

A Comparative Study of Ideologies

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We gratefully acknowledge and thank the Institute of Islamic Culture [1] for permission to reproduce Chapter 13 from his book “*Ideology of Islam*” by Khalifa Abdul Hakim.

Marxism

Here is a presentation of Marxism from the words of Marxists themselves:

1. All existence is a process of dialectical materialism. It is the Hegelian dialectic of Thesis, *synthesis* and *antithesis* materialised. Conflict of the *thesis* and *antithesis* (in other words struggle or conflict) is an inevitable fact in the universe. Their mutual action and reaction creates a *synthesis*. All creation therefore is an outcome of inner and inherent contradictions which inevitably develop in every situation. This is a complete explanation of all causal processes. It is not the mind that dominates matter, but it is itself a product of matter. The effective causes are the objective events in the universe. *Materialistic realism* must be substituted for *Hegelian Idealism*.

2. Although *dialectical materialism* is believed to be a comprehensive hypothesis which is considered suitable for a universal explanation of all phenomena in all categories, the chief interest of Marxism is its application in the field of social institutions and processes.

3. In social realms, economic phenomenon, comprised under the general concept of *modes of production*, are really creative and potent factors. Religion, politics, ethics and art are all derivatives of the *mode of production*.

4. History is not a series of chaotic haphazard events, but rather there is a method to its apparent madness. The objective conditions for the production of the material means of life form the basis of all the historical activity of man. History was never understood by any philosopher or historian because none of them chanced to possess this master-key. All idealistic and providential explanations of history are misleading. Ideas and religions are nothing but the material world reflected by the human mind. There is no other Creator or Director of the world forces except the dialectics of

matter. Politics and judicial systems are not products of abstract ideas of justice but are rooted in the material conditions of life. The anatomy of civil society is a by-product of its economics. The mode of production of the material means of existence conditions the whole process of social, political and intellectual life. Social changes, political revolutions and religious reformations are not due to any increasing insight into eternal truth and justice; they must be sought in the economics of the epoch concerned. In a joint work on German Ideology, Marx and Engels sum it up as follow: “In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here the ascent is made from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not start from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as described, thought of, imagined and conceived, in order thence and thereby to reach corporeal men; we start from real active men and from their life-process, also show the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process also show the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process.” The operation of non-economic forces is not denied but, as Engels says, according to the materialistic conception of history, the production and reproduction of real life constitutes in the last instance the determining factor of history.

The entire value of a commodity consists of physical or mental labour embodied in its production. A commodity has a value because it is a crystallisation of social labour. The relative values of commodities are determined by the respective quantities or amounts of labour worked up, realised, fixed in them. But it is only socially valuable labour that is value-determining.

Marx conceived of all kinds and degrees of occupational skill as being reducible to standard time units of unskilled labour. The value of quality can be judged only by reducing it to quantity of unskilled labour. Wages are on the whole bound closely to a physical subsistence level.

Marx maintained that under capitalism the working day must be longer than the number of hours of average

labour required to produce the workers subsistence. The value produced during these excess hours constitutes "surplus value," that is, values produced by the workers but which they do not get. The labourer is made to work more hours than is necessary for his own subsistence and the surplus value thus created is annexed by the employer. The creation and grabbing of surplus value is inevitable under the capitalistic system. To Marx, it is the heart and soul of that system. While during earlier historical stages of capitalism he exercised personal initiative in the organisation of production, he continued, even at the mature stages of capitalism, to hire others to do the directing, while he retained the passive role of the immediate supplier of funds to pay labour. A capitalist has no other aim but the acquisition of surplus value. All surplus value, whether profit, interest or rent, is in substance the materialisation of unpaid labour.

After the process of capital accumulation is set going, it is the labourer's own labour robbed from him which is advanced to the labourer to create further surplus value for the capitalist employer. The produce of the labour of those who do work, gets unavoidably accumulated in the hands of those who do not work, and becomes in their hands the most powerful means to enslave the very men who produced it. This process is inherent in the entire capitalistic system.

Being contrary to human welfare and internally inconsistent, it must be scrapped and superseded. Economic forces have always created mutually antagonistic classes of the oppressors and the oppressed.

"The modern bourgeois society, that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society, has not done away with class-antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggles in place of the old ones." Society has not split up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other --- bourgeoisie and proletariat.

"A sense of this irreconcilable clash of interests must be instilled into the workers. With their class-antagonisms developed, class-struggle would ensue; and this, necessarily taking a political form, would be the first step in preparation for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a new order."

Under capitalism the bourgeoisie would go on accumulating the surplus profit out of the unpaid labour

of the workers and the worker would go on getting wages which would be exhausted in their own reproduction. Marx makes no distinction between the incomes of the moneylender, the landowner, the capitalist, the employer and the merchant. He thinks there are no essential differences in their interests or their positions within the bourgeoisie. Their incomes consist of portions of surplus value produced by labour.

The lower strata of the bourgeoisie, the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, handicraftsmen and the peasants would gradually sink into the proletariat because they will be swamped in competition with the big capitalists.

Bourgeoisie has played a very important, progressive and transitional role; it has played a revolutionary part in tearing asunder all feudal ties and retaining naked self-interest as the only nexus between man and man. It has drowned in the icy water of egoistical calculation all religious fervour and idealistic sentimentalism. Only direct brutal exploitation is left. Its positive achievement is the advancement of humanity in many directions without any deliberate humanitarian motive. Nature's forces have been subjected to applied science and various parts of the world have been brought into close contact.

