

## EDITORIAL

In this issue we have included the opening address of Ṭāhā Jabir Al-'Alwānī which was delivered at the First AMSS History Conference with the theme of "Strategies for an Islamic Perspective on History and Historical Writing," that was held on *Dhu al Qi'dah 1-2, 1411/May 26-27, 1990*. Al-'Alwānī states that the collapse of Marxism all over the world is a logical conclusion of the philosophies which circulated in the West with a stamp of undeserved academic authority and universality.

Western thought, he says, will explain the fall of Marxism by trying to revive philosophies removed from Marxism and condemning Marxism as being opposed to human nature, antithetical to freedom and democracy, and opposed to the natural flow of history. But the alternatives to be projected will not be essentially any different. Therefore, Al-'Alwānī warns, the glee we witness in the West at the collapse of Marxism will be short-lived because before too long the shortcomings of Western thought will become more apparent. What is needed for removing the suffering of mankind is a comprehensive alternate philosophy that presents a realistic and satisfactory interpretation of history, an overall conception of life, mankind, and the universe.

Al-'Alwānī argues that the Qur'anic interpretation of time, life, the universe, mankind, history, and good and evil provides contemporary humanity with a philosophical and civilizational alternative that is capable of leading mankind out of the present crisis.

It is in this context that the contributions of *AJISS* become relevant. Our writers are engaged in providing a critique of the Western disciplines and then highlighting the features of their Islamized versions. Abdul Rashid Moten attempts a contrast between the Western mode of political inquiry and the Islamic alternative. This underscores the fact that the methodology and epistemology of Western political science is built around the seemingly limitless power of natural sciences. Moten exposes the subjective and ideological nature of political science in its own epistemic landscape from real life situations. He concludes that the instrumentalist conception of political community and the final packaging of knowledge are all colored with the social, cultural, and historical experience of Western Christianity, which is also, paradoxically, materialistic and secular to the core. By identifying reason and revelation as the twin sources of knowledge, Islamic political thought is associated with such Qur'anic concepts as *Tawḥīd*, *Khilāfah*, *'Ibadah*, *Adl*, and the like.

Mahmud Dhaouadi examines the roots of subjectivity in contemporary social sciences. He discusses the roots of ideological bias in Western social sciences and shows how positivism and empiricism are either not interested in the study of phenomena which do not fall within the range of the human senses or categorically dismiss their very existence. Ibn Khaldun's epistemology is shown as fundamentally different from what the Western social scientists have been practicing. The mind of the author of the *Muqaddimah* is shown to have been shaped by the Islamic epistemological outlook, in its attempt to understand sociological phenomena, which views man not as a mere animal but as a thinking being who moves deliberately toward good. Ibn Khaldun's presentation of reason and revelation as a harmonious whole sets him apart from as well as above and beyond the modern positivist-empiricist social scientists.

Coming to our legacy, Louay Safi attempts to trace the development of principles of Islamic jurisprudence and gives an assessment of the impact of Shari'ah on society. He argues that the law ceased to grow by the sixth century of Islam as a result of the development of classical legal theory and more specifically after the doctrine of infallibility of *ijma'* (juristic consensus) was articulated.

Boualem Bendjilali and Farid B. Taher discuss the role of a Muslim single seller as a zero efficiency loss monopolist from an Islamic perspective. In an Islamic economy there may exist a single seller of a particular commodity. The monopolist is expected to sacrifice a part of his or her own profit in favor of the welfare of the poor and needy of society. The paper formulates the objective function of the monopolist. It also derives the necessary optimal conditions for maximization.

We have a review article and a conference address in addition to three book reviews and three reports of conferences held in the United States and Malaysia. Our *IIIT/AMSS Newsbulletin* regularly provides news about seminars and conferences. We would welcome reports of academic conferences held on Islam and Muslims for publication in *AJISS*.

We continue to publish abstracts of dissertations done on Islam and Muslims in recent months. We have announced three IIIT dissertation awards of \$500 each beginning this year for dissertations completed during 1989-90. The three dissertations selected for these awards will be chosen from among those submitted from around the world. This, we hope, will encourage scholars and allow us both to identify potential Muslim social scientists in different parts of the world and to strengthen their continuous bonds with the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*.