

AN ARAB EDITOR SURVEYS JAPAN AND US

BY MARTIN SPREGLING

THE ARTICLE here presented in translation seems to us particularly well adapted to the purposes of the New Orient Society and to the needs and interests of its members.

On the one hand it deals, capably and readably, with a live problem of the present Far East, Japan and its relations to us and *vice versa*. The author is not an American, but evidently an interested and well-informed observer. This gives us opportunity, at one of the most difficult points of our foreign relations, to see ourselves as others see us. Perhaps, however, this is too much to say, since we guarantee neither his data nor his views, except insofar as we can vouch for his general ability and reliability. In any case, we can here discover how others see us in our relations and dealings with modern Japan.

The second point of importance about the essay here translated is that the author is, if not in the precise sense a man of Western Asia, certainly an eminent man of the present-day Near East. He does not name himself, but from the place and style of his article we can readily identify him as Fuad Sarruf, editor of the great Arabic magazine *Al-Muktataf*.

This throws light for our members and other readers on a little known and much misunderstood phase of modern life and letters in the Near East. Except for a few specialists the educated American on his travels in the Near East comes into contact with dragomen, until recently for the most part not very high class; with sales people of fripperies everywhere made for tourists; with native markets largely maintained for tourists¹; with shady places, creatures, transactions, and doings such as form a catch-net to trap the unwary foreigner in supposedly true native situations the world over. With high-class Arabic literati, scientists, businessmen, men of government, the traveler for pleasure rarely has any dealings.

In the late Jewish-Arabic controversy an appreciable portion of the tremendous weight and volume of the Jewish statement of their case was so phrased that the Western world received the impression

¹Debevoise, "The Vanishing Bazaars of the Near East." *Opent Court*, April 1934, 99-115.

that there were but two kinds of Arabs, nomads like the "red Indians," and "effete effendis" oppressing their poor serfs. There are high-class Jews, Zionists, and others, who know and say and write quite other things. It was not the voice of these last, but of the former, the propagandist voice, that penetrated and filled the Western press, and against this the Arabs, less widely spread, less well organized, less used to advertising methods, and perhaps less well equipped with means, had no counterweight.

Hence American views and opinions of the Arab world are even more false and distorted than our Arab editor shows them to be in the matter of Japanese manners and customs. Our little article cannot correct all of that. It can, however, make a partial correction and direct our minds toward the need of greater and sounder knowledge.

The periodical magazine is a fairly modern phenomenon. The magazine output of a people is one of the indicators of the level of what we Western Moderns call civilization. Measured by this yardstick the modern Arabic world may not be, as it was in Medieval times, in the very van of civilization, but neither is it so very far in the rear. The number of its journals is less than those seen on an American news stand, but most of the varieties are there, even the comic. And in quality the Arabic magazine stands by no means low.

The complete story of Arabic journals cannot be told here; a three-volume history of Arabic journalism—in the Arabic tongue—is in course of publication. We content ourselves and perhaps our readers here by pointing out three outstanding examples.

To many of our readers the first great surprise will be that the first of these examples appeared within our gates, in America itself. Of the three largely literary journals here briefly described it was the youngest and the least enduring, yet of considerable influence in creating and launching a new, thoroughly modern Arabic literature of essay, short story, novel, and drama, as well as lyric poetry. Founded in 1913, the first number of *Al-Funoon (The Arts)* appeared in New York in April of that year. Two of the major figures of modern Arabic literature, Khalil Gibran and Ameen Rihani, both not unknown in the world of English American letters, were contributors to this number and both continued to contribute freely until very nearly the end. Translations from the Russian and other languages occupied more space at first than later. In 1916 the jour-

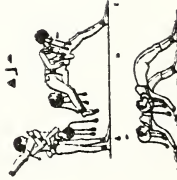
nal secured its own Russian strain in Arabic in the person of Michael Naimy, of whose work in English and in translation from the Arabic examples have been given in the *Open Court*, August 1932, p. 551-563; see *The New Orient, A Series of Monographs on Oriental Culture*. Vol. I, The Near East, p. 313-324. The fitful and stormy, but neither ignoble nor ineffective career of this American Arabic magazine closed in August 1918, just as the dream of Arab freedom and unity in their homelands exploded into meteoric brilliance only to wane presently in the welter of these post-war years into a dim and uncertain future.