But, in accordance with the inevitable dialectic of materialism, it has set in operation forces that will cause its ultimate downfall. It has created the proletariat as its logical correlative. The proletarian is defined "as a class of labourers who live only so long as they find work, and they work so long as their labour increases capital. These labourers, who sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition and to all the fluctuations of the market." As industrial processes herd together large masses of workers in one town, the proletariat is in a much better position to form combinations against the bourgeois and can club together in order to keep up the rate of wages. The proletariat is also benefited by increased means of communication. The State is an agency of oppression controlled by the bourgeoisie to advance its own interests. A well-organised society that has eradicated the distinction of classes can exist in the absence of the State. All political power is only the organised power of one class for oppressing another and as Communism advances the State shall wither. In the capitalistic system, concentration and centralization of

capital perpetuate and strengthen themselves. In the internecine conflicts of the capitalists, the smaller capitalists will be devoured by the bigger ones. Free competition among capitalists will be gradually replaced by gigantic monopolies. "Finance Capital" reaching out beyond the boundaries of a single capitalistic country becomes "Capitalistic Imperialism."

International monopoly combines of capitalists are formed which divide up the world.

The imperialist powers, fighting among themselves for the right to share in this monopoly, struggle for markets and for profitable investment of 'Finance Capital.' The world will become 'one bloody lump' of the belligerent group of capitalists, the slave-drivers of a capitalist slavery. The contradictions created by capitalist production will play upon the world instead of a nation. The proletariat must prepare itself to seize power at the collapse of the capitalist system which is inevitable because of its internal contradictions. The proletariat shall have to seize power, establish its own State to crush out all capitalist employers and their class-ideology.

In the first stage, the proletarian State shall be an engine of oppression against the capitalists but the proletarian State shall be gradually liquidated when the era of full Communism is ushered in, when each person would be motivated to work with his full capacity and to consume from the common product merely in accord with his own needs. The change cannot take place by peaceful evolution. Economic fight must turn into a political fight. The bourgeois State shall not give in without a bitter fight. According to Marx and Engels, force is not an absolute evil; it is the midwife of every old society which is pregnant with the new. Immense moral and spiritual impetus results from every victorious revolution.

The change from capitalism to Communism is dialectically inevitable but a violent revolution is an essential phase of that dialectic. In the transitional state, political power will change places; the bourgeoisie will lose it, the proletariat shall acquire it and the ruled will become the rulers.

In the earlier phases, there shall be no universal democracy as formerly democracy existed for the bourgeoisie only, now it will exist for the workers only; exploiters and oppressors of the people shall be

excluded from this democracy in the transition from capitalism to Communism.

As the means of production will belong to the whole of society, all citizens shall be transformed into hired employees of the State. Labourers will work for wages, each worker receiving for an equal quantity of labour an equal quantity of products and 'he who does not work shall not eat.' There shall be difference in wages but no exploitation.

According to Marx, the goal of Communism is 'from each according to his ability; to each according to his needs.'

But the advent of full Communism is not inevitable. Lenin says, 'It has never entered the head of any socialist to promise that the highest phase of Communism will arrive.' (Lenin, quoting Marx in *The State and Revolution*).

He further pointed out that full Communism cannot be introduced; by what stages, and by means of what practical measures, humanity will proceed to this higher aim – this we do not and cannot know. "It can only be said with the fullest confidence that expropriation of the capitalists will inevitably result in a gigantic development of the productive forces of human society."

It is the aim of Communism to establish a classless society. Fascism Under this term will be included the economic systems of both Italy and Germany before World War II. In Germany it was called National Socialism. The word 'Fascism' is derived from *fascio* meaning a group or bundle. This movement in both countries was directed against democratic liberalism which hoped that cooperation by agreement would replace national conflicts. President Wilson was a great interpreter of the liberal spirit. Liberalism preached the self-determination of peoples as a desirable goal; the small nations. Minorities were to be protected from the oppression of majorities. Everywhere women, along with men, were to be granted suffrage in constitutional democracies. Similarly, labour was to be protected against the exploitation of employers. A league of nations was to be set up to settle international disputes and to rule out war and the arbitrament of the sword.

The Socialists and Communists agreed with many of these objective but were of the opinion that political

democracy alone cannot achieve them unless it is coupled with industrial democracy. Violence may be necessary to achieve the workers' utopia of economic equality and social justice. As only the workers' States can achieve real and abiding international harmony the primary aim should be the establishment of the worker's States.

Fascism, under the leadership of Mussolini, controlled the Government of Italy in 1922, and repudiated most of these objectives along with the methods proposed to attain them. Fascism came to the conclusion that liberal democracy had its day and it has now to be transcended not by Socialism or Communism but by something quite different. It started revaluation of all the values of liberal democracy. Government by majorities attained through the ballot was despised and the notion of opposition parties in the parliament or within the government ridiculed as a puerile absurdity. Similarly, freedom of thought and speech was anathema. Their reading of history convinced them that great and powerful States were created and ruled by a bundle of a few individuals and by militant minorities who did not legislate by consulting the masses. Democratic liberalism grants the right of private ownership as the first essential of freedom, and rectifies disequilibrium of power by an honoured system of checks and balances. Fascism also grants the right of private ownership but within the framework of a power-seeking State. Similarly, checks and balances are contrived and controlled by the State. Individual liberty is not an absolute right; the real entity is the State and the individual has no existence, except as an organ of the State. Fascism is against vesting the ownership of land and capital in society as a whole. State-control must not extend to the abolition of private property because that would weaken the State, but any amount of encroachment by the State is permissible, if dictated by the necessities of the State. Fascism denies the control of the means of production to the workers.

Let us try to sum up the basic concepts of Fascism. Government by universal suffrage is wrong. The majority of citizens cannot be trusted to determine public policy. They should be taught their duties and not allowed to clamour for their rights. The natural fact is the inequality of men and not their fictitious equality. Mussolini urges, "The beneficial and fruitful inequality of mankind can never be permanently levelled through the mere operation of a mechanical process, such as universal suffrage." According to an exponent of Fascism, it trains its guns on the whole block of democratic ideologies. In

democratic regimes, people are, from time to time, deluded into the belief that they exercise sovereignty, while all the time real sovereignty is exercised by and resides in others who may be self-seeking and tyrannical. Mussolini expresses his creed in the following sentences: "Fascism denies that numbers, as such, can be the determining factor in human society; it denies the right of numbers to govern by means of periodical consultation."

