

**FROM AN OFFICER IN THE OTTOMAN
ARMY TO A MUSLIM PUBLICIST AND
ARMAMENT AGENT IN BERLIN:
ZEKÎ HISHMAT-BEY KIRÂM (1886-1946)**

Umar RYAD^{*})

During the colonial era, the Arab world witnessed a strong nationalist movement that called for the unification of the Arabs under common heritage — that all Arabs are united by a shared history, culture, and language and the elimination or minimization of direct Western influence.¹⁾ This movement, as integrated to Muslim religious ideas, was led by many a great Muslim figure throughout the Muslim world, such as the Syro-Egyptian Muslim scholar Sheikh Muhammad Rashîd Ridâ (1865-1935), the founder of the well-known journal *Al-Manâr* ('The Lighthouse', 1898-1940), the Lebanese Druze prince Shakîb Arslân (1871-1946), who was later banished to Switzerland, and the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Amîn al-Husaynî (1897-1974), who was later exiled in Berlin (1941-1945) and became an ally of the Axis. Rashîd Ridâ, for example, believed that the renaissance of Islam could be accomplished through Arab nationalism, for it was the only nationalism that seemed to be in harmony with Islam.²⁾ He also succeeded in establishing a great network and extended the influence of his religious ideas over the Muslim World from North Africa to Russia and the Far East.³⁾ After World

War I, Arslân moved his efforts from reviving the last caliphate (or 'Ottomanism') to Arab nationalism and 'Islamism'.⁴⁾ As an exemplary activist, he in his anti-imperialist struggle was able to make his Geneva residence 'the umbilical cord of the Islamic world'.⁵⁾ His effectiveness as an exiled agitator rested with his ability to attract attention to his activities, to publish frequently in the Arabic press, and to maintain contact with influential groups within Arab [and Muslim] states.⁶⁾ In North Africa, for example, he had a great influence on the nationalist *Salafîyya* movement and was 'a mentor of a generation'.⁷⁾ The religious and political ideas of such figures gained a wide circulation among Muslim elites in almost all Muslim regions. To get their aims done, Muslim nationalists attempted to establish connections and networks of the Muslims, who were of great significance for the mobilization of their efforts. This group of people were the 'mediators', who in many ways provided them with needed information, or gave them assistance in their relations with Arab leaders.

During my research (summer 2004) on the papers of Rashîd Ridâ, I came across 13 hitherto unstudied letters sent to Ridâ by a certain Dr. Zekî Hishmat-Bey Kirâm from Berlin. On further research, I was able to specifically identify the sender of the letters. Zekî Hishmat-Bey Kirâm (1886-1946) was a former Syrian officer in the Turkish army. He was transferred to Berlin for medical treatment after being wounded during World War I. After his settlement in Germany, he established himself as a Muslim publicist and took a prominent position in Berlin (1920s-1940s). The Berlin of Kirâm's time witnessed a lengthy history of Muslim émigré activism, boasting numerous Muslim publications and established Muslim institutions.⁸⁾ Besides, Kirâm played a rather significant role as an agent in Germany's arms deals with the Muslim world through his mediation with the authorities of Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Zekî Kirâm's name is to be found in a few secondary references. In works on the history of Muslims in Berlin, there is some information mentioned about him. In their studies on the history of Islam in Germany, Abdullah and Gerhard Höpp referred to Kirâm as a 'Turkish captain', who was a member of the committee in charge of reconstructing the Islamic cemetery in Berlin (1921), which was established by the Oriental Club after the burial of its founder Mehmet Talât (1874-1921), the former Turkish minister of Interior,

^{*}) Umar Ryad, of Egyptian origin, is AIO (assistant-in-training) at the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions (LISOR). He studied at the Faculty of Languages and Translation, Al-Azhar University in Cairo (1998, BA Islamic Studies in English), and got his MA degree in Islamic Studies (Cum Laude) from the University of Leiden in 2001. I am indebted to my promoters P.S. van Koningsveld and G.A. Wiegers for giving their comments on the draft of the paper, and to my twelve-years-old brother Al-Mitwally Ryad for helping me organizing and scanning the archives of Rashîd Ridâ and Zekî Kirâm. Thanks are also due to the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) and the LUF of the University of Leiden for the financial grant for research in Egypt, Germany and Morocco.

¹⁾ See for example, Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1789-1939*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998; Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982; Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation, 1930-1945*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995; Tawfic E. Farah (ed.), *Pan-Arabism and Arab Nationalism: the continuing debate*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1987; Youssef Choueiri, *Arab Nationalism: A History: Nationalism and State in the Arab World*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000; Added Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003.

²⁾ E. Tauber, 'Rashîd Ridâ as pan-Arabist before World War I', *The Muslim World*, vol. 79/2 (1989), pp. 111-112. For more about his political ideas, see, for instance, Mahmoud Haddad, 'Arab Religious Nationalism in the Colonial era: Rereading Rashîd Ridâ's ideas on the Caliphate', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 117/2 (1997), pp. 253-277; Assad N. Busool, 'Rashîd Ridâ's struggle to establish a modern Islamic state', *American Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 1/1 (1984), pp. 83-99.

³⁾ See, for example, Mona Abaza, 'Southeast Asia and the Middle East: *Al-Manâr* and Islamic Modernity' in Claude Guillot, Denys Lombard and Roderich Ptak (eds.), *Mediterranean to the Chinese Sea: Miscellaneous Notes*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998, 93-111; Azyumardi Azra, 'The Transmission of *al-Manâr*'s Reformism to the Malay-Indonesian World: the Cases of *al-Imam* and *al-Munir*', *Studia Islamika*, 6/3 (1999), pp. 79-111; Jutta E. Bluhm, 'A Preliminary Statement on the Dialogue Established Between the Reform Magazine *Al-Manâr* and the Malay-Indonesian World', *Indonesia Circle*, 32 (1983), pp. 35-42; 'Al-Manâr and Ahmad Soorkattie: Links in the Chain of Transmission of Muhammad 'Abduh's Ideas to the Malay-Speaking World,' in Peter G. Riddell and Tony Street, (eds.), *Islam: Essays on Scripture, Thought and Society*, Leiden: Brill, 1997, 295-308.

⁴⁾ See, for example, Arslân's magazine, *La Nation arabe*, Geneva, 4 vols., 1934-1938; W. L. Cleveland, *Islam: Shakîb Arslân and the campaign for Islamic nationalism against the West*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985, 223pp; J. Bessis, 'Chekib Arslan et les mouvements nationalistes au Maghreb', in *Revue Historique*, no. 526 (1978), pp. 467-489.

⁵⁾ C. Julien, as quoted in Cleveland, *ibid.*, p. 67.

⁶⁾ *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

⁷⁾ *Ibid.*, pp. 91-114.

⁸⁾ Martin Kramer, *Islam Assembled: The Advent of the Muslim Congresses*, New York: Colombia University Press, 1986, p. 159. About the history of Muslims in Berlin, see, for instance, G. Höpp, *Arabisches und islamitische Periodika in Berlin und Brandenburg 1915-1945: Geschichtlicher Abriss und Bibliographie*, Verlag Das Arabische Buch: Berlin, 1994; G. Höpp and G. Jonker (eds.), *In fremder Erde, Zur Geschichte und Gegenwart der islamischen Bestattung in Deutschland*, Berlin: Verlag Das Arabische Buch, 1996; Gerhard Höpp, *Texte aus der Fremde. Arabische politische Publizistik in Deutschland, 1896-1945. Eine Bibliographie*, Berlin: Verlag Das Arabische Buch, 2000; M. S. Abdullah, *Geschichte des Islams in Deutschland*, Graz, Wien, Köln: Verlag Styria, 1981.