The second great Arabic magazine to which I would like to introduce the members of the New Orient Society and the readers of our literature is called the *Hilal* (the *Crescent*). It was founded in 1892 by the great Syro-Egyptian, Jirji Zaydan, who among other things is also a sort of Arabic Sir Walter Scott, the best of whose historical novels is even now being translated into appropriate English by Mrs. Florence Lowden Miller at Chicago. Without subvention of any kind, government or private, the *Hilal* has flourished uninterruptedly, and now, in its forty-third year, is still earning a comfortable living for its owners, two descendants of the founder. It is comparable in America to *Harpers*, with the addition, say, of the *Reader's Digest* and *Popular Science*. The number for January 1935 contains articles on "Precocious Genius" by Mohammed Fareed Wajdi; on "Literature and the Legal Profession" by the great blind genius, Taha Hussain²; on "Art and Artists" in the modern conception by the editor of the great Cairo daily *Siyasa*, Dr. Mohammed Husain Haikal; under the caption "Problems of the Present Age," an article on "Marriage" by Ahmed Ameen; "Cradle Songs among the Arabs" by Doctor Ahmed Bey Isa; a good short story "The Pariah" by Mohammed Auda Mohammed; "The Philosophy of Names" by Ameen Boctor; two reports on new Byzantine and Greco-Roman mosaics found at Bethlehem and Beirut; and a dozen or more other articles of a similar nature, informative and well written. American readers will be interested to know about a section called *The Magazine of Magazines* which gives a digest of articles from eight foreign journals, among them our *Esquire*, *New York Times*, *Harpers*, *Parents' Magazine*, and *Reader's Digest*. A pictorial review depicts among other things a new water automobile and the largest egg in the world, as shown in the frontispiece. A

²See *The New Orient*, Vol. I, p. 365-371 and 440-458.



الرمس اليوناني
من حركات عن ولكتسون
في عهد الاميرة الثانية عشرة



لغة يونانية



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العدد الاول

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scientific digest, book reviews, and a question and answer box for readers closes the number.

The third great Arabic magazine, published like the *Hilal* in the greatest Arabic publishing center in the world, Cairo, is, the one from which our article is taken, *al Muktataf* (*The Élite*). Founded in 1876 it is now in its 86th volume and going strong. It designates itself "An Arabic Monthly Review of Current Science and Literature." The quality of its articles is comparable to our *Atlantic Monthly* and *The Scientific American*, without loss of prestige to either. The last number lying before us as we write, January 1935, discusses intelligently and intelligibly the discovery of heavy hydrogen and its Nobel prize; the library of Alexandria and its school; Pirandello and his Tragedies by the famous authoress, al-Anisah Mayy, opening a monthly series of literary studies; Minot and his associates conquer pernicious anaemia by means of liver and extracts from it; athletic games and exercises among the ancient Egyptians; Ancient Crete: was it the fabled Atlantis?—science and armament, a digest from the American Journal, *Popular Science*; modern psychology (meaning Freud); the current events section in this number reviews Japan and its Asiatic policy, modern Italy, and Captain Anthony Eden; the outstanding article in the woman's section is an extract from a new book in Arabic on modern educational methods, which, as a very favorable review later shows, presents clearly the Montessori, Decroly, Dalton, and Gary systems, together with the project plan; the poetic section brings in Arabic selections from Edna St. Vincent Millay, Alfonse de Lamartine, and Tennyson; the general essay section has a good pen picture of a prominent Egyptian business man and discussions of modern Arabic linguistic usage. It would be difficult to find a five dollar magazine in America or England offering in any one month a richer selection or one of higher class.

From the November 1934 number of this last of the three great magazines is taken the article here presented in translation. The author of the article, Fuad Sarruf, is a person of consequence in the Arabic world, comparable to John H. Finley of the New York Times, Glenn Frank, or Stuart Chase in America. It is interesting to observe his Asiatic sympathy with Japan vying with his Near Eastern sympathetic interest in America. This curious and interesting combination in the Near Eastern mind dates back at least to the early years of the World War. In 1915 or 1916 the writer was given

a clipping from an Arabic newspaper, which extolled as ideals for the young Egyptian Arab on the one hand Japan's Westernization and modernization, especially in her army and in her merchant and war fleet, on the other hand courses in the Correspondence School of the University of Chicago and the Alexander Hamilton Institute.