Hitler was of the same opinion. Here is a quotation from *My Struggle*: "The national State must work untiringly to set all government, especially the highest – that is, the political leadership free from the principle of control by majorities that is, the multitude – so as to secure the undisputed authority of the Individual (i.e., the strong leader) in its stead. There must be no majority making decisions, but merely a body of responsible persons, and the word 'council' will revert to its ancient meaning. Every man shall have councilors by his side, but the decision shall be made by one Man."

The alternative to democracy is the rule of the self-constituted few. Fascism agrees with Socialism and Communism in the view that competitive economic systems based on *laissez faire* have developed inner contradictions and disputing anti-social tendencies. Fascism stands for State-controlled capitalistic system. Uncontrolled capitalism cannot achieve stability, provide employment or utilise the capital resources completely. If various economic groups are unified by the State, private ownership could be divested of its evils and made to work as a beneficial system. All economic life must be nationally directed within the frame-work of private ownerships.

Fascism does not, generally speaking, believe in the possibility of perpetual peace. Mussolini utters his philosophy of war and peace in the following rhetorical sentences: "Fascism discards pacifism as a cloak for cowardly supine renunciation in contradistinction to self-sacrifice. War alone keeps up all human energies to their maximum tension and sets the seal of nobility on those people who have the courage to face it. All other tests are substitutes which never place a man face to face with himself before the alternative of life or death. Therefore all doctrines which postulate peace at all costs are incompatible with Fascism. Equally foreign to the spirit of Fascism – even if accepted as useful in meeting special political situations – are all internationalistic or League superstructures which, as history shows, crumble to the ground, whenever the

heart of nations is deeply stirred by sentimental, idealistic or practical consideration. Fascism carries this anti-pacifistic attitude into the life of the individual. 'I do not care a damn' (*me ne frego*), the proud motto of the fighting squads scrawled by a wounded man on his bandages, is not only an act of philosophic stoicism, it sums up a doctrine which is not merely political; it is evidence of fighting spirit which accepts all risks." "Such a conception of life makes Fascism the resolute negation of the doctrine underlying so-called scientific and Marxian socialism, the doctrine of historic materialism which would explain the history of mankind in terms of the class-struggle and by changes in the processes and instruments of production, to the exclusion of all else." Fascism recognises the importance of economic factors but it denies that class-struggle is the preponderating agent of all social transformations.

Fascism denies the hedonistic utilitarian doctrine that the summum bonum is the greatest happiness of the greatest number, meaning by happiness only the sum of pleasures.

Communism prophesies that the State, being always an engine of oppression, must finally wither away for Fascist State is more real than the individual and is greater than the sum of the individuals. Strengthening of the State must be the ultimate aim, to which all individual liberty and individual happiness must be sacrificed if it becomes necessary. Fascism considers nationalism to be an indisputable datum; its comparison with this internationalism is an ineffective makeshift. Fascist State is a totalitarian state; the sovereignty of the State is total and indivisible and cannot be distributed among the citizens, as is the case in democracies. Mussolini's famous dictum expresses it forcefully in a few words: 'Everything is the State, nothing against the State, nothing outside the State. It is Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omnicompetent.'

"The Fascist State lays claim to rule in the economic field no less than in others; it makes its action felt throughout the length and breadth of the country, by means of its cooperative, social and educational institutions and all the political, economic and spiritual forces of the nation, organised in their respective associations, circulate within the State." The State, being an abstract entity, in action practice, the persons who control the State become the symbol and embodiment of this omnipotence. At the head is the Leader, who can

assert with greater truth than Louis the XIV of France '*l'etat, c'est moi.*' 'I am the State,' and lay claim to blind loyalty and unconditional obedience. National pride must be fostered by history and, if necessary, by myth. The virtues of the nation must be extolled at the expense of other nations. The myth of the 'chosen people' must become a psychological reality. Propaganda must be vigorously directed against the decadence of democratic nations.

The Nazis emphasized, more particularly, the doctrine of racial superiority and racial purity.

Force is the creator of nations, States and empires and it shall continue to be so in the present and the future. The strong shall rule over the weak and there is no shame or injustice attached to it. Communism strives for a universal, international unity of working humanity transcending the barriers of nationality and the differences of race and colour. Fascism stands for the accentuation of national differences, dividing the world into natural masters and natural slaves. Inter-State morality must be different from morality among individuals of the same State. There are superior and inferior races or the cooperation of the strong and weak nations on terms of equality is a retrograde step in the course of biological evolution whose basic law is natural selection and survival of the fittest.

In a totalitarian Fascist State, the State precedes the individual, while in liberal democracies the individual precedes the State and has his rights guaranteed by constitutional statutes.

The German idealist, Fascist, said that history is a gradual evolution of liberties. Mussolini and the great Fascist philosopher, Giovanni Gentile, repudiate this interpretation of human history and maintain the thesis that 'the maximum of liberty coincides with the maximum of State force.' "All history of man's civilization, from the caves to the civilized or so-called civilized man, is a progressive limitation of liberty." Since the State is of one mind and one policy, a single party is necessary to make decisions and to enforce them. Decisions are made ultimately by an inner circle of leaders and then directives are issued to the executives.

Leadership is pyramidal, at the apex is the Great Leader whose judgment must be taken as infallible and whose will is absolute. Fascism believes in regulated and

controlled capitalist economy. Individual and corporate enterprises are retained; government is not the only enterpriser or employer but is a controller of the direction which production is to take. Article Eight of the Italian Labour Charter of 1926 states, "The corporate State considers that private enterprise in the sphere of production is the most effective and useful instrument in the interest of the nation." The employer and the employee must be made to work harmoniously in the interest of the nation.