in the Mathäi-Kirchhof in Berlin.⁹⁾ In another bibliographical work, G. Höpp listed Kirâm's name among other Arab political publicists in Germany (1896-1945). He supplemented these biographical notes with titles of some of his writings.¹⁰⁾ In another study on the history of Arabic and Islamic periodicals in Berlin and Brandenburg (1915-1945), the same author introduced him as the first chairman of the organization of Arab students in Berlin (*Arabische Vereinigung*, 1923).¹¹⁾ In his study of the Volga-Tatars in Germany during the first third of the 20th century, Iskander Gilyazov mentioned the name of a certain Zekî-Bey Kirâm as one of the five founding board members of the Society of Islamic Worship (*Verein für islamische Gottesverehrung*). The writer admitted that little is known about its members (except its chairman Idrîsî), their countries of origin and activities.¹²⁾ Marfa Heimbach also briefly mentioned some of his activities within the Society of Islamic Worship in Berlin.¹³⁾

On another level, in his account of the impact the Western world made on the development of South West Arabia, Eric Macro pointed out that a certain Dr. Zekî Kirâm was dispatched by the Germans to sell Imam Yahyâ of Yemen small arms in 1934 and 1936.¹⁴⁾ Macro does not mention the original source of his details. But he probably based his account on Heyworth-Dunne's short survey of the modern history of Yemen, who stated in his *Al-Yemen*: 'in 1934 and 1936 the Germans sent a well-known Turk, named Dr. Zakî Kirâm to visit the country. Through him, the Imam was able to purchase weapons, ammunitions, binoculars, weather instruments, etc., to the tune of a million of Maria Theresa dollars.'¹⁵⁾ In his *Military History of Yemen*, S. Nâjî considered Kirâm one of the main sources of armament in Yemen during the reign of Imam Yahyâ.¹⁶⁾

The focus of the present paper is to study the life of Zekî Kirâm and his contribution to the cultural-religious and political life in Berlin (1920s-1940s). It also traces his trips to the East, and contact with the Muslim world after his settlement in Germany. The study is almost entirely based on unpublished materials, which survive in the possession of the families of both Ridâ and Kirâm. Ridâ's archive, still remaining in the possession of his family in Cairo, contains his personal papers, diaries, correspondences, documents of *Al-Manâr*, etc. The materials of Kirâm's archive, which are in the possession of the present writer, largely include his

⁹⁾ Others members of the committee were: Shakîb Arslân, Hafiz Sükrü (b. 1871), the Turkish Imam in Berlin, the Persian Hasan Abbâs and the Egyptian Muhammad Sulaimân (1878-1929). Abdullah, *ibid.*, 1981, p. 17; Gerhard Höpp, 'Tot und Geschichte oder wie in Berlin prominente Muslime bestattet wurden', in G. Höpp and G. Jonker (1996), *ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

¹⁰⁾ Höpp (2000), *op. cit.*, p. 62.

¹¹⁾ *Id.*, (1994), *op. cit.*, p. 62.

¹²⁾ Iskander Gilyazov, 'Die Wolgatataren und Deutschland im ersten Drittel des 20. Jahrhunderts', in Anke von Kügelgen, Michael Kemper and Allen J. Frank (eds.), *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries (vol. 2: Inter-Regional and Inter-Ethnic Relations)*, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1998, p. 348 (pp. 335-353).

¹³⁾ Marfa Heimbach, *Die Entwicklung der islamischen Gemeinschaft in Deutschland seit 1961*, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2001, *passim* pp. 39-46.

¹⁴⁾ Eric Macro, *Yemen and the Western World*, London: C. Hurst & Co., 1968, pp. 114-115.

¹⁵⁾ Gamal-Eddine Heyworth-Dunne, *Al-Yemen: A General Social, Political and Economic Survey*, Cairo, 1952, p. 36.

¹⁶⁾ Sultân Nâjî, *Military History of Yemen 1839-1967* (Arabic), Aden, 1976, p. 128.

correspondences, diaries and other published works and unpublished manuscripts and typescripts.¹⁷⁾

The study is not meant to be a full-scale biography of the man. Rather it tries to place him as a 'mediator' between the East and the West during the inter-war period. Although he belonged to the Muslim elite in Germany, he was no chief figure who made decisions that marked an epoch. The study of minor lives of individuals like Kirâm can serve to exemplify the lives of thousands of anonymous human beings.¹⁸⁾ It is an endeavor to focus on him as a sub-influential person, who actively attempted to participate in the social, political and intellectual life of the Berlin of his time.

I will first of all start my paper by giving a general overview of his early life and main activities after his migration to Germany. As is discussed below, besides his relation to Rashîd Ridâ in Cairo, Kirâm had intensive contact with Arab leaders in the Arabian Peninsula and Moroccan journalists in Tetuan. As the Germans allowed Arab states to buy arms in their country via 'trustworthy firms' familiar to them, Kirâm made a chance to play a rather important role as an agent in the Yemeni-German armament deals during the rule of Imam Yahyâ (1869-1948). Besides he attempted to mediate in the Saudi-German arms negotiations. He also tried to approach the authorities of Iraq during the monarchy of Faisal I (1883-1933) for the same purpose.

Zekî Kirâm was born in Damascus on May 25, 1886, died and was buried in Berlin on August 17, 1946 in the 101st General Hospital of U. S. Army, after being taken as a prisoner of war in November 1945 at the end of World War II. His full name is Zekî Hishmat-Bey (sometimes Haschmet) Mirzâ Kirâm b. Hâjj 'Alî Kirâm (1836-1905) b. Mirzâ Zamân Khân (1776-1837) (changed to Kirâm) b. Sayyid Muhammad 'Abdullâh (1749-1841) b. Sayyid Ahmad 'Abdullâh (1712-1787). His grandfather Khân was the own physician of the Shah of Iran Fath Ali Shah (1762-1834) in Tehran, and the tutor of his children, but later he moved to Damascus where his family settled. Zekî Kirâm's brother, Kirâm (d. 1933) was also an officer in the Turkish army. According to Kirâm himself, his family were descendants from Husayn, the grandson of the Prophet.¹⁹⁾

As a young boy, he began his schooling as a cadet at the military school in Damascus. Later he pursued his further military education at the Osmanli civil and military academy of Istanbul. After finishing his military study, Kirâm became a lieutenant in the Turkish army at the age of 18.²⁰⁾ At this age, he was dispatched to the Balkan to be a commander of a group of 800 Muslim soldiers against the Serbian militias.²¹⁾

He later became a commander of the Bedouin troops in Al-'Arîsh (Sinai) during World War I. During his service, he

¹⁷⁾ I am very indebted to both Mr. Fu'âd Ridâ (living at the moment in the United States), Ridâ's grandson, and Dr. Hârûn Zekî Kirâm (Kornwestheim — Germany), for giving me access to use the papers of their family archives. Special gratitude is due to Dr. Kirâm for gifting me the whole archive of his father.

¹⁸⁾ Quoted from Mercedes García-Arenal & Gerard Wiegers, *A Man of Three Worlds: Samuel Pallache, a Moroccan Jew in Catholic and Protestant Europe*, Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003, p. XVI.

¹⁹⁾ A detailed *Stammbaum* in his own handwriting was found among his papers.

²⁰⁾ Biographical notes written by Kirâm in typescript.

