mentioned in the New Testament (Acts 13:51)

Recently there was an example of religious fervor still burning. A number of deputies to the Turkish parliament from the Konya district were said to have met in the city to draft a manifesto. They demanded a return to writing in Arabic script, to the Moslem calendar, the veiling of women and the wearing of the fez for men. They asked the reinstitution of Islam as a State religion and the legalizing of the banned harem—in fact, the undoing of nearly every religious reform of Kemal Atatürk.

Modern Turks were not much alarmed. "It is politics," they said of the manifesto. "Konya is a city of fanatics."

Religious zeal fades slowly. On dark nights, Christian missionaries in the area have sometimes heard strange wails on the mountain wind. The outlawed dervishes were chanting weird, savage-sounding prayers at clandestine meetings in the countryside.

In the western section of the town is an Acropolis. This hill has been the center of Konya from time out of mind. Here the great Ala ed-din built an imperial palace which is now only a mass of ruins. The Ala ed-din Mosque beside the palace has been preserved. It is one of the best remaining examples of Seljuk

architecture. The roof is flat, for the Turks who built it had not yet borrowed the domed shape from Byzantine basilicas. The minarets are fantastic. Beneath the mosque is an eerie catacomb, accessible only by crawling down cave-like passages strewn with rubble, where Seljuk royalty still lies buried in decaying tombs.

Near the mosque a modern park has been laid out on the hilltop. Here is a memorable view of domes and towers, fields and orchards and distant mountains. Directly below, to the east, is the modern town. There are a few modest, fairly clean hotels, a rash of restaurants and coffee-houses and innumerable small shops. Somewhere, lost among the buildings, is the hustling bazaar. It is easy to imagine that the smells of Turkish commerce have drifted up here, and that by sniffing deeply you can catch the unforgettable aroma: slabs of sour, white cheese; great blocks of dates; crates of Adana oranges; bolts of brightly printed cotton; rings of crisp bread sprinkled with Sesame seeds; raw mutton, chickens, sheepskins, gunny sacks, leather and copper pots. It is a mixture of revolting garbage and fascinating treasures.

#### HOUSES BUILT OF EARTH

Where the substantial public buildings and spikey minarets end, the town turns to mud. Crooked streets wind outward through blocks of houses built from the same grey earth on which they stand. This architecture is probably more genuine than any other in Konya, for men must always have built with mud in this timberless land. Houses have second-storey balconies that overhang the street. Sometimes there are wooden lattices over the windows—reminders of the days of harems, when women sat secluded from public view, peeking through slits at the street life they could not join. The alleys are patrolled by chickens, peddlers and screeching children.

Around the base of the Acropolis hill are four of the fanciful Islamic colleges for which Konya was once famous. They are all deserted now, but starkly beautiful in their dotage. You enter them with a Turkish guide who carries the keys to half the remains of the proud Seljuk

(Continued on page 11)



# The Ethiopians and Their Church

BY THE  
REV. CHARLES T. BRIDGEMAN

*This is the sixth of a series of articles on the ancient churches of the Near East by Dr. Bridgeman. The final article will appear in the June issue.*

EDITOR.

Each year on Easter Eve when the Pascal moon is riding high over Jerusalem the Abyssinian community in the Holy City enacts one of those dramatic services which, with music and action, recalls vividly the incidents of the first Holy Week. This service, an out-door procession in the moonlight atop a chapel abutting on the Shrine of the Holy Sepulchre, is called "Searching for the Body of Christ", and relives the sorrow felt in Christ's death, the amazement when news comes that the Tomb was empty, and the joy that filled the faithful when it was realized that He was risen from the dead.

The unique character of this particular service arises from the gorgeous vestments, jewelled crown-like mitres, varicolored ceremonial umbrellas held over the chief clergy, and the haunting music beaten out with muted drums and highlighted with tinkling sistra whose use goes back to Pharaonic Egypt. Yet more strange is the dance-like step which some of the monks slip into during the procession as they reenact the joy of the Easter news.

Here we have the universal Gospel refracted through a medium which owes much to Africa where in Ethiopia has existed a great Christian nation of some four million faithful little known to the outside world.

The Ethiopian nation and church touch the life of the other peoples of the Christian East at numerous points, playing at times a surprising role in affairs outside, but their inner history has been so little recorded or studied that every contact has a romantic air of mystery. And in our day it is hard to realize that the legendary realm where descendants of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba rule and Prester John was reputed to be both priest and king has been drawn into the rapidly moving orbit of the modern world and would rather be known for its foreign-trained leaders, up-to-date schools, and imaginative public works. In these few paragraphs one cannot do justice to the land



*Ethiopian Consulate General and Modern Tours*

St. George's Church, Addis Ababa, conforms to the Ethiopian style, which calls for a circular, or in this case octagonal building, with the altar within a circular screen under the central dome. Village churches are often made of wood or reeds with only the altar and the choir under cover, and the congregation standing outside viewing the service through open doors.