Without creating a socialist State, certain socialistic measures are necessary. The Nazis proposed the abolition of unearned incomes, the confiscation of war profits, nationalisation of trusts, profit-sharing in large concerns, the extensive development of old-age pensions and the improvement of the public health through the protection of mother and child. Fascism does not

intend to abolish groups and classes. The national economy has to devise an economic framework in which national solidarity will replace the opposing interests of the groups. The vast groupings of employers and employees into syndicates, grouping of employers and employees into syndicates should constitute the practical machinery for welding the classes into an organic whole.

It is not the production and equitable distribution of the economic goods that can awaken and stimulate the potentialities of man. The strength and glory of the nation ought to become ruling passions in the minds of the citizens. In place of individual liberty, unswerving loyalty to the nation must be inculcated. If national glory is attained by even lowering the standard of living, a nation should accept it with good cheer. As Mussolini stated in 1934, "We are probably moving towards a period of humanity, resting on a lower standard of living. Humanity is capable of asceticism such as we perhaps no conception of." Fascism has no definite, logically formulated philosophy, but its trends and tracks may be traced in its general outlook as well as in its methods. These trends may best be defined negatively.

It is against all democratic, liberal and equalitarian philosophies. The philosophical basis of French and American Revolutions is repudiated, which starts with the natural rights of man.

It is definitely against the philosophical presumptions of laissez faire. Humanitarian doctrines of the New

Testament Christianity also do not suit it.

Fascism considers all doctrines of class-war and working class control as false. It is against rationalism. Search of truth for its own sake or observation, experiment, deductive and inductive reasoning have a subordinate place in human existence. Any scientific or philosophical truth must be evaluated by its effects on the spirit and life of the nation. In the interest of national glory the citizens must be drilled and conditioned to accept certain views and reject others. Rationalism repudiates mere authority without proof; fascism demands blind acceptance and obedience. Many fascists exultingly take of revolt against reason and take pride in irrationalism. They emphasize will rather than thought, and feeling rather than intellect. Propaganda takes the place of objective reasoning, force is preferred to argument with the tacit belief that it is might which ultimately assumes the complexion of right.

Peace has a degenerating influence and continued peace leads to the decadence of nations. War and struggle, therefore, must be glorified in the form of race or national conflict.

For the background of the fascist philosophy one has to go back to Fichte, Nietzsche and Treitschke among the Germans.

Fichte preached the divine mission of the German nation.

Nietzsche despised love and gentleness; for him, Life moved upward by the urge to more and more power. Men are eternally classified into masters and slaves. There is no universal humanistic ethics; there is only master morality and slave morality.

All these influences must have worked on the Germans as well as the Italians. In comparison with Mussolini, who was a scholar, Hitler was an ignorant fanatic. Some biographers of Mussolini have mentioned a number of thinkers whose philosophies Mussolini imbibed and incorporated in his outlook. He was admirer of the pragmatism of William James whose theory of truth is that truth is that which works, which Mussolini interpreted as "that which works is right." Bergson is another irrationalist whose creative evolution taught that the 'elan vital', the vital urge of life, creates existence, truth and values as it proceeds. There is no truth that mirrors any eternal pattern of reality.

Fascism appears to be closer to Machiavelli than to any other political thinker. Mussolini being an Italian appears to have been deeply impressed by him. One of Mussolini's biographers relates the story of Mussolini's father reading Machiavelli to the boy. After he became a Dictator, Mussolini began a thesis on Machiavelli, of which only the introduction was complete and published. Machiavelli taught that all was fair for the power and glory of the State and in inter-State relations the tenets of abstract justice and morality must be disregarded. Men are naturally egotistic, power-loving and vicious. Justice is not natural to the individual, who could be made to bow to law and force by necessity. Liberty would create only confusion and disorder. A statesman can succeed only if he starts on the presumption of the natural baseness and ruthless self-seeking of men. It is not idealism but force which rules all human relations.

To sum it, fascist philosophy revolves round the conception of the nationalistic, totalitarian State, organised as an organic cultural unit, strong, self-sufficient and aggressive. It wants to strengthen the collective, national ego.

Islamic Political and Economic Ideology

Having given brief sketches of capitalistic communist and fascist ideologies, we are now in a position to compare and contrast them with the basic Islamic concepts. None of these ideologies can be accepted or rejected as a whole; they emphasize partial truths and fragmentary realities mixed with a good deal of false and untenable attitude towards life. Industrial capitalism, which was accompanied with liberal democratic movements was based on the *laissez-faire* economics of Adam Smith. This system created rapidly great wealth and made the nations practising it strong and prosperous. But this prosperity was achieved at a great cost. The masses got the right of vote but were gradually made so helpless that their political liberty was of no avail. Instruments of production became more and more costly and could be possessed by only very large capitalists either singly or in corporation. As wealth was concentrated at the one end, poverty grew at the other end. Society began to split up into classes of haves and have-nots. Formerly, when the instruments of production were less costly, the peasant, the worker, the craftsman became easily the owners of these instruments. Now the independent craftsman lost his independence and became a cog in a colossal capitalistic machine. Liberal democracy had secured for him the right of vote and the

