

## THE EDITOR'S DESK

Marshall G. S. Hodgson's essay on 'The Role of Islam in World History', which appears in this issue of *IJMES*, is a stark reminder of the extent of the loss which we suffered by his untimely death at the age of 46 on 10 June 1968. Dr Hodgson, Professor and Chairman of the Committee on Social Thought and Professor of History at the University of Chicago, was a vigorous and stimulating student of Islamic history. The depth of his scholarly knowledge, and his mastery of the techniques of research in the field were demonstrated in his Ph.D. thesis, *The Order of Assassins* (The Hague, Mouton and Co., 1955). His theories on Islamic history, while invariably controversial, provided all those acquainted with him and his work with an invaluable stimulus and encouragement to look at Islam with a fresh point of view and in a wide context. It is, indeed, gratifying that his major work, *The Venture of Islam*, was sufficiently completed at the time of his death that it soon will be published as a three-volume book by the Aldine Publishing Company.

The contribution by Dr Ercümen Kuran, Associate Professor of Turkish History at the University of Toronto, on the Ottoman Grand Vezir Said Paşa reminds us of the need for a new look at the long and controversial reign of Sultan Abd ul-Hamid II (1876–1909). The fate of Abd ul-Hamid II's reputation in the half century since his death reminds us vividly how much our view of history often is colored by contemporary political conditions and philosophies and the prejudices of historians of the time. Since the Turkish Republic rose so quickly after his death, discussion of his reign fell easy prey to its general tendency to condemn the Ottoman sultans out of hand, and without distinction. Since so many of his Young Turk political opponents, and their followers, rose to political and academic prominence in Turkey in later years, while many of those who suffered during his reign spread throughout the western world, it was inevitable that his bad qualities should be emphasized and his accomplishments ignored. But time has now passed. And even more important, the archives of his reign, originally collected at the Yıldız Palace, now are available to researchers for the first time at the *Başbakanlık Arşivi* (Prime Minister's Archives) in Istanbul. They will be the subject of a later essay in *IJMES*, but preliminary examination of this material, as well as other published and manuscript sources already available, such as that undertaken by Professor Kuran, seems to indicate that much of the Sultan's reputation was undeserved, that he was a major reformer, in truth the 'Last Man of the *Tanzimat*', and that his accomplishments provided a firm basis for many of the advances made in Turkish government and society during the years of the Turkish Republic.

The development of French economic interests in the Arab portion of the

Ottoman Empire as part of an effort to justify subsequent territorial claims during the two decades which immediately preceded World War I is discussed, on the basis of exhaustive research in the French archives, by Dr William I. Shorrock, Assistant Professor of History at Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio, in 'The Origin of the French Mandate in Syria and Lebanon: The Railroad Question, 1901-1914'. His description of the process by which French diplomats took advantage of Ottoman financial distress, using it as a lever to secure ever more extensive concessions, demonstrates vividly how much Ottoman decline was a product of the ambitions of those who perported to be her 'friends' as well as her enemies.

Finally, Dr M. T. Ozelli, Assistant Professor of Business Administration at Fordham University, New York, discusses the economic results of Turkey's investments in the different levels of education, and of the salary structure of the Turkish bureaucracy, in his study of 'The Estimates of Private Internal Rates of Return on Educational Investment in the First Turkish Republic, 1923-1960'. The results of the Republic's tendency to emphasize the development of secondary rather than higher education and to discourage those intending to enter the bureaucracy from continuing their studies in the universities should be considered in relation to similar problems in other developing countries.

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