The Abyssinians are famous for the wide variety of ornate crosses they use, one of which is seen atop St. George's. This picture is of especial interest because it was taken by His Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie, who is an enthusiastic photographer.

of the "wine-red" or swarthy people mentioned by Homer, and three thousand years of curious incidents, and still less to the stirring life of a new age.

As a geographical entity Ethiopia of antiquity must be somewhat differentiated from the modern land of the Abyssinians. Homer used the term Ethiopia for the upper reaches of the Nile in what we would call Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. But it had a wider use for all the country lying astride and eastwards of the Nile in the northeast corner of Africa which is bounded by the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. Indeed by Ethiopia was also meant at times the southern corner of Arabia or Sheba now called the Yemen. These were the regions whence came gold, ivory, spices, gems, slaves for Queen Hatshepsut and royal Solomon and stalwart soldiers for the armies of Egypt. Although the Nilotic region was subject to Pharaonic Egypt in the 18th dynasty, it achieved independence in the eleventh century B. C., and from the eighth to the sixth centuries B. C. was strong enough to dominate the lower Nile valley. In the

century before and after the birth of Christ the Ethiopians ruled the Sudan, and oftentimes a queen-mother under the dynastic name of Candace was on the throne of the capital at Meroe, near modern Khartoum. It was the treasurer of such a queen, by religion a Jew but by race an Ethiopian, who was encountered by St. Philip as recorded in Acts Ch. 8, and converted to belief in Jesus as the expected Messiah.

Modern Ethiopia is more strictly limited to the Switzerland of north Africa, that triangle of 6,000 foot plateaux and 15,000 foot mountains, which lies eastwards of the upper Nile and is the source whence through the Blue Nile and the Sobar River and White Nile, the fertilizing waters dropped by summer rains on Ethiopia find their way northwards to irrigate Egypt's parched sands and muddy delta. Although not far from salt water Ethiopia is in fact cut off by the narrow strips of Islamic Eritrea and Somaliland from what once were its coasts.

The Arabs call the inhabitants of Ethiopia Habesh, meaning mixed, whence



comes the term Abyssinian. Such the people are: a mixture in varying degrees of Hamitic, Semitic and Negroid peoples. The Hamitic and Semitic strains predominate in the people of the northern provinces adjacent to the Red Sea (Tigre, Amhara and parts of Shoa) who constitute the predominate element. In time they have extended their sway to the Hamitic peoples of more easternly Harar, and the Galla peoples, pagan and Moslem, of the southern parts near Kenya. The people are strikingly tall and handsome, with finely cut noses, and thin lips. Save in color, which ranges from *cafe au lait* to black they look like Semites or Eastern Europeans.

#### LANGUAGE A FORM OF SEMITIC

The Ethiopian language is a southern form of Semitic, akin to Arabic. Its early form known as Geez is no longer spoken but remains as the classical language of the Bible, early translations of Christian literature and the liturgy. In the middle ages the derivative form called Amharic found use in a literary revival and is still the speech of some of the people, although other derivative dialects are used locally. The Gallas in the south use a Hamitic tongue.

The early Ethiopians were pagans who adapted to themselves the culture and the religion of Egypt. But at some early date Jews fleeing persecution settled among them and either by intermarriage or proselytism gave rise to a group which to this day remains Jewish in faith but is otherwise indistinguishable from the other peoples. These are the famous "black Jews" or Falasha Jews of Ethiopia.

Life in Ethiopia is primitive in its setting, akin to that of the peasants of Egypt, of Arabia and the more civilized peoples of Africa. The mountainous country, riven by deep valleys, makes for provincialism and clannishness, which gives rise to rivalry and endless struggle between the local *ras* (*ras* means prince, like Arabic *ras* for head) and *neguses* (*negus* means king), who from time to time, as at present, have been subordinated to a supreme *negus* known as *negusa nagast* or emperor.

One would like to suppose that the Ethiopian Eunuch of Acts 8 was the first evangelist of Ethiopia, but he was from the Sudan region. And the Ethiopian tradition that St. Matthew and St. Bar-

tholomew preached there cannot be substantiated, although it is interesting that in early days a Hebrew version of St. Matthew's Gospel is recorded as current in South Arabia, which had close contacts with the adjacent African coast.