freedom of contract but he was too weak to bargain. Gradually after a sustained struggle, the workers came together in trade unions and were pitched as a class against the employers. As the employer had a right to close the factory, the workers had a right to strike to improve their wages. Capitalism developed its own inner contradictions which we have already mentioned, and mere political democracy failed to create social justice. Capitalism also created colonialism and war for markets. When the social fabric of humanity began to sag everywhere, different nations produced different remedies and panaceas to cure the ills of a confounded civilisation. It is well known that Islam is not only a metaphysical belief but it offers a system and scheme of life which has logical unity. We will try to give a brief sketch of its ideology. We will see that it agrees with some parts of every great scheme and rejects some other parts. Every system thus far sketched has some vital defect that vitiates it either in its very foundations or in the consequences that inevitably follow from it. *laissez-faire* capitalism preached liberty and equality in the abstract but the State remaining neutral in the struggle for existence could take no steps to see that unjust inequalities are not accentuated. In delivering society from feudal and monarchical tyranny, it created a kind of free wage-slavery: the right of free contract and free vote remained abortive: political democracy was combined with economic slavery. Capitalistic society in countries like England and America has progressively tried to remedy the evils that ensue from uncontrolled capitalism but the strains and stresses generated by the nature of the system continue to create social unrest. Islam is based on liberty, fraternity and equality and its philosophical outlook is theistic. All philosophies of life and fundamental attitude towards existence have great practical consequences. We have seen that the philosophy of orthodox Communism is materialistic and atheistic. Over and against that, Islam believes that life has a spiritual origin, a spiritual background and a spiritual goal and purposes. The universe is not governed by blind mechanistic forces and is not subject to merely a materialistic dialectic. Life has a physical basis too and Islam does not ignore it. It is cognisant of the fact that the physical well-being of man must be assured, in order to make him spiritually free. Created by a good, omniscient and omnipotent Being, the universe is not ethically neutral but is positively good, whose processes generate certain abiding values.

There is no antithesis between the spirit and the flesh or between this world and the next. As God is one so entire

existence is linked together. The Muslim is asked to pray for well-being in this world prior to well-being in the next. Moral causation creates effects here and now as it will continue to do in the hereafter. Communism repudiates the providential explanation of creation, and its explanation of all human history, as of all physical phenomena based on crass materialism; only modes of production produce moral, religious or cultural values. The Quranic explanation of history is quite the opposite of it. It asserts that the rise and fall of nations is due primarily to the changes in the beliefs and characters of the nations. Islam believes that when 'vision fails the nations perish.' According to the Qur'an, no real revolution occurs in the life of a people until a revolution occurs in their mental and moral outlook. "Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition" (13-2). The Qur'an gives illustrations of materially prosperous nations that perished because of their narrow materialistic outlook. Not believing in the 4 eternal verities of the moral law, they became selfish and tyrannical: they were given great latitudes to reform themselves, but when they did not heed the Signs of the Lord, the day of reckoning came and they were doomed. "God has set up a balance of right and wrong; the balance is so sensitive and unerring that every atom is weighed in it, and the result becomes visible in due course." The Islamic theory of history follows from its materialism. The two outlooks are so diametrically opposed that it is impossible for a theistic Muslim to become a Marxian Communist.

The Fascists replaced the worship of mere production and equitable distribution, by the worship of the State. The worship of the State is nothing but magnified tribalism of the barbarous period of civilisation: "My country, right or wrong." Fascism wants to build up a powerful State and inculcates the worship of the State as a super-individual entity: it is virtually the worship of the tribal god or idol. Islam too saw the necessity of building up a powerful State which should safeguard the fundamental liberties of the people and which should protect itself against aggressors from outside and also protect the weak from the tyranny of the strong. Islam is a social and political religion and all of its institutions have a reference to social justice and social solidarity. No unconditional obedience, however, is due to the State or its leaders and governors. Obedience to superiors is inculcated in the interest of law and discipline, but this obedience is always conditional on the orders being moral. "There is no obedience in sin" is a fundamental tenet of Islam. The orders and actions of even the

Supreme Head of the State can be publicly questioned by even the humblest citizen.

In Islam there is complete equality, before law. The Prophet himself asked others to exercise their right of relations or compensation even against himself, if he had inadvertently done them any wrong. The mighty Khalifa Omar and the wise and pious Ali appeared in the courts as claimants or defendants to demand even-handed justice.

Islam inculcates government by consultation. The Prophet almost daily held consultations with his companions on matters of the State.

The Qur'an mentions as one of the good qualities of a Muslim that he is not autocratic or dictatorial but settles all matters of social importance by consultation

As the Muslim nation has received in the Qur'an the designation 'the nation of the middle path,' the nation follows the golden mean in all extremes. This is analogous to the Greek view of life whose motto was "nothing in excess." The doctrine of the golden mean forms the pivotal point also in Aristotelian ethics. This characteristic of Islam runs through all its teaching and practice; the entire ethics of Islam is practical ethics which made Renan remark that Islam is a religion for men. It is not meant for angels. In every injunction, actual human nature with all its instincts and urges is taken into consideration. Instincts and emotions are the instruments of life: they are meant to be regulated and not suppressed. One of the companions of the Prophet expressed his regret in the following words: "When I am sitting in your presence, my moral tone is exalted and high ideas and ideals pervade my consciousness: but when I am away, my moral level is suddenly lowered: how sorry I feel for myself." Hearing this the Prophet replied, "You must not feel depressed and dejected; you are a human being and not an angel. If God had desired to populate the world with beings without any moral conflict. He would have made the angels inhabit it: but He did not choose to do so: your moral compunction and this feeling of rise and fall is a sign of faith." Hearing this the man was reassured.

