

Correspondence

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

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SIR,—Will you allow me to inquire, through your columns, whether any of your readers would be interested to co-operate in some organized study of Western influence on Near and Middle Eastern peoples?

The history of this influence during the last two or three centuries is one of the keys to present oriental problems, and the intellectual and social sides are at least as important as the military, diplomatic, and economic. There is an admirable field for such studies in the narratives of Western travellers, which, though often ransacked for curiosities of literature, seem never to have been surveyed systematically. But this field is so vast that no one inquiring into some particular subject can really cover it single-handed. Group work suggests itself, and I am trying to bring together at the Institute of Historical Research, Malet Street, Bloomsbury, a group of people interested in the studies that I have mentioned. For this purpose I am proposing to exclude India and Russia, to concentrate on the peoples and countries that have at one time been included in the Ottoman Empire, and not to go further back to start with than about the last quarter of the seventeenth century. On these lines I have already made a start with several collaborators.

At the Institute of Historical Research we have rooms, maps and works of reference, and are conveniently near to the British Museum. If any of your readers wishes for further information, I should be glad if he or she would write to me at the Institute; I will only add that I am not asking for pupils but for collaborators, and that even those with little time to spare may give valuable help.

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