The actual Christianization of the Ethiopians was initiated in the middle of the fourth century by Frumentius, sent as a Bishop to the people of the Ethiopian kingdom of Auxume, a northern region near the Red Sea. He was a Syrian Christian from Tyre who had been made a slave of the king when a ship on which he was traveling in the Red Sea was wrecked and the crew slain. So greatly did his gentle manners and fine intelligence commend themselves to the king that he was freed, became a trusted officer in the state, and was eventually chosen by St. Athanasius of Alexandria to serve as Bishop and evangelist. The Ethiopians gratefully remember him as Abba Salama, "Father of peace", and ever since have looked to the Egyptian Church to supply them with their metropolitan.

In the fifth century a band of nine Syrian monks, doubtless monophysites fleeing persecution in the Byzantine empire, arrived in Ethiopia and succeeded in evangelizing the royal house and the bulk of the people. The Scriptures were translated from Greek, Syriac and Coptic, ancient canons circulated and a broad foundation laid. Soon monasticism was introduced and has ever remained a powerful influence in the country. Relations with the Greek Christian world were close. The early period of literary activity which ended in the seventh century saw translated Christian classics, of which one, the Jewish Book of Enoch, survives mainly in the Ethiopic version.

#### JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY IN ARABIA

Both Judaism and Christianity were then found also in South Arabia in Saba or Sheba, as well as elsewhere among the Arab peoples. In the sixth century some Jewish-Arab rulers of South Arabia so persecuted their Christian subjects that news spread even to Constantinople and the great Justinian asked the king of Ethiopia to avenge them. Crossing to the Yemen the Ethiopians set up a protectorate which lasted half a century.

Here occurs one of the curious coincidences of history. A punitive expedi-

tion sent by the Ethiopians to Mecca to succor the Christians there was stoutly repulsed. Even the war elephants of the Ethiopians were killed. The Arabs ever remembered the year as the Year of the Elephant (Koran, Ch. 105). It was 570 A.D., the fateful year in which Mohammad was born.

The rise of Islam meant the cessation of Christian expansion in the East and a long, tragic recession. Egypt was soon under Moslem control. The Christian Kingdom of Nubia which had grown up in Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, where the earlier Ethiopian kingdom had been, withstood for many centuries. But when that too had become Moslem the Ethiopians were effectively surrounded on every side by Moslems and remained alone and aloof in a forgotten corner of Africa. They maintained their ancient connection with the Copts with difficulty, and often had to wait long years for a new metropolitan, usually a Copt, to be sent them. At such times the *negus* was de facto head of church as well as state, a priest-king.

#### LEGEND OF PRESTER JOHN

The European legend of Prester John, the mysterious monarch with dual office of priest and king, gained circulation in Europe in the twelfth century, and seems originally to have been associated with some Nestorian prince in Asia, or a Mongol in Tartary. But by the time that Henry the Navigator was studying the possibility of sea routes to India the legend was associated with an African king somewhere in the interior. King John II of Portugal between 1481-1495 opened up communication with the king of Ethiopia in hopes that the latter was Prester John and a possible ally against the encroaching Moslems. Vasco da Gama began his epoch-making circumnavigation of the Cape of Good Hope, in which he discovered the sea route to India, in search of Ethiopia. The heroic Portuguese adventurers actually reached Ethiopia in 1520, and once again the Europeans began to learn about the remote Christian nation. The Ethiopians were deeply impressed by this unexpected Christian ally.

The Portuguese were interested in religion as well as conquest and trade. Eager to correct the secular "errors" of

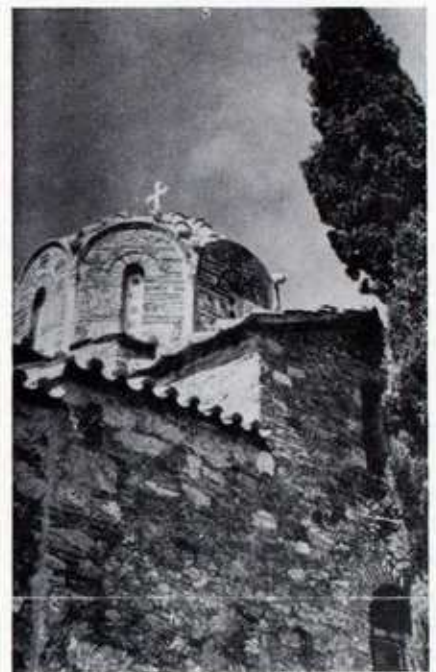
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# Near East Camera



*Standard Oil Company (N. J.)*  
The market square at Qatif in Saudi Arabia



*National Tourist Organization of Greece*  
Church of St. John Theologos, Athens



An Egyptian potter at his workshop in Cairo *Egyptian Tourist Office*



*Ivan Dmitri for American Export Lines*  
Two Lebanese girls discuss a letter



# FIRST MOSQUE AND ISLAMIC INSTITUTE IN AMERICA

BY HASSAN HOSNY

*Mr. Hosny is Third Secretary of the Royal Egyptian Embassy in Washington. He has been Executive Secretary of the Mosque Foundation, Inc., since its creation in 1945. This article is condensed from EGYPT, a quarterly magazine published by the Egyptian Information Bureau (Autumn, 1951).*

EDITOR.