During the Versailles Peace Conference an eminent and well-equipped American Committee of investigation, whose results were published too late and are now almost forgotten, found a universal love and preference for American management prevailing all over the Near East. Something of this prestige and grateful friendliness manifestly still exists there. In this stage, as the Near East is striving for revival as did Japan fifty or seventy-five years ago, it behooves America, as well as the British Empire, to note with due appreciation this sector of the world and its genuine friendliness to us, and to do what is in our power not to neglect and throw away, but to preserve and foster this gift of the gods in a chaotic world.

With this recommendation we give the floor to Fuad Sarruf to speak to us on

THE NATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY OF JAPAN

[America is watching the affairs of the Far East with considerable care and anxiety. At the same time she does not hesitate to assert strongly her attitude with regard to these affairs, which is, that she will not recognize any treaty or established state of affairs arrived at by means contrary to the Kellogg-Briand pact—the Pact of Paris which outlaws war—and in this connection she has begun to restore her fleet to the strength permitted her by the naval treaties. Over against this Japan is troubled with jealous, perplexed anxiety. What is the attitude of the Japanese nation toward America? What ideas do they entertain about her? What do they fear from her?]

A Double Life

The Japanese of today lives a double life, with one foot in the brilliant-hued, ancient, Japanese life, the life of the fathers and forefathers, circumscribed by a narrow circle of desires and interests, and the other foot in the life of the twentieth century, a life of travel, of telegraphic news, of mechanized industry, international trade, and capitalistic economy, filled with the urge to enlargement and expansion.

Take any picture that comes to hand of a Japanese ministry, and you may ascertain the truth of our statement. You will see in such

a picture a group of managers of imperial affairs in clothes of the latest fashion generally accepted in Europe and America, and you will see another group in the garb of their forefathers. General Araki, formerly Japanese Minister of War, the leader of militarist Japan, leader of the militarist spirit in her, would appear in his office dressed in a military uniform made of khaki cloth; but when a reporter or photographer surprised him in his house, he would find the uniform discarded and its place taken by the wide, flowing, brilliant-hued garb of the ancients, which one sees in pictures characteristic of Old Japan.

What is true in this sort of statesmen and leaders of empires is true likewise in the little and ordinary matters of everyday life. In the Japanese house of today is a wing of foreign chambers—one room or more—containing tables, chairs, and rugs, such as may be seen in New York or Paris; but the rest of the house is pure Japanese, the floors of the rooms covered with golden-hued mats which give forth no sound, when you walk upon them, and for the rest bare of furniture except for a brazier, a tea tray, and a few cushions.

Or take the man of finance, business, or industry. He spends his day in his office on a swivel chair among typewriters, telephones, stenographers; he takes his lunch in a first-class restaurant; he pauses a bit after lunch to listen over the radio to a speech on some subject of interest to him. But when the day's work is done, he returns to his home; he takes his bath in a wooden tub full of hot water with the steam arching over him in a cloud as in a Turkish bath; then he puts on ample, silken robes and eats Japanese food sitting on the floor at a table which rises not more than a foot from the surface of the floor. His daughters, who have spent their day in their schools or places of work dressed in regular Western clothes, now surround him at eventide in wide, bright kimonos, jesting, laughing, spreading about them the pleasant atmosphere of youth.

It is as though the Japanese, returning from his office to his home, had turned back the hand of the clock of history a hundred years. He has turned away from the materialistic civilization, which he has adopted, but in which he does not find himself at ease, to a receding civilization of which there remain only some few remnants in which he takes comfort, but which, nevertheless, he enjoys to the full. In the paper, in which in the morning he has read the prices of the world's markets, he reads in the evening a story of the age of ancient Japanese chivalry. If he goes forth with the members of

his household to the moving picture theaters, he finds before him on the one hand films of Hollywood or the films of modern Japan, which follow the footsteps of Hollywood—and on the other hand ancient plays, into which sex motifs do not enter, about a life based at heart upon sincerity and loyalty; for the plays of this sort outweigh in Japan all other plays by at least two hundred per cent.