²¹⁾ Z. Kirâm, 'Jâmi' Jadîd fî Zagreb', in *Al-Hurriyya*, Tetuan, 3 Rabî' al-Awwal 1361/21 March 1942.

was wounded near the Suez Canal (end 1916).²²⁾ After abortive attempts to cure him in Jerusalem, the Turkish government transferred him to Berlin, where he received medical treatment at the Charité hospital. He arrived in Berlin on November 28, 1917.²³⁾ After a three-year period of treatment and the amputation of his left leg (first of October, 1919), he left the hospital in order to follow courses at the Faculty of Medicine at Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität in Berlin. He finished his studies of dentistry and obtained his degree in 1925. He wrote his thesis under the title: “Mund- und Zahnpflege bei den mohammedanischen Völkern”.²⁴⁾

On 5 July 1920, he married his German wife Gertrud Neuendorff (1886-1983). Ahmad Shukrî, the imam of the Turkish Consulate in Berlin, started their wedding celebration with a recitation of some verses from the Qur’ân, and a protestant priest delivered a speech to the attendants.²⁵⁾ In partnership with his wife, Kirâm initiated a bookshop and founded a publishing house in Berlin under the name ‘Maktabat al-Sharq wa-l-Gharb al-‘Ilmiyya fî Berlin’ (or Morgen- und Abendland Verlag, Berlin).²⁶⁾ In 1923 he published a Latin-Turkish-Arabic medical glossary on anatomy, which was his first published work.²⁷⁾

Besides his medical studies, he also followed courses on political economy and philosophy. Kirâm founded a society under the name *Jam’iyyat al-Tadâmun al-Islâmî* (Society of Islamic Solidarity), but little is known about it.²⁸⁾ Kirâm was a friend of the Lebanese exiled Prince Shakîb Arslân with whom he was a member of the graveyard committee mentioned above. In cooperation with Arslân, Kirâm, as an Arab captain in the Ottoman army, wrote an appeal concerning Syria’s cause and the Great Revolution (1925-1926) to the League of Nations during its seventh assembly in 1925.²⁹⁾ He later attended its thirteenth assembly (October 3, 1932) in Geneva as a journalist.³⁰⁾

In 1932 he became the president of the Berlin branch of the General Islamic Congress (*Islamischer Weltkongreß, Zweigstelle Berlin*). The organizers were seeking Muslims who would be representatives for the congress in many countries. From Jerusalem, Amîn al-Husaynî, the grand mufti of Palestine and the leader of the congress, had confidence in Kirâm, and his ability of ‘defending [...] the resolutions of the congress before the German people’.³¹⁾ Ziyâ al-Dîn Tabâtâbâ’î, Secretary General of the congress and former

Prime Minister of Iran, entrusted Kirâm to send the general secretariat of the congress a list of reliable Muslims living in Berlin, who were to be of benefit to the congress.³²⁾

As an associate to Shakîb Arslân’s network of affiliations, Kirâm became a member of the founding committee of the European Muslim Congress, held in Geneva in September 1935 under the presidency of Arslân himself.³³⁾ Preparations for the project started as early as August 1933 and took two years. The initiative for this congress first belonged to Mahmûd Sâlim, an Egyptian journalist and jurist long resident in Paris.³⁴⁾ Sâlim, who was a close friend to Rashîd Ridâ, started to formulate his detailed plans with the members of a Paris-based society, La Fraternité Musulmane. One year after the establishment of the 1931 Jerusalem Muslim Congress, Sâlim embarked on a journey which took him through the Middle East and Europe to stir Muslim interest in his idea. With their choice of Geneva, the Paris group appealed to Shakîb Arslân for support. Sâlim needed Arslân’s broad network of affiliations. The congress invited ‘all Muslims living in Europe [...] to participate, whether they are of European nationality, or are foreigners residing on the continent: industrialists, men of commerce, professors, students, officials, diplomats, artists, scholars, artisans — in a word, people of intellect from every walk of life.’³⁵⁾

In many of his notes, Kirâm insists that he never became a member of the Nationalist Socialist Party; but it was not a reasonable justification because he, as a Turkish citizen, had no right to join the party. However, he wrote an article in the Ahmadiyya journal *Moslemsche Revue* about his experience in the ‘new’ Germany describing Hitler as ‘berufen’ or a man destined for great things.³⁶⁾ From August 1939 to 1940, he worked as a translator at the Information Department of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Auswärtiges Amt).³⁷⁾

Besides his relation to Rashîd Ridâ and writing in *Al-Manâr* (see below), Kirâm was also the Berliner correspondent of the Egyptian journal *Al-Muqattam* and the American New York-based tri-weekly Arabic journal *Al-Bayân*.³⁸⁾ He

²²⁾ See his article ‘Krieg am Sueskanal’, in *Die Woche*, Berlin, 6 January 1934, pp. 16-18.

²³⁾ Kirâm’s diaries, 1917.

²⁴⁾ Kirâm later published the summary of his thesis in his *Verlag*. Zeki H. Kirâm-Bey, *Mund- und Zahnpflege bei den mohammedanischen Völkern*, Berlin: Morgen- und Abendland-Verlag, 1923.

²⁵⁾ Kirâm mentions in his diary that he was worried that wine would be served to the guests in the presence of the imam. But to his big surprise, the imam started to drink a glass of wine after having mixed it with some juice. Kirâm’s diaries, 1920.

²⁶⁾ The bookshop was located in Karlstraße 10 in Berlin.

²⁷⁾ Kirâm, *Qâmûs al-Tesrîh latini-‘Arabî: Vocabolarius anatomiae latine-arabice & Qamûs Tesrîh latine-türkge: Vocabolarius anatomiae latine-turcice*, Berlin: Morgen- und Abendland Verlag, 1923.

²⁸⁾ I have found two letters, which he addressed to the Egyptian Ministry of Education as ‘President of the Society of Islamic Solidarity in Berlin’.

²⁹⁾ Zeki Kirâm and Chekib Arslan, *La Syrie: A la Société des Nations l’an 1925, un appel à la Vème Assemblée*, Genève, Novembre 1925. His entrance permission, Carte d’entrée permanente, Carte No. 302, 1925.

³⁰⁾ Salle du Conseil Général, Carte No. 1357, 1932.

³¹⁾ Letter from Amîn al-Husaynî to Kirâm, Jerusalem, 22 Ramadân 1350/30 January 1932.

³²⁾ Letter from Ziyâ al-Dîn al-Tabâtâbâ’î to Kirâm, 16 Safar 1351/21 June 1932, no place (probably Geneva). Al-Tabâtâbâ’î, who was exiled in Geneva, as a capable organizer, was urged by the congress delegates to supervise the permanent secretariat of the congress, and was committed to administration and fundraising. About his role in the congress, see Kramer, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-141.

³³⁾ Document containing the proposal and articles of the congress sent to Rashîd Ridâ in the name of the founding committee, 4 Jumâdâ al-Ulâ 1352/ 25 August 1933; Kirâm’s name appeared on the document as a founding member in absentia.

³⁴⁾ Known as Mahmûd Sâlim al-‘Arafâtî. He was the founder of the Cairo-based French magazine *Arafate: Revue Islamite Mensuelle* (first published 1904). See Rashîd Ridâ’s review of the magazine, *Al-Manâr*, vol. 6/21 (Dhû al-Qa’dah 1321/19 June 1904), p. 840. For more on the congress, see Sâlim’s *Le Congrès Islamo-Européen de Genève*, Paris, 1933. Kramer, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-153.

³⁵⁾ Kramer, *ibid.*, pp. 143-44.

³⁶⁾ Zeki Kirâm, ‘Ein Moslem über das neue Deutschland: Hitler ist der Berufene Mann’, in *Moslemische Revue*, 14 (1938), pp. 59-60.

³⁷⁾ ‘Lebenslauf von Dr. Zeki H. Kirâm’, unpublished typescript, n. d.; cf. Höpp, *Texte*, p. 62.

³⁸⁾ *Al-Bayân* was founded by the Syrian journalist Sulaymân Baddûr (d. 1941) in 1911. It played a major rôle in her support of the Great Syrian Revolution against the French (1925-1926). See, *Al-A‘lâm*, 3, p. 122. The newspaper maintained a consistently high literary and journalistic reputation. See, B.T. Mehdi, *The Arabs in America 1492-1977*, New York, 1978, p. 12. It was originally dedicated to serve Druze affairs in the American community. In *Al-Muqattam* and *Al-Bayân*, Zeki Kirâm wrote about the musical talent of his son Hârûn (b. 1923), when he was eleven years old. On the front page of *Al-Muqattam* (November 1935), Hârûn appeared as

also had contact with the Egyptian *salafî* journal *Al-Fath* founded by Muhibb al-Dîn al-Khatîb (1886-1969). One of Kirâm's early works was *Al-Tifl* (the Child), which appeared as a series of pedagogic articles dealing with the methods of child upbringing on the pages of *Al-Bayân* (1927).³⁹

He also made a contribution about the Prophet Muhammad in the volume *Revolutionen der Weltgeschichte* (1933).⁴⁰ The volume (992 pp.) contained historical information on religious, political and national revolutions both in the German Reich and abroad. Kirâm contributed to the volume writing an article on 'Mohammed der Gottgesante', which was published in the section of religious revolutions in the past.⁴¹