When the corner stone of the Washington Mosque and Islamic Institute was laid in the early part of the year before last (1949), His Excellency Kamil Abdul Rahim, Egyptian Ambassador to the United States and president of the Washington Mosque Foundation Inc., said: "On laying the foundation of our mosque, may we pray to God and dedicate ourselves to the fruitful cooperation and permanent unity of our countries in the cause of peace and justice to all mankind."

Thousands of Moslems residing in the United States stand ready to confirm this declaration. They have great admiration for the country in which they now live and feel that millions of Americans have an equal admiration for Moslem countries. They are the ones who, for many past years, have felt that Washington should have a center of Moslem worship and learning and they are the ones who nurtured the plan that finally developed into a definite building program.

Back in 1945, the idea for a Mosque and Islamic Institute moved out of the discussion stage. It was then that the ambassadors and ministers of the Moslem countries duly accredited to the United States met to formulate a scheme for carrying out the proposals which had been made from time to time. From this initial meeting of the diplomatic representatives was born the plan for creating the Washington Mosque Foundation, Inc.

## GIFT FROM KING FAROUK

After this organization was set up the government of the Moslem countries began to pledge financial help for the project. Among the very first contributions to be received was that of His Majesty King Farouk who in 1946 donated over \$41,000 which enabled the Foundation to purchase a tract of land at Massachusetts Avenue and Belmont Road in a residential section considered

to be one of the finest in the national capital and where many embassies and legations of Moslem countries are located.

To insure conformity with Arab and Islamic architecture, world-famous for its beautiful structure and artistic lines, the building plans were drawn up by the Egyptian Ministry of Wakfs (philanthropic endowments) and they are being executed by the American architects, Irwin S. Porter and Company, and the American Moslem builder, A. J. Howar. Construction of the basement of the edifice has been completed and it is expected that the superstructure of the building which is now in progress will be finished this year.

It is due to the nature of the architecture and to the design of the project that the edifice requires great and special care—and thus more time—for completion than ordinary types of buildings.

When completed the project will consist of a mosque and two wings. One wing will be devoted to an Islamic Institute which will serve as a center for scholars doing research in Islamic history and culture. It will contain a library of many priceless works of literature, both ancient and modern, from all parts of the Islamic world. To provide for lectures and conferences, the Institute will have an auditorium with soundproof walls completely air-conditioned throughout the entire year, and equipped with the latest motion picture projection devices. The other wing will be devoted to administrative offices and comprise a residence for the Imam-Director of the Institute.

As a means of fostering interest in Islamic topics, the Institute will issue periodical publications on science, philosophy, art and learning which will contribute towards a better understanding of the true democratic principles of Islam and its famous teachings, and help towards a better assessment of the cultural legacy which the Islamic East gave to the West.

The Mosque and Institute will not only be a haven of worship but a center of learning for all scholars seeking to acquaint themselves with Islamic themes. Thus, the facilities of the Institute will

be enjoyed by all those who—whatever their religion may be—seek to study Islamic teachings, art and culture.

Although the main financial support for the Mosque and Institute is being underwritten by the Moslem countries, the Foundation has received various contributions from numerous Moslem and Christian communities in the United States, Latin America and Canada.

To increase the building fund of this project, the Government of Saudi Arabia has donated, besides its official contribution, several thousand copies of the Holy Quran in Arabic and English translation by A. Yusuf Ali and of the "Religion of Islam" by Dr. A. A. Galwash. These religious books are being sold and the proceeds used in the new project. Many American educators and theologians throughout the States have shown considerable interest in these books, praising the first for its deep eternal truths and the second for its clear and concise exposition of the main tenets of Islam.

Such interest in the Washington Mosque and Institute, extending as it does beyond the United States to South America and Canada, can really be attributed to the strong emphasis which the people of the democracies place on religion and culture as a vital source of international understanding and good-will which, if fully realized, would lead to greater cooperation between nations and would foster deeper ties of friendship.

This project will not only appeal to Moslems but also to people of all religions, for it is an ideal representation of the world's present search for freedom, equality and tolerance.