Attraction and Repulsion

This doubleness or pairing in Japanese life, where two utterly different currents intermingle, runs through a variety of the phases of Japanese life. You may easily discern it in the attitude of Japan toward America. The writer, Hugh Byas—we believe he is a Japanese³ who has studied in America, who now serves as correspondent for the great dailies, a man upon whom we think we can rely—tells of an incident when in an autumn night he was out walking in Tokyo. At one point he heard voices of young men and women talking English with an American accent. He turned in surprise, and his eyes fell upon a brightly lighted restaurant from which issued the sounds that had attracted his attention. There he discovered some sixty or seventy young people seated round a room, from the center of which all the furniture had been removed in preparation for a dance. They were all Japanese.

This gathering consisted of Japanese born in America or such as had studied there and then returned to their native land. When the writer talked to them, they said that the opinions commonly held in Japanese circles about American life were derived from the seeing of American films. These did not represent true American life or at best they presented a wholly distorted view of it. The only way to correct these opinions was to arrange an innocent evening's entertainment in the American fashion, so that the Japanese might learn what was meant by "diversion," a "Good Time" in America, and for those who wished to understand America as she really is, to attend our entertainment.

The strange thing about this, a matter which gives rise to real astonishment, is that the time during which these young people were undertaking this conciliatory enterprise was a period in which Japan was extremely apprehensive about America. Indeed, American tourists were meeting with serious obstacles on their travels in Japan, because the Japanese considered every American a spy who carried

³Hugh Byas, the *New York Times* tells us, is not a Japanese. *Asia* says he is Scotch by birth.

about concealed in the folds of his clothing means of divulging Japan's military secrets. It is said that a party of tourists had been rambling about in a beautiful district and that the police had repeatedly arrested and released them, until finally they requested the police department to detail a policeman to accompany them from one district to the next, and to turn them over to the following police guard with instructions, that there was nothing against them and that their trip was not to be interfered with thereafter.

A strange phenomenon in the twentieth century! Travelers used to seek aid of the police against highway robbery in lands in which security was lacking. But in Japan during this interval this company of American tourists was forced to request assistance of the police—for protection against the police!

Still more strange is the following tale. A New York bank had offices in Japan. This bank asked its branch in Osaka to assemble photographs of the principal buildings of Osaka for use in a general statement which was designed to set forth the affluence of the district in which the financial operations of the bank were carried on. The manager called in a Japanese photographer and commissioned him to take pictures of the government building, the board of trade, the chamber of commerce, and others. A policeman saw that photographer and felt convinced that these pictures were ultimately to be used by the American air force, when it would attack Japan and attempt to bomb Osaka. He arrested him and held him for questioning. When it appeared that the photographer was within the limits of the law, he was, indeed, released, but the story got out to the papers and was made into a scarehead. This in itself serves to show you an angle of Japanese psychology in its attitude toward America.

Fear of espionage is a natural thing in a country like Japan. Government employees are watched to make sure that they are conscientiously fulfilling their functions. The people are watched to make sure that none among them is conspiring against the government. When a foreigner comes to live in Japan, a man of the police looks him up and registers his name, his sex, his age, his birthplace, his nationality, the names of his parents and of the parents of his spouse. Every month thereafter the policeman returns, even though the foreigner should remain in Japan for twenty years, to establish the correctness of the informations which he has registered. On the following visits, however, he does not trouble the foreigner with

his questions, but contents himself with questioning the servant.

Those who have lived long in Japan have become accustomed to the coming of policemen to ask them about their names, their ages, their nationalities, whence they have come, and whither they are going. So they return answers to the questions with the same politeness with which they are addressed to them and go on their ways.

But those whose stay in Japan is of recent date are nettled by such treatment. If they are Americans, they interpret it as an insult to the dignity of their government. Should a minor official, because of his ignorance of the American language blunder into the American's ignorance of the Japanese language, then a molehill becomes a mountain, and the American leaves, considering himself insulted and bearing away with him nothing but anger and rancor against the Japanese.

