

The World of the Slavs. By ALBERT MOUSSET. Translated by A. M. LAVENU. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc. 1950. Pp. ix, 204. \$3.00.)

An exploration of the extent to which Slav solidarity has been achieved is the theme of this thin book, commissioned by the London Institute of World Affairs. Its author, a Frenchman with a long list of publications about European politics, develops the theme on the basis of the record during World War II and in the postwar years. To provide a setting for current history the author devotes a third of his work to a sketchy review of the pan-slavic movement in earlier years. The book is in no sense a history of the Slavs as its title might suggest but rather a study of Soviet politics.

Mousset gathers many facts to indicate that the small Slav states looked upon the war as an occasion to build Slav solidarity. He believes that the spirit of pan-slavism was great enough to influence Bulgaria to stand alone among the Nazi satellites in refusing to send even a token force to fight on the eastern front in the USSR. He believes that it motivated the Ambassador to Vichy from collaborationist Croatia to say that as the war progressed the Slavs were coming into their day. Finally, Mousset states that not a Polish, Czech, Yugoslav, or Bulgarian statesman failed to see in the outcome of the war the end of the Teutonic curse which had paralyzed the expansion of the Slav world for a thousand years.

Into this receptive situation the Russians moved with skill. Slavism was on the lips of her diplomats, her political leaders, and even the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church. The Russians found fertile fields for their ideas, since they had been accepted traditionally as protectors of the lesser Slav peoples. Then came the rude awakening, laid bare by the Tito-Stalin controversy. In Mousset's opinion Russian pan-slavism was exposed as a myth without substance. Russia seized a position of domination, not collaboration. Her relations with Budapest and Bucharest were no different from those with the Slav powers. Stalin-Marxism and obedience to Moscow, not racial brotherhood among the Slavs, became the cement that bound.

Mousset finds that the Slavs became restive in Poland, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia, but that they were unable to side with Tito. They were kept at Moscow's apron strings, but collaboration on the basis of Slavic solidarity disintegrated as it had before in history, and today nothing remains.

Mousset's book presents no facts not already well known. The thesis is interesting, and probably correct, although one cannot but suspect that there is still some sentimental tie between the lesser Slavs and their traditional big brother. The account is marred by a lack of precision and

clarity, perhaps because of the translation. Its chief value to us Americans is that it indicates what a French political observer thinks about Eastern European politics, and it permits us to know something of what the book-stalls of Europe have been offering. As such, it may be rewarding reading for those who wish to sample the fare.

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Near Eastern Culture and Society: A Symposium on the Meeting of East and West. By PHILIP K. HITT, T. CUYLER YOUNG, RICHARD ETTINGHAUSEN, GUSTAVE E. VON GRUNEBaum, ARTHUR J. ARBERRY, GEORGE SARTON, EDWIN E. CALVERLY, ABDULHAK ADNAN-ADIVAR, HABIB AMIN KURANI, LEWIS V. THOMAS, CONSTANTINE K. ZURAYK, H. A. R. GIBB. Edited by T. CUYLER YOUNG. (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1951. Pp. x, 250. \$4.00.)

As a vade mecum to the study of Near Eastern Humanities this book should prove very useful. The first half of the volume is a survey in which the reader is introduced very briefly to the great names of the past in Oriental scholarship, given his bearings, as it were, in a world of specialists. In Part 2, dealing with "Current Problems of Near Eastern Peoples," we are introduced to a Turkey badly in need of "religious and philosophical reform" an Iran suffering from a resurgent clergy and a decline of morals, and an Arab world that calls for "a spiritual awakening," and finds itself as usual "in the midst of a crisis."

But what of the main problem? It is noteworthy that in a work that warns the world that a broad meeting of East and West must take place soon if either is to survive no mention is made of movies, radio, or the popular press. This is the more remarkable since our writers insist that the tragic gap between the two worlds is basically a cultural one. In cautioning against the "romantic" and "sentimental" views that the East and West have taken of each other in the past, the contributors ignore the one possible solution to their problem of general cultural understanding. What Western Orientalist was ever led into his field by any but the "romantic" appeal of it? What Oriental nation ever adopted Western ways without idealizing them to an absurd degree? Determined to keep all approaches to East and West on an impeccably correct scientific and scholarly level, our authors forget that they must deal with masses, that even the obscene orientalism of Hollywood and the comics shows a sort of nostalgia in the West for things Oriental, and that a game of backgammon in a Syrian restaurant or a Turkish bath can come far nearer to achieving a cultural meeting of minds and tastes than any displays of Persian miniatures, Abbasid coins, or twelfth-century armor. They also forget that strong ties of

sympathy between nations and cultures are not a matter of correct and objective estimates of each other, but of pure sentimentalism — witness this country's standing bonds with England or France. In the meeting of East and West for which these scholars are striving the common man is left quite out of the picture as an active participant.