The teachings of Islam are based on true democracy. They irradiate such rays of truth and hope that are incentive to implement the high principles of ideology badly lacking in our troubled world.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee of the Foundation is composed of the heads of diplomatic missions in the United States from Afghanistan, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen. A. J. Howar is Treasurer and Ameen David is Member Trustee of the Foundation.



## DEATH OF DR. RIGGS

Dr. Ernest Wilson Riggs, President Emeritus of Anatolia College, Thessaloniki, Greece, died last March 25, while on a speaking tour in Dallas, Texas, following a heart attack.

Dr. Riggs was born in Merzifon, Turkey, July 3, 1881, the son of Dr. and Mrs. Edward Riggs. He received his A.B. degree from Princeton in 1904 and graduated from Auburn Theological Seminary in 1910. Following graduation he was ordained a Presbyterian minister. From 1904 to 1907 he was U.S. Vice-Consul at Harpoot, Turkey; President of Euphrates College, Harpoot, Turkey, from 1910-1921; associate secretary, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions 1921-1927 and corresponding secretary of the same organization from 1927-1932. He was elected president of Anatolia College, Thessaloniki, Greece, in 1933, the position he held until his retirement in 1950.

During the campaign against Italy he cooperated in establishing a military hospital in the college buildings; he directed the office of Greek War Relief, Thessaloniki, 1940-1941, and escaped twenty-four hours before the Germans took over the college buildings for their military headquarters in the Southern Balkans. He returned and reopened the college in 1945.

Dr. Riggs devoted most of his life to the cause of American education and welfare in Greece and Turkey and he was held in high esteem by both nations.

He is survived by his wife, the former Alice Shepard, and three children, Lorrin Andrews, Douglas Shepard and Margaret Mary.

## NEAR EASTERN STUDIES AT MICHIGAN

The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, has announced a program of Near Eastern Studies for 1952 from June 23 to August 15. The courses will cover anthropology, economics, geography, history, law, linguistics and languages, philosophy and religion, and political science. The lecturers include: George G. Cameron, William D. Schorger, Peter Franck, George Hoffman, George Mendenhall, George Hourani, Herbert Liebesny, Ernest McCarus, Herbert Paper, and N. Marbury Efimenko.

## COVER PICTURE

In the lowland areas the Forest Department of the island of Cyprus encourages the growth of trees along the roads. Not only do the roots bind the edges of the road and lessen damage in heavy rain-storms, but the shade is welcome in the hot summer months. Where much of the transport is dependent on draught animals, this is important.

Forest care and development in Cyprus has become an example for the whole Middle East. Present capital value of the existing forests is estimated at 30,000,000 pounds. The Cypriot forests have more than their immediate commercial value in their importance to the well-being of the island's people. As well as being a prime factor in the economy of wide rural areas, reforestation is essential if erosion is to be halted, and is a requisite of sound irrigation.

The state forests now cover 622 square miles, more than two-thirds of which are mountain areas. In early medieval times Cyprus was famed as a green and pleasant land. The Venetians started the devastation by plundering the forests to build their ships. Then under the Turks, exploitation amounted to wastage. Herds of starving goats ranged through the forest areas maintaining a few hundred shepherds at the expense of hundreds of square miles of woodlands. With all this came erosion of the upland areas—so that the current administration is faced with bare boulder-strewn gullies where the roots of forest vegetation once held the soil together.

Early efforts to cope with these problems brought bitter local opposition and thousands of acres were destroyed by incendiaries in the years which followed. Before the beginning of the last war a better feeling had come in. Education had improved and the Cypriots began to regard the forests as a main source of the Colony's wealth. Grazing was licensed, fuel-cutting was organized and shepherds learned to trust Government compensation officers when they had to be dispossessed.

The change came just in time. Nearly the whole of the timber requirements of the North African and Middle East campaigns came from the forests of Cyprus—and still the planted areas were greater in 1946 than in 1939.

## NEW AFME TRAVEL SERVICE

Miss Dorothy Thompson, Chairman of the American Friends of the Middle East, has announced the formation of Phoenix Tours, a service offered, in conjunction with recognized travel agencies, by the American Friends of the Middle East to promote travel to the Middle Eastern countries. Mrs. Alice B. Whelen is director of the travel program.

The first of these AFME sponsored tours will leave, by air, New York August 5, under the leadership of Mrs. Ovid R. Sellers. The tour will arrive at Tunis on August 6 for a two days stay. Bengasi will be visited next for three days, then to Cairo until August 16 when the party will go to Beirut, which will include a number of side-trips to Damascus, Baalbek, Aleppo, Tripoli, and the Cedars of Lebanon. Jerusalem will be reached August 23 with a trip to Israel August 30 and 31. On September 1 the party will go to Haifa, then to Tel Aviv, and from there to Istanbul, arriving September 2, and remaining until September 6 when the tour will be concluded. The trip will include conferences and discussion groups en route, as well as thorough coverage of all places of interest.