So the Japanese fear of espionage, and their severity in punishing those against whom the suspicion is confirmed, and their treatment of suspects until their innocence is established serve as contributory causes toward estrangement between Japan and America. In such circumstances it occurs to the mind of some employee or chief of department that America is anxious to spy on Japan, while at the same time he does not realize that the ordinary missionary or tourist rambling about for amusement is rarely able to gather any military data of value during the space of such rambling. Quite evidently, when a nation is smitten with the disease "fear of espionage" it loses in a general way sane insight and sound judgment.

But, of course, it is evident, when a nation is smitten with the disease "Fear of Espionage," then generally sane insight and sound judgment has departed.

As for the Americans in Japan, they are stricken with another variety of the disease "Fear of Espionage" than that which has attacked the Japanese. The Japanese fear of espionage is permanent. The Americans, however, become aware of it only sometimes with sudden surprise, as if they had uncovered a new and serious matter. Then they go off telling stories about what happened to them and to their friends and conceiving of it all as an indication that the Japanese hate the Americans. If people believe what they say, nothing is easier to infer than that the Japanese government is behind all this, and that it is the government itself which eggs on the police to interfere with the journey of American travelers. So they stir up public opinion against the attitude of Japan and the Japanese govern-

ment and against any friendly relation of the American government with Japan.

An Historical Sketch

Friendly relations between Japan and America continued uninterruptedly for thirty years after the American Commodore Perry had entered Japan in the middle of the nineteenth century, Japan feeling bound to America by bonds that savored of the most sincere friendship. Those years left in the minds of the young people of that era—who have since become mature and aged men—a deep impression to the effect that the American government was sincerely striving for the highest goals and ideals. Thus sincerity was a strong bond between the Japanese and Americans. This firmly rooted image in the minds of mature and aged men was a powerful factor in smoothing out affairs, when complications arose between them during the period in which Japan emerged from the stage of youthful tutelage in relation to America and became a strong state, with the ambitions and interests of other strong states.

Some years ago President Franklin Roosevelt wrote an article in which he maintained that Japan's change of attitude toward America was to be traced back to the time when America occupied the Philippine Islands. At that time the Departments of the Army and of the Navy began to bring up the subject of the defense of these islands and the means for such defense. At the same time Japan, seeing a foreign nation venturing into its near neighborhood southwards, made use of this venturesome approach as grounds for demanding an increase of her fleet.

Nevertheless the objective of Japan's military and naval preparations in those days was not America, but Russia. And when war broke out between these two in the early years of this century, the attitude of President Theodore Roosevelt was sympathetic toward Japan.

Then, when the Chinese government signed the treaty of 1915,⁴ in which she acceded to the severe demands of Japan, the government of President Wilson stated publicly that it would recognize no change inaugurated by the treaty, which was detrimental to American interests. When President Wilson at the Peace Conference attempted to eject Japan from Shantung (a district in China, which

⁴A treaty concluded between Japan and China after an ultimatum on the part of the former, to whose stern demands, 21 in number, designed to ratify Japan's advance on the Chinese mainland, China was forced to yield.

had been the property of Germany before the war, which Japan had wrested from her during the war, and which was of considerable commercial and military importance), the American people believed that Wilson was doing this merely as a philanthropic attempt to aid China in her struggle for independence, while in reality it was in the service of American commercial interests. When the Washington Naval Conference met and Mr. Hughes, then Secretary of State, returned to the subject and persuaded the Japanese to evacuate Shantung and to drop the treaty with England in favor of two new treaties with the powers there assembled, guaranteeing the integrity of China and maintaining the open door, America reaffirmed the right to interfere in the affairs of the Far East.

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In more recent times the Japanese have been watching with anxious care the actions of Mr. Stimson, Secretary of State in Hoover's term, in the matter of the controversy over Manchuria. Mr. Stimson was arguing for the sanctity of treaties concluded and for the cause of universal peace. The Japanese, however, in their intense preoccupation with disturbances detrimental to them, of which they were complaining, did not believe that the maintenance of their rights in a country adjacent to them, a prey to continuing anarchical conditions, was in its very nature disturbing to the peace of the world. They did not realize that the Americans were not nearly so much interested in Manchuria as they were in general peace in the Far East to the end that the routes of commerce might remain unhampered there. The foreign policy of the American State Department was following the line of interference in the affairs of the Far East, which had been firmly laid down by Mr. Hughes in the treaties of 1922, when he persuaded Japan to evacuate Shantung and to annul their treaty with England; and this was what Japan was repudiating now.