In 1934, a certain Abdel-Hamîd Mahmûd, director of *Madrasat al-'Ulûm al-'Arabiyya* (school of Arabic Studies) in Sumatra (Indonesia), sent Kirâm a letter requesting him to write a book on whatever Islamic subject he would choose in order to publish it as a *waqf* (religious endowment) for supporting the renovation of his school.⁴² The school was established in February 1921, and was intended to teach Arabic and Islamic subjects to primary and secondary students. He also asked him to make a contribution with a series of articles to his newly published magazine *Majallat al-'Ulûm al-Islâmiyya* (Magazine of Islamic Sciences, probably first published in 1939).⁴³

In addition, Kirâm wrote many other works in German, Arabic and Turkish. He also contributed articles and interviews on Eastern issues to some German newspapers. Many of his works, however, were never published. The only records available to me so far that explain why they were not published are Kirâm's own words. In the introduction to his unpublished work 'Die Welt des Islam in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart', he mentioned that he failed to gain access to publish his works, and since 1933 he had been vainly appealing to the Nazi officials to get his works published. Through one of his friends, Kirâm came into contact with the office of Alfred Rosenberg (1893-1946), the official theoretician of National Socialism. Rosenberg's office informed Kirâm more than once that his manuscripts were stolen. In despair, Kirâm decided not to contact the office again. In 1939, he tried once again to contact German officials for the same reason, but he was not granted any permission. He thought of publishing his works in Switzerland, but according to him the authorities did not grant him any foreign bills (*Devisen*). Kirâm was told that the reason the permission was not granted was that his works did not contain any mention of the men of the Nazi party.⁴⁴

'an oriental talented boy in Music'. See, 'Ghulâm Sharqî Nabîgh fî al-Musîqâ', in *Al-Muqattam*, Thursday 1 November 1935. *Al-Bayân*'s article was entitled: 'Najm Sharqî Yabzugh fî Samâ' Berlin' (or 'An oriental star rising on the sky of Berlin'), *Al-Bayân*, New York, Saturday 14 December, 1935. On the front page of *Al-Muqattam* (November 1935), Hârûn's name also appeared as 'an oriental talented boy in Music'. See 'Ghulâm Sharqî Nabîgh fî al-Musîqâ', in *Al-Muqattam*, Thursday 1 November 1935. Cf. another article, 'Ghulâm Sharqî fî Berlin yanbugh fî al-Musîqâ wa al-Rimâyah', in *al-Muqattam*, 26 January 1936.

³⁹ *Al-Bayân*, New York, no. 8 (Rabî' al-Thânî 1346/4 October 1927).

⁴⁰ Wulf Bley (ed.), *Revolutionen der Weltgeschichte: Zwei Jahrtausende Revolutionen und Bürgerkriege*, Kriegs-, Militär-, Gerichts- und Reichsarchiven, 1933.

⁴¹ Zekî Kirâm Bey, 'Mohammed der Gottgesante', in *ibid.*, pp. 89-100.

⁴² Letter from Mahmûd to Kirâm, Sumatra, Rabî' al-Awwal 8, 1353/July 1, 1934.

⁴³ Letter from Mahmûd to Kirâm, Sumatra, Jumâdâ al-Ākhira 1358/July 1939.

⁴⁴ More information is mentioned in the introduction of the unpublished work.

Later in 1941, he made an Arabic translation of one of the works of the German orientalist Max Horten (1874-1945), and attempted to have it published. He contacted the author asking for his help to find a publishing house that might be willing to publish the treatise. In a letter, Horten complained to him that he was facing the same problem, and advised him to look for a press in the Orient:

'Wenn Sie keinen Verlag für Ihre Übersetzung finden, so trifft Sie dasselbe Missgeschick, wie mich. Noch viele Arbeiten über den Islam habe ich fertiggestellt und finde keinen Verleger fuer diesen. Für Ihre arabische Übersetzung müssten sich im Orient (Kairo oder Damaskus) Leute interessieren und es käme doch auch nur ein Verlag im Orient im Frage. Sie haben selbst erfahren, dass bei uns ganz falsche Vorstellungen über den Islam herrschen. Dann wäre es doch gut, wenn gebildete Muslims unsere so überaus rückständige Orientalistik zu fördern suchten und ihr einige Hilfe aus dem Orient zukommen ließen.'⁴⁵

Nevertheless, one year later Kirâm managed to publish his translation in a treatise entitled: *Murûnat al-Thaqâfa al-Islâmiyya* (1942). As we see on the cover of the treatise, he probably managed to have it published in a private printing house under the name of an Islamic press in Berlin.⁴⁶

The idea of publishing an Islamic journal in Berlin also occurred to Kirâm's mind, but it never saw light. Among his papers, I have found the typescript of the first issue (December 1943) of a journal, which was supposed to be published under the title: 'Minbar al-Thaqâfatayn' (or 'Platform of the Two Cultures'). The journal was intended to deal with 'scientific, cultural, social and philosophical' issues, and to seek 'rapprochement between the oriental and occidental societies and cultures'.⁴⁷ Kirâm also approached the exiled former Iraqi Prime Minister 'Alî al-Kîlânî (d. 1965), as an ally to German officials, in Berlin to ask the German authorities to publish his journal and his other works, but he also failed to get him any permission of publication.⁴⁸

Due to his eagerness to publish his works, Kirâm approached a Russian officer during the invasion of Berlin with a request to help him find a channel through which his works would see the light.⁴⁹ When the Americans reached Berlin, Kirâm had made a similar request to the American headquarters of the Berlin district to give him aid in publishing his books. A certain Major Carlyle C. Ring of the division wrote an introduction letter for Kirâm to a certain Lieutenant Colonel Glaser at Headquarters AIAI as 'the personal representative of the King of Yemen and other Arabian countries' in order to help him get 'approval and aid in the publication of certain volumes concerning Islamic culture'. The reason for writing this note was to help him contact the proper authority for his purpose.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Letter, Max Horten to Kirâm, Bonn (Venusbergweg 12), April 2, 1941.

⁴⁶ Zekî H. Kirâm (trans.), *Murûnat al-Thaqâfa al-Islâmiyya* (or *Flexibility of Islamic Culture* (by Max Horten), Matba'a Islâmiyya fî Berlin (An Islamic Press in Berlin), 1942. Cf. Max Joseph Heinrich Horten, *Einführung in die höhere Geistes-Kultur des Islam*, Bonn, 1914.

⁴⁷ First Year, First issue, Dhu al-Hijja 1363 (December 1943).

⁴⁸ Diaries, 25 November 1943.

⁴⁹ German fragments in his diary 1945.

⁵⁰ Abschrift, U.S. Headquarters G 5 Division, Berlin-Tempelhof, July 30, 1945.

Contact with Rashîd Ridâ (1865-1935)

Rashîd Ridâ's knowledge of the West was diverse and complex, although he had little command of Western languages.⁵¹⁾ Ridâ managed to draw this vast knowledge from various sources. On more than one occasion, Ridâ stated that he acquired his primary experience about modern progress and the new world of the West in Lebanon through his discussions and personal contact with 'liberal Christian intellectuals' and American missionaries in Beirut. He was a studious visitor of American missionary bookshops and Christian liberal societies, where he was reading their books and journals such as the famous Arabic journals *Al-Muqtataf* and *Al-Tabîb*.⁵²⁾ The Arab world also witnessed at his time a rapid increase in the number of translated books in various fields. Ridâ attempted, therefore, to compensate for his inability to read in Western languages with the help of translated books.⁵³⁾

In addition, Ridâ had some Western works translated to him by some of his friends and students who had a good command of some Western languages. Ridâ's network abroad also played an important role in his acquisition of knowledge about Western scholarly works on Islam. One of these informants and translators was Zekî Kirâm, who kept Ridâ up to date with the developments of German orientalism and briefed him on the situation of Muslim institutions in Berlin and other significant news items in the German press.