Residents in various Middle Eastern cities have been appointed as representatives of AFME to provide tourists with introductions and special opportunities to understand the programs of each particular country.

Information about these trips may be obtained by writing to: Phoenix Tours, American Friends of the Middle East Inc., 139 East 57th Street, New York 22, New York.

## DEATH OF DR. ZWEMER

The Reverend Dr. Samuel Marinus Zwemer, Emeritus Professor of History of Religion and Christian Missions at Princeton Theological Seminary, died April 2 after a brief illness. He would have been 85 years old April 12.

Dr. Zwemer's article "Al-Ghazali, The Mystic" appeared in the BULLETIN last February.

He was born in Michigan and was a graduate of Hope College in Holland, Michigan, and the New Brunswick Theological Seminary. Dr. Zwemer served many years as a missionary throughout the Middle East.



## Foibles and Fables

Just after World War I a boy fifteen years old turned up at the office of the preparatory school attached to the American University of Beirut. He explained that his father owned a farm in a Balkan town which had been first Turkish, then Bulgarian, and finally Greek. He was wanted for military service in all three armies, so his father sent him first to England with the help of a relief organization, and then to Beirut.

The boy, whose name was Benjamin, was a bright attractive lad, so the principal accepted him as a pupil and then wrote the boy's father, telling him what the tuition fee would be and how the money could be sent to Beirut.

Some weeks later a reply came addressed to the president of the American University of Beirut:

"Honored Sir: In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I present my son Benjamin as a gift to your university."

The boy was granted a scholarship for a year or two, then he worked in the office of the recreation building for several years. Eventually he returned to the Balkans where he got a job with an oil company in Sofia.

When the Germans invaded Bulgaria, Benjamin was instrumental in helping the American members of the oil company with their preparations to leave the country. No word has been heard of Benjamin since his heroic work at the time of the German invasion.

\* \* \*

The Seven Cardinal Sins of Islam as explained by a teacher at the old and famous Moslem University, al-Azhar, in Cairo include: Idolatry (polytheism); sorcery; murder which is not founded on a legal basis; usury, which often meant exploiting a poor man at a rate reaching more than 100 per cent; misappropriation of the property of orphans; desertion during an attack; bearing false witness. The sins are usually given in a popular way as: murder, drunkenness, adultery, sodomy, evil treatment of parents, false witness, and theft.

The Prophet Mohammad appreciated the evils of bad behavior and preached against them: gambling, adultery, drunkenness, etc., but he realized that

## SCHOLARSHIPS IN MEMORY OF MISS BURNS

Dean Emeritus Eleanor I. Burns of the American College for Girls, Istanbul, who died last February, is the inspiration for two scholarships established recently in her memory. The Athens Alumnae Association has instituted a scholarship to be awarded to a girl from northern Greece who wishes to continue her education at an American college in Greece. The Istanbul Alumnae have voted to use the interest on the Plateau Fund to establish a scholarship, theirs to be an award for use in the senior year to the girl who has made the highest cumulative average in her first three years.

The Plateau Fund was a project of especial interest to Miss Burns. When the trustees of the College decided to authorize the sale of The Plateau, a tract of land on the campus noted for its beautiful view of the Bosphorus, the alumnae organized a campaign to raise money to save it.

Since Miss Burns' death, many tributes have been received in this office. Typical of these is one from a former student and later co-worker, Miss Selma Riza, of New York:

"I wish to pay my homage and personal tribute to the dear memory of Dean Eleanor I. Burns, by expressing my profound grief at her loss. Her many virtues, incredible consideration for others and noble character had always made me feel certain she was a rare person. Her staunch friendship, never failing readiness to accept advice and gratitude for service were some of her finest qualifications.

"During her splendid administration for many years, she never neglected to take leadership in creating peace and harmony. I shall long remember her as a person with superior qualities, magnificent enthusiasm and keen mind.

"As a former pupil, and later as a co-worker and always as a friend, I shall rejoice in fine memories of her."

the greatest sins were those that interfered with the worship of the one true God, or caused injustice to persons unable to defend their rights.

## "ANTIGONE" AT ATHENS

"Antigone", adapted by Lewis Galantiere from the play by Jean Anouilh, was presented last March at Athens College for the benefit of the Scholarship Fund.