So the group of Japanese young men and women trying by their dance to inaugurate a rapprochement between America and Japan, and the incidents in which Americans were arrested under suspicion of espionage, illustrate the two forces of attraction and repulsion between America and Japan. Where personal knowledge was increased and expanded, there bonds of friendship, confidence, and sympathy were strengthened. Where relations were circumscribed by official negotiations, the utterances of statesmen on general attitudes, the ignorance of minor officials, and the hasty statements of

the daily press, there fear, guarded caution, and doubt prevailed.

Wars and Rumors of Wars

In the shadow of this tension in Japanese-American relations there arose the whisper about a war which was to break out in the Pacific Ocean. The whisper rose to a higher pitch, when America proceeded to increase its fleet toward the limit permitted to her by the naval treaties. Here the arena was laid open for the masters of "certain knowledge" among the spreaders of rumors. Mr. Hugh Byas says, that, a short while before the writing of his article, he was approached by an American who asked him, was it true, what was said in Honolulu (the capital of the Hawaiian islands, a group of islands belonging to America in the middle of the Pacific Ocean), that Japan was preparing to attack these islands, and that this attack would be the first stage in the war of Japan with America. And he says likewise, that he was told that America was keeping its fleet on a footing of preparedness for the conflict in the Pacific Ocean so as to be prepared against eventualities, and that 27,000 soldiers would soon be added to the garrison of the islands.

And what is said on the American side is said also on the Japanese side. Recently an American visited Japan, making inquiries up to the highest classes of Japanese society. He noticed that every conversation with every Japanese turned about the question: Does America intend to go to war?

The Japanese ask: Why does America want to interfere in the affair of Manchuria, when she decided the difficulties of Cuba and Panama by armed force? When he is told that the settlement of these two problems, the Cuban and that of Panama, by force took place before the Kellogg pact, and that the settlement of the Manchurian difficulty by force took place after that, the Japanese curls up his lip and adds nothing further; but the tongue of his posture is saying: Why do you not leave us alone with our business? We do not interfere in your affairs in America. Why do you want to interfere in our affairs in Manchuria?

The Perplexity of the Japanese

So you see the Japanese perplexed because the nation which had the greatest and most extensive educational influence in the rise of his land, is the country which now faces and thwarts him when he tries to expand his narrow domain; the country which he looks up to with the utmost admiration and whose means and ways he con-

siders the last and highest word in human invention is the country which he fears more than all other countries together; and this perplexity is the more deeply impressed upon his mind by the fact that the country which blocks his way is the richest nation on the face of the earth in actual and potential wealth, while his country, in the numbers of its inhabitants and in the harshness of its soil is the poorest of nations.

Thus it is necessary that one remember the difficulties which face Japan, when her sins are recounted.

If Japan has entered upon a dangerous line of conduct, taking no one into account, i. e., her struggle in Manchuria,—then we must remember that she had reached in the gravity of her economic situation the limit of desperation. The condition of troubled China, a land of about 400,000,000 souls, was rousing fear. What would America do if China were in the place of Canada? Or if Canada were like China, troubled and disturbed, bearing within herself the seeds of chaotic revolution and overturn, like a giant evil genius, of whom you did not know what would be the next step he would take?

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There is no doubt that in Japan's policy there is danger to peace in the Far East; but the Japanese are sorely troubled by the fact, that the difficulties which she faces are not studied sympathetically and that the great things which she has accomplished are not rated at their true value. The Japanese see themselves as a country which honors private property, public security, law and order, the safeguarding of individual liberty, and the establishment of universal education; her constitution is based upon parliamentary foundations, that is, she honors the fundamental principles which America honors; in addition to all this she sees herself as the sole stable element in a continent given up to chaotic conditions. So she is astonished and grieved, that America should consider her as nothing other than the "bad boy," who must be admonished or disciplined.

Those of our readers who want to balance this Asiatic survey by a wholly American one can do so by reviewing our state papers and the writings of Carroll Binder, Upton Close, and the excellent and farsighted article by Nathaniel Peffer in *Asia* for April, 1935, on the Japanese question.