Even more disturbing is the systematic neglect of Israel in this study. This is excused on the grounds that "the Princeton bicentennial conference which originated the volume occurred before the Arab-Zionist war." Yet the volume itself was published after that war, to which its contributors often refer as a thing of the past. No less realistic approach to the problems of the Near East can be imagined than one which simply dismisses Israel, as these authors do, as a terrible mistake.

An excellent diagnosis of the ills of the East, this book has little to offer in the way of a cure. While one authority assures us that the Arabs will "move from their medieval state into the modern world" only when they realize that religion is a purely spiritual and personal matter, another announces that the "new generation of Muslim intellectual leaders . . . reject the doctrine that religion is a matter only of private conscience." And what is *our* feeling towards Islam supposed to be when the "New Turkey cannot yet afford to be idealistic," and displays "little fellow-feeling for the Arabs as brother-Muslims?" The book ends, as all symposiums on East and West seem to do, with a timely admonition to the West to put its own house in order.

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Memoirs of King Abdullah of Transjordan. Edited by PHILIP GRAVES (New York: The Philosophical Library. 1950. Pp. 278. \$3.75.)

Probably the assassination of Emir Abdullah last year was as much of a tragedy to the West as to the little kingdom of Transjordan. Fortunately, we do have the personal record of this man whose impact on Near Eastern affairs is still largely unappreciated here.

Because King Abdullah addressed his memoirs to his own people, the editor (former *London Times* Near East correspondent) found it necessary to furnish numerous notes and a few interpolations for Western readers. Though Abdullah's cultural and linguistic orientation was completely Arabic and Turkish (he spoke no Western tongue), his mastery of writing, even in translation, shows that he was a poet as well as statesman.

Perhaps that is why this book may not have a general appeal among political scientists and historians. In spite of the vantage offered by the author's position, background, knowledge, and experience, this work re-

veals little that is not already known of Arab society, culture and history in general or of Transjordan in particular. However it may be argued, this was not the author's purpose.

Some points of history are made more clear. For example, Abdullah's part in the preparation of the Arab revolt of 1916 apparently was greater than the British and other observers realized at the time. His subsequent statesmanlike handling of the problems presented by the British Mandate over Transjordan and Palestine, his ability to rally the loyalty of the nomad tribes, his skill in choosing advisors — all seem to bear out Mr. Graves' belief that T. E. Lawrence grossly underestimated Abdullah's talents.

Clearly, too, his services to the Allied cause in both World Wars earned him the respect and loyalty of the British, particularly of Winston Churchill, who intervened in 1922 to leave him in occupation of Transjordan. The Emir, in turn, devoted two full pages of completely laudatory statements to the British and their war-time Prime Minister.

In his only reference to the recent Palestine dispute, Abdullah quite candidly admired the progress of the Jewish colonies and despaired at the backward state of the Arabs. "Palestine," he admitted, "is still suffering from the ambitions of its Arab parties . . . [who] are still fighting over the claims to leadership of those men who were responsible for the ruin of their country." On the other hand, Abdullah's concern for his people was not matched by his attitude toward parliamentary government, probably because of the chasm between democratic theory and practice in the Ottoman Empire. (He was thrice "elected" M.P. for Mecca in the Chamber of Deputies prior to and during World War I.) "It [parliamentary government] purports," he wrote, "to be a government by the people for the people." But, he observed somewhat bitterly, although the Ottoman Parliament was to represent all races in the Empire, the Union and Progress Party elements always controlled the elections. Consequently, he concluded, "It seems . . . that principles of representative government in a state composed of several races, often tend to division and loss, animosity and downfall."

This book, however, will not provide a complete picture of the Arab world — its aspirations, its accomplishments, its international position and its policies. Rather Abdullah intended his writings primarily for the domestic consumption of his own people "who will find in them many facts relating to the glory of the ancestors and to the struggle of the present generation." The Western reader will find more: he will discover, perhaps, the outstanding personality of the Arab world in our time.

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