Produced by the Athens College Players, the ancient Greek tragedy has been rewritten in modern idiom, in terms of contemporary life, and acted in modern dress.

"Antigone" is the third production of the Athens College Players; the other two, presented last year, were "Accent on Youth" and "Night Must Fall".

An inscription which appeared over the doors of many Arabic universities in the middle ages read: "The world is supported by four things only: The learning of the wise, the justice of the great, the prayers of the righteous and the valor of the brave".

## WHAT IS IT?

The photograph on page 12 shows a donkey-operated water well in one of the old Arab date gardens near the Al Kharj experimental farm area in Saudi Arabia. This experimental farm is sponsored by the Arabian American Oil Company.

## Near East Society Bulletin

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ROBERT S. HARDY, *American Director*  
Near East College Assn. Inc.  
46 Cedar St., New York 5, N. Y.

E. C. MILLER, *Executive Secretary*  
Near East Foundation, Inc.  
54 E. 64th St., New York 21, N. Y.

ALYAH L. MILLER, *General Secretary*  
Near East Society  
46 Cedar Street, New York 5, N. Y.

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VIRGINIA BOTSFORD, *Editor*  
46 Cedar Street, Room 1209  
New York 5, N. Y.



## THE ETHIOPIANS

(Continued from page 6)

the Ethiopians and to bring them into union with Rome, they launched a great ecclesiastical campaign. There was not much popular interest in the matter but when their King David was persuaded to accept a Portuguese metropolitan in place of the deceased Coptic holder of the office, it looked as though Roman Catholicism would indeed capture the country. However the Jesuits, zealous and competent as they were, proved untactful, possibly in seeking to change local customs to conform to Roman usages, and there arose a popular reaction which drove the Portuguese and their monks from the country.

Meanwhile for a brief period after the fourteenth century there was a veritable literary and theological revival in which a new series of books in Amharic was produced, including many on history and fine points of theology.

The driving out of the Portuguese left the Ethiopians again isolated and the object of Moslem pressure, now exerted by the Turks, and so they remained until the nineteenth century. The fresh European interest in the Middle East which began with Napoleon's adventure in Egypt brought the English and the French into contact with Ethiopia. Russia too became interested. Foreign contacts were reestablished in a tenuous way, and Ethiopia was covered by colonizing powers. However strong native rulers, of which one strain claimed descent from King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (I Kings 10,) gradually created a strong central government and extended their sway to the southern Gallas.

### ITALIANS TO RED SEA IN 1870

About 1870 the Italians appeared on the Red Sea, and despite reverses at Adowa in 1897, never gave up their ambition to control Ethiopia until they waged an unequal and successful campaign in 1935-6. The Emperor Haile Selassie of the House of Solomon had to withdraw, but with the turn of the wheel of fortune in World War II he came back with powerful allies and today rules with skill a stronger and more progressive country.

The Ethiopian Church, as has been indicated, belongs to the large sector of

Eastern Christianity which, although it accepts the first three Ecumenical Councils, rejects that of Chalcedon and adheres to the monophysite formula to describe Christ's divine-human nature. As such they are in communion with the Copts, the Old Syrians and the Armenians. The Ethiopians agree with the Copts in most matters, but have customs of their own. Their liturgy is rich in alternative forms for the consecration of the Eucharist, some of which are identical with those of the Copts. General Semitic customs such as the rite of circumcision and distinction between clean and unclean meats they hold in common with Jews and Moslems. Their Holy Orders are like other Eastern Churches, save that their Metropolitan, who is called the Abuna (our Father), must seek consecration from the Coptic Patriarch, as also the other bishops.

### CHURCH OF ZEAL AND VITALITY

Casual travellers are wont to describe the Ethiopian Church as "barbaric", Judaistic or semi-Christian. True it has suffered from isolation almost from its inception, and in many non-essentials is truly African, but despite blemishes such as all Christians display in varying degrees, it is a Church which has had the zeal and vitality not only to survive but to grow through missionary expansion. The simple piety of the common people, their fanatical attachment to Christ, and true fruits of the Spirit are earnest of fine things in the more enlightened age which is now dawning for them.

### KONYA'S DOMES and DERVISHES

(Continued from page 4)

empire jangling on an iron ring.

The colleges are alike in pattern. Each one, when it was intact, consisted basically of a great dome, an out-sized portal and a minaret, and combined the functions of a mosque, monastery and lecture hall.

### DOMES SHAPED LIKE A BEE-HIVE

The dome is shaped as an enormous bee-hive of baked mud bricks, with a hole in the top. On clear nights, the stars shone through the openings, reflecting in the waters of a pool on the floor of the chamber. The students would gather around the pool, and there, gazing at mirrored images of the night

constellations of the Turkish sky, would learn astronomy and the aged, mystical cosmology of Islam.