Kirâm met Rashîd Ridâ for the first time on 13 October 1921 during the latter's only visit to Berlin, after Ridâ had attended the works of the Syro-Palestinian Congress (Geneva, summer 1921). Ridâ was the vice-president of the Syro-Palestinian Delegation to the League of Nations against the imposition of the French Mandate in Syria.⁵⁴⁾ Accompanied by Shakîb Arslân, Ridâ made a tour around big cities in Switzerland and Germany. His records of his 'European Trip' were later published in *Al-Manâr*.⁵⁵⁾ In his diaries, Ridâ has also recorded all about his journey around the Swiss and German cities.⁵⁶⁾

In his diary, Ridâ writes: '[Then] we visited [probably with Arslân] Zakî effendi Kirâm al-Dimashqî in his bookstore. He is an active young man, whose leg was injured during the last war, and he was treated in Germany. Then he married his nurse, and they opened a bookstore together where he sells books with her. He is now studying medicine'.⁵⁷⁾

In February 1926, Ridâ wrote to Shakîb Arslân to send him Kirâm's address.⁵⁸⁾ Since that time, their relation grew. In

Kirâm's eyes, Ridâ was his 'guide', 'master', 'lighthouse', 'elder brother', and 'father'. For Ridâ, Kirâm was a 'good and sincere friend'. Kirâm had also some business with *Al-Manâr* Press in Cairo where he had labels printed for medicines made in his private laboratory in Berlin.⁵⁹⁾ Kirâm also asked Ridâ to send him information or Islamic books, which he sometimes needed when writing German articles or giving lectures to German audiences on Islam. For example, he once told Ridâ that he had finished a treatise titled: 'No celibacy in Islam', but he was lacking information about the old-aged men who — despite their old age — were able to have children, such as the Algerian Prince 'Abd al-Qâdir al-Jazâ'irî (1807-1883). Kirâm was proposing to use such examples in his arguments on the 'necessity of regulated marriage [...] as a reason for a healthy body, strength and long age.'⁶⁰⁾

Kirâm translated one of the works of the aforementioned German orientalist Max Horten on the Islamic *Geisteskultur*. He sent a summary of his translation to Ridâ to publish in his *Manâr*. His Arabic style was not perfect, and Arabic writings had also sometimes grammatical mistakes. Ridâ revised the Arabic translation and sent it back to Kirâm for correction. Kirâm suggested that he would send the revised version included with the original German terms to Horten to compare them to the Arabic sources he used.⁶¹⁾ A summary of his translation of some of Horten's ideas was later published in *Al-Manâr* under the title: 'Witnesses of Fair-minded Western scholars about Islam, the Prophet and the Muslims' (1929).⁶²⁾ In another article to *Al-Manâr*, he discussed some of the Western medical discoveries on the 'bad effects' of pork and wine on the human body. Ridâ disagreed with him in his statement that pork was prohibited by the Divine revelation because there were no microscopes which would analyze the flesh. For Ridâ, the Divine revelation must be applicable to all people in all ages, and not restricted to such arguments. God, and not Muhammad or Moses, was the one Who prohibited eating pork in the Torah and the Qur'ân.⁶³⁾

He also sometimes translated German orientalist works at Ridâ's request. Ridâ urgently requested him to study the work *Mohammed, sein Leben und sein Glaube*⁶⁴⁾ by Tor Andrae (1885-1947), on the life of the Prophet Muhammad and his faith, and to feed him back with a summary of the book. Kirâm wrote Ridâ back that he did not know the author, but he promised him to translate the book in Arabic.⁶⁵⁾

About his contribution to the volume of *World Revolutions*, Kirâm proudly told Ridâ that he managed to publish a historical account of the conditions of the Arabs before Islam, the Prophet's mission and wars, the significance and the cultural and theological understanding of the *Ka'bah* and the Black Stone, and the meaning of prayer, pilgrimage and *Hijra*. He stressed that he attempted to formulate these subjects in a scientific and philosophical manner so that Western readers

⁵¹⁾ Emad Eldin Shahin, *Through Muslim Eyes: M. Rashid Ridâ and the West*, Virginia: IIIT, 1994, p. 91.

⁵²⁾ See, Rashîd Ridâ, *Al-Manâr wa-l-Azhar*, Al-Manâr Press, p. 193. Cf. Dayla Hamzah, 'Rashîd Ridâ: 'Alim, Islamic Reformer or Journalist? Genre, Class and the New Intellectual Craft during the Nahdah', paper presented at *The Fourth Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting*, Florence, 19-23 March, 2003.

⁵³⁾ Emad Eldin Shahin, 'Muhammad Rashîd Ridâ's Perspectives on the West as Reflected in *Al-Manâr*', *The Muslim World*, vol. LXXIX (1989), pp. 113-114.

⁵⁴⁾ Marie-Renée Mouton, 'Le Congrès syro-palestinien de Genève (1921)', *Relations Internationales*, No. 19 (1979), pp. 313-328.

⁵⁵⁾ See Yûsuf Ibîsh (ed.), *Rihâlât al-Imâm Muhammad Rashîd Ridâ*, Beirut: Badr li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzî', 2000, p. 233-282.

⁵⁶⁾ Ridâ's diary, August-October 1921.

⁵⁷⁾ Ibid, October 13, 1921; Kirâm's wife actually was not his nurse. According to Kirâm's son Hârûn she was a manager at the bookstore in front of the Charité Hospital.

⁵⁸⁾ Shakîb Arslân, *Al-Sayyid Rashîd Ridâ aw Ikhâ' Arba'in Sana*, Damascus: Ibn Zaydûn Press, 1937, p. 441.

⁵⁹⁾ Letter from Kirâm to Ridâ, Berlin, 19 Muharram 1350/5 June 1931.

⁶⁰⁾ Letter from Kirâm to Ridâ, Berlin, 11 Rabî' al-Awwal/ 15 July 1932.

⁶¹⁾ Ibid.

⁶²⁾ Kirâm Zeki, 'Shahadat 'Ulamâ' al-Gharb al-Munsifîn li-l-Islâm wa-l-Nabî wa-l-Muslimîn', in *Al-Manâr*, vol. 30/2 (Safar 1348/ 8 July 1929), pp. 140-141; See another article by Kirâm in *Al-Manâr*, vol. 30/2 (Safar 1348/ July 1929), p. 140.

⁶³⁾ Id., 'Qawâ'id al-Sihha fî al-Islâm mundhu 1348 Sana wâ Qawâ'id al-Sihha fî Urûbâ Ba'da 1348 Sana', in *Al-Manâr* vol. 30/5 (29 Jumâdâ al-Ûlâ 1348/ First of November 1929), pp. 381-384.

⁶⁴⁾ Tor Andrae, *Mohammed, sein Leben und sein Glaube*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1932

⁶⁵⁾ Letter from Kirâm to Ridâ, Berlin, 8 Muharram 1352/May 1933.

would acquire some historical facts based on scientific arguments, but not in the form of overstated miracles, which are only supported by people's conviction. Through his article, Kirâm believed that he would 'exercise the greatest influence on the heart of Europe.'⁶⁶) According to him, one of his German friends had asked him to read the article on the Prophet on the radio. But Kirâm was not sure if he would manage to do that due to the 'government's stance against non-Christian religions'.⁶⁷)

The purpose of briefing *Al-Manâr*'s founder about the German press was that he, as an influential Muslim scholar, would get acquainted with the opinions of policymakers in Europe; and that he would also 'convey the current events [to his readers] as soon as possible in order to confront the Zionists and other enemies, who spend millions for disseminating news to the press in order to mislead the public opinion.'⁶⁸) The ill propaganda of some 'intruders trading in the name of Islam' also causes Islam gross damage and the propagation of 'false beliefs' under the name of Islam, such as this of Bâbiyya, Bahâ'iyya or Ahmadiyya, which were, in his view, the reason behind the deterioration of the spread of Islam in Europe.⁶⁹)