We have delineated some of the major programmes of human uplift delineated by recent thinkers, reformers and leaders of nations. In every one of those programmes there are certain elements that form parts

of the Islamic ideology: but in all of them partial truths are exaggerated to the extent of becoming falsehood: and the fanatical emphasis on certain parts with suppression of others, has made them fail while dealing with life as a whole. There is much in liberal democracy that is a part and parcel of Islam. Equality before law and equality of opportunity are inculcated by Islam. But racial and national prejudices still vitiate the professions and practices of liberal democracy: from the point of view of Islam, it is not liberal enough; nor can Islam subscribe to its capitalistic structure in which interest forms the backbone. Freedom of conscience and freedom of expression, along with freedom of all knowledge were inculcated and practised by Islam before the world dreamt of it. "There ought to be no compulsion in religion" (2-256) is one of the basic principles of the Qur'an. Western democracy accepts the Islamic injunction of the equality of citizens in their civic rights, but considers it necessary to divide the citizens in majorities and minorities and deems it necessary to have opposition parties whose chief aim is to oppose the government measures in almost everything: it is opposition for the sake of opposition, with the set purpose of discrediting and ultimately dislodging the party in power. The Communists and Fascists both repudiated this method of the cock-fight of caucuses and set up only one ruling party that should brook no opposition either from individuals or from groups. The whole spirit of Islam is against both these alternatives. Ruling by one party takes away the liberty of the citizens to voice their independent feelings: in such totalitarian States there can be no liberty for the individual; he must either fall in line with the dictates of the party or forfeit his essential liberties. Similarly, in the struggle for power in the party-politics of liberal democracies truth and common weal are ruled out or take a very subordinate place. There is a regimentation of the representatives of the people in every parliament. An independent man becomes a back-bencher: an independent man in this system, if he gets elected at all, is considered to be useless because no party can depend upon him. In a truly Islamic consultative body as was convened off and on by the great Khalifa Omar, men of understanding and character came together, without forming a single dictatorial party or splitting up into majority and minority groups. If an Islamic State convenes assemblies or consultative groups for the settlement of specific or general problems, every member must be an independent member representing particular regions or particular interests, not elected on any party ticket. He must be chosen only on the basis of

his knowledge and character.

The Islamic State would endorse, some part of the programme of the Fascist State without subscribing to its entire ideology. Fascism proposes to weld the nation into an organic whole in which the conflicts of interest shall not be allowed a free-play to the detriment of national solidarity. The right of private property is recognised as it is recognised in Islam, but all rights of the employers and the employed are subject to the over-all supervision and control of the State. In the Fascist programme there is much to be admired. But the fundamental urge of the Fascist State is vicious. The State is set up on a racial or national basis. The State becomes an object of worship which has a life of its own, over and above the lives of the individuals. This metaphysical and mythical entity has no moral purposes as the ethics of the individual does not apply to it. The purpose of the State is to maintain its strength and glory and to inculcate in the citizens a blind and mystical obedience. Internationalism is eschewed. Universal humanity is considered a myth and all attempts in that direction are dubbed as hypocritical. According to Fascism, among the national groups there is a biological struggle for existence which recognises no other law but that of survival through superior might; hence preparation for war is the primary duty of every State; pacifism is the creed of the degenerates. Having resolved conflicts within the nation, by dictating modes of forced harmony, it encourages conflicts between different States. As one-party dictatorship based on force is un-Islamic, so is the basic ideology of a Fascist State. Islam recognises no racial or national boundaries as vital and ultimate and encourages all attempts at international peace. Great emphasis is laid on peaceful cooperation between different religious or national groups on the basis of all elements that are common between them. The Qur'an invited the Jews and the Christians to cooperate with the Muslims on that which formed common ground between them. Fascism derided the basis of the League of Nations. That international body and its successor, the United Nations, promulgated very high ideals but fell miserably short in implementing them. It was power rather than peace that dominated their mind and with that mental make-up there could be little hope of any substantial achievement in the sphere of international justice. In the first place it was difficult for them to agree even on an obviously just course and even if they happened to agree, they had neither the will nor the power to implement their decision, if it involved a real sacrifice on their part. The

Fascist objection to the League was, however, not based on its inefficiency, but the very idea of international justice was repudiated. The fascist idea is that it is the right of the strong to conquer and hold what is can: it is the destiny of the weak to be conquered, ruled and exploited. However one might appreciate the Fascist methods of harmonising conflicts within the body politics and of achieving national solidarity, the moral cost is too great to be imitated by a truly Islamic State, whose aim is the establishment of universal peace transcending all racial and national boundaries.

The Qur'an has enunciated a basis for a truly effective League of Nations by teaching that if two groups disagree about a vital right, attempt should be made by disinterested parties to settle the dispute in a just manner. The award having been given, the parties to the dispute should be bound to abide by it. If a party is recalcitrant and refuses to act according to the decision, it should be made to bend by force used by all the parties together. It is clear that no League of Nations can ever become an effective body until it acts on this Quranic injunction.

THE WELFARE STATE

The modern States have gradually evolved the idea of a Welfare State but it will be difficult for apolitical historian to deny the fact that Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was the first statesman to conceive the idea of a Welfare State and to put it into practice. Even when England had developed its political institutions and established parliamentary government on a workable basis, its great philosopher, Herbert Spencer, was advocating the idea of a *laissez-faire* State acting as a policeman only. Such a Police State gathers taxes from its citizens to maintain, on behalf of the taxpayers, army and police to protect the citizens against invaders and law-breakers. Citizens have to be protected? against murder and personal injury, theft and fraud. At the most, the State might spend some money on education and public health. Spencer wanted no interference of the State in the economic life of the society, which should be based only on free contact. The law of supply and demand will by itself create an equilibrium. Adam Smith, the father of *laissez-faire* economics, restricted the functions of the government to three things only. he says, "According to the system of natural liberty, the sovereign has only three duties to attend to—three duties of great importance indeed but plain and intelligible to common understanding: first, the duty of protecting the society from violence and