The students lived like medieval monks in cells around the dome. They passed their days in prayer and reading and gazing at the inscrutable stars.

The portals of the colleges are magnificent. Forbidden by the Koran to draw pictures representing real things, Moslem artists developed the intricate patterns we know, from their Arabic origin, as arabesques. The whorls and traceries of Konya's doors suggest all that they cannot represent literally: clouds, bending trees, a flight of birds across the valley, flowers, mountains and the moving waters in fountains of ablution. Whole passages of the holy Koran run across the walls in delicate script.

### ART OF OTHER COUNTRIES IN KONYA

The art of Persia, Arabia and Greece stand by the doors of these colleges in Konya. There are columns with fussy Corinthian capitals, walls embellished with Persian fretting and arches twisted into Arabic designs. Usually, there are also the typically Turkish "stalactite" arches, which suggest the roofs of limestone caves or the insides of fancy jelly molds.

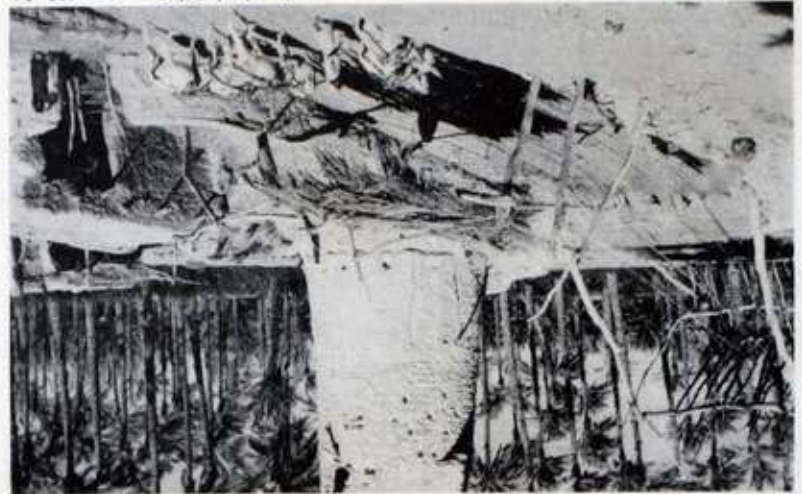
A small museum on the main street is now attempting to gather the relics of Konya's pre-Turkish past. Artifacts dug from the city streets are displayed in maddening disarray — Hellenistic Greek sculpture, bits of Byzantine mosaic, Roman sarcophagi and chunks of classical marble. It hardly seems worth-while in a city with dozens of major mosques from every period of Turkish history and hundreds of intriguing small buildings hidden among the narrow streets.

### BEAUTIFUL AND SUDDEN DUSK

Dusk comes suddenly to Konya, and beautifully if you are standing on the hill near Ala ed-din's fallen palace. The clear air is shot with cobalt blue all at once, as ink diffuses into water. From dozens of minarets the muezzin is calling the evening prayer.

Unfortunately, most visitors are never on the hill at the right time. They are too likely at that moment to be finding a Roman column half-buried in a cotton patch or coming upon the startling blue of Persian tiles in some forgotten mosque among the alleys and the walls of mud.





ROOM 1209, 46 CEDAR STREET, NEW YORK 5, N. Y.

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Mr. and Mrs. Sydney M.A. Fisher  
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## NEAR EASTERN LEADERS

Sheikh Asad al-Faqih (photograph at the left) is Ambassador from Saudi Arabia to the United States. He is chairman of his country's delegation to the United Nations.

Sheikh Asad was born December 8, 1910 in Alei, Lebanon. He was educated at National College in Alei, the Jesuit Université de St. Joseph in Beirut, and the Law College of Baghdad, Iraq.

He has served as chargé d'affaires and Minister of the Saudi Arabian Legation in Baghdad. Sheikh Asad has been in this country since 1945 when he came as Minister to the Saudi Arabian Legation in Washington (since the elevation of the Legation to an Embassy in 1949, he has, of course, held the rank of Ambassador). He was a delegate to the San Francisco United Nations Conference in 1945.

Sheikh Asad's country is a focal point in the Middle East because of the advances which have been made during the rulership of King Ibn Saud. Long a mysterious, remote land, little known except to adventurous travelers and explorers, Saudi Arabia is today familiar to many Americans. Since 1933 Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco) has had a concession in the country. This concession now covers about 440,000 square miles. More than 25,000 Arabs and Americans are united in the work of Aramco, which sends over 850,000 barrels of oil a day to oil markets in Europe and the Far East.

*United Nations*