Kirâm bemoaned the Muslim state of affairs that they have nothing but the 'Islamic feeling' and the 'Oriental Arab heart' to defend their oppressed rights.⁷⁰) Kirâm also tried to convince Ridâ that he 'due to his own vast readings and solid belief based on knowledge [...] was able to launch a strong movement for the cause of Islam and Arab Islamic peoples.'⁷¹) He considered himself as 'one of the pivots of *îmân*, and a missionary of Islam'.⁷²) The only manner to destroy 'the allegations of Zionism, Christianity, Jesuitism and Freemasonry', in Kirâm's mind, was to use weapons of their own and select some of their controversial books for translation. Kirâm maintained that his financial situation and lack of time did not help him enough to exert more effort in 'defending Muslim rights,⁷³) and 'devoting all his time to missionary work'.⁷⁴)

In *Al-Manâr*, Ridâ praised Kirâm's efforts of 'reproaching Christian missionaries, and Muslims who give them support'. He in addition described those Muslims as 'atheists, slaves of colonizers and enemies of their umma'.⁷⁵) Among Ridâ's papers in Cairo, I have found two Arabic manuscripts which contain the Arabic translation of a German text on the history of the Jesuits. In my view, Kirâm made this translation for Ridâ, as they bear the same handwriting of Kirâm. Unfortunately, there is nothing mentioned in the manuscripts, which could further lead so far to know the original work and its author.

Kirâm repeatedly complained to Ridâ about the degeneration of Muslim institutions in Berlin and their feeble role in serving Islam. He was convinced that Muslims in Berlin suffered from ill-information and a lack of understanding of the

European mentality and did not have any capability of presenting Islam to the Western public in a proper way. In one letter, he directed his severe attack against the Ahmadiyya *Islamische Gemeinde zu Berlin*.⁷⁶) He extremely doubted their role of serving Islam. In his view, their work would, on the contrary, defame the image of Islam in the West.⁷⁷) He moreover labeled the five board members of the *Gemeinde* without giving any names as 'charlatans', 'five fanatic communists', and 'opportunists who knocked at all doors to get financial benefits for their own interests'.⁷⁸)

The conflict between the Ahmadiyya group and the Muslim community in Berlin dates back to 1923, when Mansûr Rifât (1883-1927), a member of the Egyptian National Party living in Berlin,⁷⁹) launched an anti-Ahmadiyya campaign by attacking them in many of his pamphlets and articles as collaborators of the British imperial government in India in return for financial support. In the ensuing months Rifât, motivated by his anti-British nationalist feelings, intensified his assault on the *Gemeinde*.⁸⁰) Most of the anti-Ahmadiyya campaign brochures were published by Kirâm's Morgen- und Abendland Verlag.⁸¹)

Later, Rifât became an active member of the *Verein für Islamische Gottesverehrung*. The society was established on 27 December 1924 by Alim Idrîsî (a Russian emigrant in Berlin, 1887- died after 1945), and was intended to replace the *Islamische Gemeinde* and to provide a sanctuary for Muslims in Germany.⁸²) According to Heimbach, it was Kirâm who was behind the formation of this society.⁸³) The statute of the society indicates that it was formed under the auspices of the Turkish, Persian, Afghani and Egyptian ambassadors to Berlin. It was mainly intended to unite all Muslim residents in Germany with no regard of their ethnical background and to take care of their affairs, especially the mosque of Wünsdorf and the Muslim cemetery in Hasenheide.⁸⁴) Shakîb Arslân also played an instrumental role in founding this organization with the purpose of bringing Muslims from all regions of the world in Berlin together.⁸⁵) He quoted the Society's statute in the Egyptian paper *Al-Shûrâ* as a non-political organization established to serve the Muslims in the

⁶⁶) Ibid.

⁶⁷) Ibid.

⁶⁸) Letter from Kirâm to Ridâ, Berlin, 9 October (no year).

⁶⁹) Letter from Kirâm to Ridâ, Berlin, 3 Dhu al-Hijja 1351/March 1932.

⁷⁰) Ibid.

⁷¹) Letter from Kirâm to Ridâ, Berlin, 14 November 1929.

⁷²) Letter from Kirâm to Ridâ, Berlin, 8 Muharram 1352/ May 1933.

⁷³) Letter Kirâm to Ridâ, Berlin, 14 November 1929.

⁷⁴) Letter from Kirâm to Ridâ, Berlin, 8 Muharram 1352/ May 1935.

⁷⁵) See Ridâ's comments on the margin of Kirâm's translation of Horten's ideas. *Al-Manâr*, vol. 30/2, p. 140.

⁷⁶) Arabic: *al-Jam'iyya al-Islâmiyya fi Berlin*; founded by Maulana Sadr-ud-Din of Lahore in Berlin Charlottenburg 1922.

⁷⁷) Letter from Kirâm to Ridâ, Berlin, 3 June 1926; about the *Gemeinde*, see Abdullah, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁷⁸) Ibid.

⁷⁹) He studied medicine in Cairo, Beirut and Philadelphia. He was the chairman of the 'Club des patriotes égyptiennes' (1914). He is the founder and chairman of the Egyptian National radical Party (1918). More about him in Höpp (2000), *op. cit.*, pp. 67-73.

⁸⁰) Heimbach, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45. The Berliner press described the conflict as 'eine interne Streitigkeit der Mohammedaner', p. 44.

⁸¹) For instance, *Die Ahmadiya-Sekte: Ein Vorkämpfer für den englischen Imperialismus*, Berlin 1923; *Der Verrat der Ahmadi an Heimat und Religion*, 1923, *The Ahmadi sect: Vanguard of the British Imperialism and the Greatest Danger to Islam, Convincing evidence of their Duplicity*, 1923; *Der Verrat der Ahmadi an Heimat und Religion*, 1923; *Ahmadi's Betrayal of Country and Religion*, 1923; *Die Ahmadiya Agenten: ein Rätsel. Werden sie tatsächlich von den deutschen Behörden unterstützt und beschützt?*, 1924; *Vollständiger Zusammenbruch der Ahmadiya-Sekte: Weitere Beweise für Ihre Tätigkeit als englische Agenten*, 1924; *Total Demoralisation of the Ahmadiya sect: Further evidence in regard to their Activities as British agents and menace to Islam*, 1924.

⁸²) Cleveland, *op. cit.*, p. 63. Cf. Heimbach, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁸³) Heimbach, *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁸⁴) Statute, *Hay'at Sha'â'ir Islâmiyya, Verein für Islamische Gottesverehrung*, Berlin 1343/1924.

⁸⁵) Cleveland, *Shakîb, op. cit.*, p. 42.

German Republic with no regard to their ethnicity or background.⁸⁶⁾ Gilyazov stated that the board members of the society were Alimjan Idrîsî, Osman Tokumbet, M. Hassan, Haschem and Y. Barakat.⁸⁷⁾ Kirâm publicly showed great sympathy to the *Verein* and donated a carpet to the new mosque.⁸⁸⁾

In his letter, Kirâm warned Ridâ not to be deluded by the Ahmadiyya *Gemeinde* and their 'huge names', which they only manipulate for obtaining money from various people. According to him, some of them went to the abdicated sultan Wahîd al-Dîn a few days before his death. Another person also approached the abdicated sultan Abdel-Majîd. They dispatched another member to Mecca. Kirâm drew Ridâ's attention to the fact that they did not represent Germany, for the country did not recognize Communism or Islam. Muslim communities in Berlin, according to him, were divided among themselves according to their own ethnical identity. Oriental residents in Berlin had no confidence any more in the members of this *Gemeinde*.⁸⁹⁾

In the same letter, he anonymously alluded to a Syrian student, who was actively involved in supporting the *Gemeinde's* activities, without giving his name. In my view, this student was probably Hâjj Muhammad Nafi' Tschelebi (Çelebi) from Aleppo (1901- drowned in a lake nearby Berlin in 1933), the founder of the Muslim student organization *Islâmiya*. Tschelebi was an active student at the Technische Hochschule Berlin. As chairman and in cooperation with the *Gemeinde*, Tschelebi took the initiative of founding *Das Islam-Institut* (1927).⁹⁰⁾ In the same year *Islâmiya* jointly with the Ahmadi *Gemeinde* organized the celebration of 'Īd al-Adhâ (Feast of Sacrifice).⁹¹⁾ According to Kirâm, the *Gemeinde* planned to send this student (Tschelebi) to meet Ridâ in Cairo for making propaganda for their society. Kirâm notified Ridâ not to believe this person, describing him as 'representative of the devil (Iblîs)'. He also urged Ridâ not to be deceived by his appearance. He wrote:

'The one coming to you is a Syrian man sent by his family to acquire [education] in Berlin. Some of the Indian devils spoiled him and tempted him with trivial tricks. Beware of him, even though he would grow (lit. loosen) his beard and sideburns and name himself Wahhâbî. It is no wonder that he bears such a name in order to satisfy his greediness.'⁹²⁾

Kirâm expected their 'opportunistic' scenario to be as follows: they would first try to acquire sympathy and financial support by demanding the money of *zakât* from recognized kings, such as Ibn Sa'ûd or Imam Yahyâ of Yemen. But when they failed to get any support from them, they would go to

other deposed kings such as Sharîf Husayn.⁹³⁾ He warned Ridâ never to be impressed by such institutions with names like 'Islamic society', 'Islamic institute', 'Islamic culture', etc. For him, there were many 'parasites' on Islam with great famous names, whose views perplexed both Muslims and Europeans. The founders of such organizations were, according to him, *murtaziqa* 'mercenaries', exploiting the name of Islam only for earning money.⁹⁴⁾

His anti-Ahmadiyya letter apparently influenced Ridâ's attitude towards the *Gemeinde*. A month after his reception of Kirâm's letter, Ridâ published his severe critique on the society. Without giving any names, Ridâ maintained that he had received a letter from one of his Muslim friends in Berlin, who was a former member of the society with critical comments on their work.⁹⁵⁾ In his article, Ridâ published the Arabic translation of two of their German declarations. In the first one, the society, in the name of the whole Muslim community, propagated the idea of independence from all foreign powers, and readiness to participate in constituting an Islamic Congress, which might enable establishing an Islamic government under one elected caliph.⁹⁶⁾ The second declaration (published on the occasion of the Prophet's Birth Anniversary 1344/1926) contained a call to Muslims to become members of the society, and promote its activities by paying the *zakât* to its funds.⁹⁷⁾

The activities of the society disappointed Ridâ's earlier expectations. In 1908, Ridâ met Abdul-Jabbâr Khayrî, one of the founders of the society, and his brother Abdul-Sattâr, during his visit to Beirut. As a result of his discussions with Abdul-Jabbâr, Ridâ was at this time impressed by his religious zeal and independence of thought. However, his society's 'over-ambitious' objectives to liberate the whole Muslim world and to form a Muslim government all over the world were for Ridâ unrealistic and not easily reachable. It saddened him to find that the founders of this tiny society adhered to exaggeration and impracticable solutions in their call to free the vast Muslim world and achieve pan-Islamism from Morocco to China. As for the society's request for Muslims to send their *zakât* to Berlin in promotion of this difficult task, Ridâ found that it was totally opposing the Qur'anic injunctions of *zakât* and that it was not permissible to send one's *zakât* to 'a political organization in a remote non-Muslim land'. Some of the *fuqahâ* (Muslim jurists) were of the view that the *zakât* money should be given to the poor Muslims of each land; and it is not allowed to transfer the money to another distant land. For him, Abdul-Jabbâr intended to 'raise Islam by destroying the pillars of Islam'. The society therefore had no legal right to request *zakât* from their fellow Muslims. He reminded Abdul-Jabbâr that to collect such huge amounts of money for the sake of his ambiguous and hard mission would open the way to suspicion, and that Muslims would not trust his society at all. For *Al-Manâr*, this unreliable commitment revealed that the only aim of the society was to collect money and fortune. In the end, Ridâ requested the society to stop asking Muslims to donate them

⁸⁶⁾ *Al-Shûrâ*, 14 January 1925; as quoted in Ahmad al-Sharâbasî, *Shakîb Arslan dâ'iyat al-Urûba wa al-Islâm*, Beirut: Dâr al-Jîl, second edition, 2001, pp. 36-37.

⁸⁷⁾ Gilyazov, *op. cit.*, p. 348; Idrîsî also established the *Verein zur Unterstützung russland-mohammedanischer Studenten*.

⁸⁸⁾ Heimbach, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

⁸⁹⁾ Letter from Kirâm to Ridâ, Berlin, 3 June 1926.

⁹⁰⁾ Heimbach, *op. cit.*, p. 46. He initiated the organization for the purpose of 'promoting the academic education of Muslim students [...] and development of understanding of Islamic cultural areas in the hosting country'. See also, *Die Islamische Gegenwart: Monatschrift für die Zeitgeschichte des Islam*, November 7, 1927. About *Das Islam-Institut*, see, id., pp. 23-28; Höpp (2000), *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79.

⁹¹⁾ H. M. N. Tschelebi, 'Islam-Bibliothek und Islamia-Heim in Berlin', in *Nachrichten: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Islamkunde* (edited by Prof. Dr. G. Kampffmeyer), no. 3 (July, 1927), pp. 44-45; Heimbach, *ibid.*, p. 48.

⁹²⁾ Letter from Kirâm to Ridâ, Berlin, 3 June 1926.

⁹³⁾ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴⁾ Letter from Kirâm to Ridâ, Berlin, 8 Muharram 1352/May 1933.

⁹⁵⁾ Rashid Ridâ, 'Al-Jamâ'a al-Islâmiyya fî Berlin wa Nidâ'uhâ al-Âmm wa Balaghâtuhâ', in *Al-Manâr*, vol. 27/4 (Dhû al-Hijja 1344 /July 1926), pp. 309-314.

⁹⁶⁾ The declaration was published in Berlin on 14 September 1925, quoted in *Al-Manâr*, pp. 310-311.

⁹⁷⁾ *Ibid.*

zakât, and concluded that none of the Muslims should give them any financial support.⁹⁸) Later, in 1927, an anonymous member of the *Gemeinde* sent Ridâ a letter in which he rebuked *Al-Manâr* for his critique of their society. Ridâ was not happy with the language of the letter stating as he did not expect to receive such 'offending' notes.⁹⁹)

It is interesting to know that despite of his negative tone about Muslim institutions, Kirâm later participated in the activities of the *Deutsch-Muslimische Gesellschaft* in Berlin, which replaced the name of the *Islamische Gemeinde* in 1930. In November 1932 he gave a short speech on the occasion of the retirement of the then Imam of the mosque of the *Gesellschaft*, G. M. Abdullah.¹⁰⁰) In January 1933, Kirâm delivered another lecture under the title, 'Soziale Gedanken im Islam',¹⁰¹) in the mosque of Briener Street. In the lecture, attended by German and Muslim audiences, Kirâm again pointed out that lack of knowledge was the reason behind the circulation of a countless number of misconceptions about Islam as an intolerant and aggressive religion. The Arabs had conveyed their culture to Spain. He turned to speak about the position of women, the prohibition of alcohol, purification in Islam, worship and the concept of war in Islam.¹⁰²)

On preparing his German lectures 'Der Prophet Mohammed und die Frau', Shakîb Arslân had advised Kirâm to consult Ridâ's then recent well-known work on the rights of women in Islam, *Nidâ' ilâ al-Jins al-Latîf*. At his request, Kirâm received the treatise with a word of dedication.¹⁰³) He delivered these two lectures on the rights of women in Islam in one of the principal Berlin hotels. The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* reviewed the lectures.¹⁰⁴) The London-based *Daily Telegraph* also commented on them.¹⁰⁵) Arabic journals, such as the Egyptian Wafdist journal *Al-Jihâd* and the Palestinian *Al-Jâmi'a al-Islâmiyya* (Pan-Islamism), also quoted the lecture at length.¹⁰⁶)