invasion of other independent societies; secondly, the duty of protecting, as far as possible, every member of the society from the injustice or oppression of every other member of it, or the duty of establishing an exact administration of justice; and thirdly, the duty of erecting and maintaining certain public works and certain public institutions, which it can never be for the interest of any individual, or small number of individuals, to erect and maintain, because the profit could never repay the expense to any individual or small number of individuals, though it may frequently do much more than repay it to a great society. (The Wealth of Nations. Book IV Chapter IX). These restricted functions of the State gave a free hand to exploiting employers and capitalists, and the maldistribution of wealth divided society into, two warring camps. The gulf between the haves and have-nots widened without the State stirring to think out any remedies. Against the strikes of labour the State exercised its police functions. Gradually the statesmen and humanitarian thinkers began to urge for the extension of the functions of the State. The first remedy was a revised system of taxation for a partial levelling of social inequalities. The capitalistic States began to broaden the sphere of their activities. Housing, unemployment insurance, health insurance: old-age pensions and many other humane measures were gradually proposed and to some extent adopted by some countries, until we come to the great Beveridge scheme which has chalked out a comprehensive programme for a Welfare State. These trends are a clear proof of how world, by a long process of trial and error, is gradually coming round to see the rationality and righteousness of Prophet Muhammad's concept of the State (P.B.U.H). We have already stated the view of Islam about interest. He was insistent that interest must be wiped out of all economic transactions. Now the great economists of the West are coming round to this very view rather hesitatingly, that banking must be nationalised and interest must be controlled and Keynes exhorted the States to revive moral and religious sanctions in this respect. But, even now, these economists think that 'the absolute abolition of interest is not a practical proposition; it has only to be controlled and put at a very low level to serve the purposes of production. Islam allowed the owner of capital to become a partner with the productive worker, so that capital is indissolubly linked to production and the vicissitudes of trade are shared by both. When interest is divorced from productivity, all the risk is taken by the borrower, while the lender is assured by the State that he could legitimately demand his pound of flesh. In the Islamic

system there is capital levy of *Zakat* on capital that is lying idle. Islam wants production and trade to prosper and that explains all its strong injunctions against hoarding. A part of the hoarded wealth is taken away by the State to be spent on social welfare, particularly to help the poorer classes. A Welfare State has to encourage the production of wealth by human labour and exploitation of natural resources; but it has also to be vigilant that wealth circulates in the whole social organism and does not cause plethoras in the whole social organism and does not cause plethora and congestion in one part and anaemia in the other. The Qur'an warns, "See that wealth does not circulate amongst the rich, only." Unearned wealth accumulates mostly by interest and by the hoarding of surpluses. It also accumulates inequitable laws of inheritance or by permission to will away the whole property to a single recipient. Granting the right of ownership and private property. Islam created all necessary safeguards against undue concentration of wealth on the one hand and poverty on the other. All great religions have always laid great emphasis on charity and denounced the ungenerous and callous rich, but it was Islam which grappled successfully and in a practical manner with the problem of the equitable distribution of wealth, knowing human nature, is realised that mere abstract moral exhortation would not do, unless the economic structure of society is remoulded by necessary legislation. Religious belief and its verbal profession is not enough. Good people in the Qur'an are described as those who believe and do good deeds and among the good deeds charity is emphasized as the most essential virtue. Then charity is classified as voluntary charity and compulsory charity. About voluntary charity it is said that good men do not keep more than they need; they never hoard but part with their surplus. *Zakat*, the State-organised tax for the relief of distress of all kinds, is one of the main pillars of Islam and is often mentioned in the Qur'an along with prayers with the warning that the prayers of those who do not give *Zakat* or charity are ineffective and unacceptable to God. Looking at the economic life around Him. The Prophet defined, in a number of cases, as to what should be considered as constituting surplus capital and to what extent it should be taxed. If the economic structure of society undergoes fundamental changes, the details of the scheme maybe readjusted to suit the circumstances, always keeping in view the spirit and purpose of the scheme. According to Islam, hoarded surpluses create moral and social poison by demoralising the poor, destitute and helpless, thereby the whole social organism becomes diseased. *Zakat*

means purity as well as growth and blessing. A society that would observe it would become pure and prosperous because genuine prosperity is nothing but social health. Growth and efficiency of the economic life depend on it. It is a pivot of the Muslim public finance. The Prophet was afraid of superfluous wealth as well as of poverty. He described the abolition of poverty as one of the chief aims of Islam. Many another religion has exalted poverty to the pitch of spirituality; this attitude was the result of a confusion between poverty and the simple life. The simple life was praised by the Prophet and was practised by Him, but about poverty He prayed to God to keep it away from human beings, because, as He said. 'it darkness a man's face in both the worlds, and makes him almost lose his faith.' He was equally, rather more, afraid of superfluous wealth. He is reported to have said. 'O ye Muslims, I am more afraid of wealth among you than poverty.' After Him, when rich war booty arrived from Persia and was piled before Khalifa Omar, his eyes were dimmed with tears. Someone remarked. 'O Chief of the Muslims, it is an occasion to rejoice and not to shed tears.' To this the Khalifa replied. 'I am afraid, it is danger for Islam.' This remark should open the eyes of those ignorant and hostile critics of Islam who say that love of booty constituted the main urge of the early Muslim warriors. The institution of *Zakat*, as the pivotal point of the Islamic Welfare State, demands that we devote a little more space to the clarification of it. The Prophet said. "Your Islam can find perfection only in the giving of *Zakat*. Pay *Zakat* out of your property, this will purify you and will enable you to do your duty by those related to you. Be careful of the rights of the beggar, the neighbour, and the indigent, and do not indulge in extravagance." A nation that withheld *Zakat* courted dearth and indigence. "Without *Zakat* neither faith nor prayer is acceptable to Allah.",

No State has the right to be called an Islamic State if it disregards the injunctions about *Zakat*, because, according to Islam, a State has no other purpose except social welfare and social welfare is impossible without *Zakat*. If the right of private initiative and private ownership is granted as an essential factor in individual liberty, and if the system is left to itself without corrective taxation, some men are bound to acquire and hoard more than they need and others will be left destitute; therefore the mode of earning and the distribution of wealth must be controlled by the State. After the political success of Islam, some Arabian tribes had hastened to enter the fold of the Islamic State without having thoroughly understood and imbibed the

spirit of Islam. About such people it is said in the Qur'an that when they profess that they have acquired faith, they should be told that they have only submitted to the power of Islam: faith is a matter of deeper realisation. After the death of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H), a number of such tribes refused to pay *Zakat* and started a no-tax campaign. The successors of the Prophet were in a quandary. What to do with such people who say that are Muslims believing in the Unity of God and offering prayers. How could a Khalifa wage war against the believers? This was initially the view of even such a strong-willed man as Omar. But Abu Bakr, the first successor of the Prophet, had a clearer vision of Islam in this respect. His opinion was that faith was incomplete without *Zakat*. Offering prayers but taking no part in and making no sacrifices for public welfare is a virtual negation of faith. He said he would wage war on those who refused to pay this tax. Omar too praised him for his superior vision and his firm decision, and a bloody war was actually waged for this purpose. It is a pity that, sometimes later, the compulsory tax which formed the backbone of the Welfare State, and which had to be collected by the State and distributed by the State, was made voluntary and left to the conscience of the giver. The Western *laissez-faire* economics had trusted the enlightened self-interest of individuals to create an economic equilibrium, and the world now knows the chaos created by this misreading of the human instincts. Self-interest did not prove to be so enlightened that private and social interests would coincide by any providential arrangement. The Muslim States, that trusted the Muslim conscience about the *Zakat*, were similarly mistaken. By withdrawing it from the State control, surplus capital did not flow into the public exchequer and most of the welfare schemes too had to be left to the private conscience. Islam had saddled the State with the responsibility of controlling and regulating the production and distribution of wealth. The Islamic State was enjoined to do it without becoming a totalitarian colossus. A vital problem of legislation is to determine the boundaries of State interference and individual freedom. Islam had solved this problem in a beautiful and practicable manner. But the Muslim States themselves sabotaged the scheme. *Zakat* is a tax levied on capital; it makes wealth circulate to the organs that need it most. *Zakat* coordinates wealth with social welfare and is the antithesis of the doctrine of *laissez-faire*. Muslim thinkers and theologians of note realised the importance of *Zakat* for moral purity and public weal. Here is a passage from Shah Waliullah, the saintly thinker of Islam. Shah Sahib says about *Zakat*, "There

must be no mistake about the fact that *Zakat* has been ordained to serve two purposes; self-discipline and provision against social destitution. Riches breed stinginess, selfishness, mutual hatred and aversion and even moral degeneration. The best remedy against these evils is the charitable disposal of one's money. This uproots stinginess and cures one of selfishness. It also heals social cleavage and replaces it with a spirit of comradeship, becomes a foundation stone of high moral character. As it develops. It fosters habits of honest dealings. Slowly but surely, these noble traits transform man into a paragon of moral excellence. This means self-improvement through self-discipline. "*Zakat* is the most effective insurance measure against communal and social misery because a civic structure cannot be sound unless it rests on a sound economic basis. It is through the working of its economic mechanism that society can minister to the wants and needs of its needy members in accordance with their status in life. It prevents the spread of beggary, because the indigent, the defectives, the cripples, the orphans and the widows and likewise all other categories of the needy folk are duly provided for, and saved the humiliation and disgrace of begging for alms. It is the State which must bear the responsibility for their maintenance. But it can discharge this onerous obligation satisfactorily only when, in addition to the usual source of public revenue, there is an adequate supply of money coming from the rich people in the form of *Zakat*."

The Qur'an has enumerated certain classes of beneficiaries who are entitled to help from the *Zakat* fund:

*"Alms are for the poor
And the needy, and those
Employed to minister the fund
For those whose hearts
have been (recently) reconciled
(To truth): for those in bondage
And in debt; in the cause
Of God and for the wayfarer;
(Thus is it) ordained by God,
And God is full of Knowledge
And Wisdom." (9:60)*

The two words 'the poor' and 'the needy' are so comprehensive that it would be impossible to make a list of all those situations in which men stand in need of help for the essentials of life. Hazrat Omar included in the category of the needy not only the unemployable but

also the unemployed, that is those who would work but could get no work. One category is particularly worth noting. Muhammad (P.B.U.H), The Great Liberator of humanity, was very anxious that the institution of slavery should be abolished. He said that it was a great act of merit to set free a slave. As the entire economic structure of ancient civilisations rested on slavery it was impossible to abolish it, at one stroke. The emancipation of slaves was enjoined as a measure of expiation for certain acts of commission or omission. Fervent appeals were made to the conscience of the masters to treat their slaves with kindness. But according to the principle that all matters of vital social concern must be handled by the State along with the free initiative of the individuals, it was laid down that the State too should make it incumbent on itself to spend a part of its revenues on the freeing of slaves. The State must also come to the help of the man in debt, who has been placed in that predicament by misfortune. The relief of undeserved indebtedness is a duty of the State. The term *Fi-sabilillah* (in the way of God) covers all acts of public weal.

It may be said that such a vast scheme of social insurance would require enormous funds; surely it may do so. Spreading out of wealth and equalisation of opportunity were the basic aims of the Muslim polity. If the *Zakat* fund and other public revenues fail to relieve human distress the State can demand more from those who can afford to give. The right of individual ownership is not absolute; it is always subject to public weal. The capitalistic countries destroy their surplus production if the capitalists are afraid of a slump and they are aided by the State in this act of destruction, while there are millions of needy persons who stand in dire need of those things. The capitalists say that fulfilling the needs of the needy by State aid would impoverish the producers of wealth and demoralise those who receive help. The Prophet too was conscious of the fact that the recipient of charity stands in danger of demoralisation. So we find him on the one hand exhorting people to be charitable and on the other hand discharging beggary.

[1] *Islamic Ideology, The Fundamental Beliefs and Principles of Islam and their Application to Practical Life*, by Dr. Khalifa Abdul Hakim, Published by the Institute of Islamic Culture, 2 Club Road, Lahore, Pakistan ©1993