In his lectures, Kirâm described the position of Arab women before and after the Prophet's mission of Islam. He stated that Islam gave women their proper place as equal to men, arguing that it was 'Muhammad who founded the first great feminine movement in history by making women free and independent.'¹⁰⁷) In his view, Islam also gave women

their rights of guardianship and ownership of property. Woman was not only on the front during the time of war giving water to the soldiers, but also responsible for the education of children, and was *Verwalterin des Hauses* (or manager of the house).¹⁰⁸) 'The great Arab cultural advance at that epoch was due to', he went on, 'the emancipation of women. Later the Arabs deprived women of her rights, and consequently they decayed in culture. Today women occupied in Europe the position they held in Islam 1352 years ago, while in the Orient she had fallen back to the level of Christian Europe at that date.'¹⁰⁹)

The Daily Telegraph, which presented Kirâm as 'a learned Bedouin Arab doctor', compared his views with the manifesto of Herr Krummacher, who was then appointed as 'Leader of Women Front'. In his view, Krummacher maintained that 'there can be a nobler and a higher task for women than to be the center of family life and to guarantee to men a daily source of energy for work. The unmarried woman has the right of having a professional life, but she should work in the sense of German motherhood. He also urged all women in the Reich to be 'affiliated in one huge federation to the dissemination of Nazi ideas'.¹¹⁰)

Rashîd Ridâ was one of the significant organizers of the General Islamic Congress in defense of Jerusalem (1931). After its organization, the conflict between the congress and Zionist groups went high. As an Arab activist in Berlin, Kirâm was preoccupied with the development of the Zionist question in Germany. He kept Ridâ updated with the news of the petitions and protest of German Jews against the Zionist movement.¹¹¹) In order to substantiate the Arab cause, he believed that the Jewish statements would be of great benefit in fighting the enemy with his own 'weapon'. He was in contact with some anti-Zionist liberal Jewish organizations in Europe. In 1930, he sent *Al-Manâr* a translation of an article on the history of the Jewish migration to Palestine written by the Jewish German scholar H. Löwe in the *Gemeindeblatt der Jüdischen Gemeinde zu Berlin*. Kirâm's intention was to give the readers of *Al-Manâr* insight into 'the persecution of the Jews by non-Muslims and the welfare they enjoyed under the banner of Islam.'¹¹²) The reason why the article never appeared in *Al-Manâr* is not known.

Arms Agent to Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan

In his *German-Saudi Arabian Arms Deals*, Michael Wolffsohn maintained that the history of the German-Saudi armament deals began with the 'fall of 1937'.¹¹³) He gives no explicit mention to Kirâm's role in German arms deals with the Saudis, but he only referred to an anonymous 'merchant living in Berlin and close to the Außenpolitisches Amt',¹¹⁴) who played a role in this respect. According to him, until November 1937 neither international nor transnational bilateral steps could be traced. A representative of the Otto Wolff

⁹⁸) Ibid., p. 313-314.

⁹⁹) *Al-Manâr*, vol. 29/2 (Shawwâl 1349/ April 1929), p. 114.

¹⁰⁰) *Lokal Anzeiger*, Tuesday 29 November, 1932.

¹⁰¹) G. Galbenz, 'Der Soziale Gedanke im Islam', in *Neue Tempelhofer Zeitung*, Nr. 10 (Thursday, January 12, 1933). Kirâm wrote to Ridâ that he was planning to give lectures on what he calls Islamic sociology. (Letter, 3 Dhû al-Hijja 1351/ 19 March 1934).

¹⁰²) Ibid.

¹⁰³) Letter from Kirâm to Ridâ, Berlin, 3 Dhû al-Hijja 1351/March 1932; Rashîd Ridâ, *Nidâ' ilâ al-Jins al-Latîf: Huqûq al-Mar'a fî al-Islâm*, Cairo: Al-Manâr Press, 1932. The treatise was found among Kirâm's collection of books, with Ridâ's signature on the front page. Cf. W. J. A. Kernkamp, *De Islâm en de vrouw: Bijdrage tot de kennis van het Reformisme naar aanleiding van M.R. Ridâ's Nidâ lil-Djins al-Latîf*, published PhD dissertation (University of Utrecht), Amsterdam, 1935.

¹⁰⁴) E. F., 'Der Prophet Mohammed und die Frau', in *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, Berlin, Nr. 414 (22 September 1933).

¹⁰⁵) 'Nazi Plans for Women', in *The Daily Telegraph*, London, Nr. 24, 444 (Saturday, 23 September 1933). It is probable that it was Kirâm himself who provided the *Daily Telegraph*, and German and Arab newspapers, with information about his activities in Berlin, or even wrote the articles himself.

¹⁰⁶) See, 'Al-Jarâ'id al-Almâniyya tatakallam 'an al-Maqâm al-Ijtimâ'î li-l-Mar'a al-Muslima', *Al-Jihâd*, Cairo 26 September 1933; 'Al-Dûktûr Zekî Kirâm yuhâdir fî al-Mar'a', *Al-Jâmi'a al-Islâmiyya*, Yafa (Palestine), 5 Rajab 1352/ 24 September 1933.

¹⁰⁷) As quoted in *The Daily Telegraph*, op. cit.

¹⁰⁸) See *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, Ibid.

¹⁰⁹) As quoted in *The Daily Telegraph*, Ibid.

¹¹⁰) Ibid.

¹¹¹) From Kirâm to Ridâ, Berlin, 14 November 1929.

¹¹²) Letter from Kirâm, Shawwâl 1348 (1930).

¹¹³) Michael Wolffsohn, *German-Saudi Arabian Arms Deals 1936-1939 and 1981-1985*, Frankfurt am Main, Bern and New York: Verlag Peter Lang, 1985, p. 15.

¹¹⁴) Ibid., p. 17.

enterprise was asked by Sheikh Yūsuf Yāsīn, the Saudi King's private secretary (and one of Rashīd Ridā's students), and 'other confidential agents' whether they would supply the Kingdom with 15,000 rifles on credit or for cash'.¹¹⁵) In the period 23-27 August 1938, the Saudi deputy foreign minister Fu'ād Hamza (1899-1951)¹¹⁶ stayed in Berlin for diplomatic and military negotiations. During his meeting with German officials, Hamza 'again raised the question of the arms delivery'. After having consulted with Ministerialrat Prüfer of the Auswärtiges Amt, Von Hentig of the Oriental desk introduced Hamza to Vice Admiral Canaris of the military intelligence.¹¹⁷)

However, Kirām's correspondence with the Saudi Foreign Ministry reveals that he as early as 1928 attempted to approach the Saudi government by sending them sample arms in order to convince the officials of using him as agent in their deals with the Germans. Despite the fact that the Saudis were much interested in modernizing their armaments on a big scale, their business remained poor until 1936-1937 because they only managed to finish deals on a sub-governmental or semi-governmental level.¹¹⁸)

Fu'ād Hamza knew about Kirām for the first time through Amīn Ruwayha, a senior physician in Rosetta hospital in Cairo and a former military in the Turkish Army with Kirām in his early military career, during his stay in Saudi Arabia.¹¹⁹) Shakīb Arslān, who saw Ibn Sa'ūd as an ideal monarch and a daring warrior,¹²⁰) was a much more important channel for introducing Kirām to the Saudis. In 1928, Hamza wrote Kirām about the Saudi high interest in his agency for making arms deals with German firms.¹²¹) During his visit to Saudi Arabia, Shakīb Arslān (during his hajj in 1929) showed Hamza a letter sent to him by Kirām (23 July 1929) in which the latter tells about German rifles. Hamza demanded Kirām to transport ten rifles and 1000 cartridges to his address in Jeddah.¹²²) In June 1932 the Saudi government was interested in the completion of the deal of 2000 rifles.¹²³) During the official visit of Prince Faisal (1906-1975) to Germany on 20 May 1932 (after his diplomatic visit in the Hague), Kirām was with other German officials at the Tempelhofer Airport in Berlin to receive him officially.¹²⁴) Hamza, who accompanied the prince, requested Kirām once again to send him other samples of

rifles a few months after his return to Saudi Arabia.¹²⁵) Kirām immediately informed the political department of the Royal Dīwān (Council) that he had three thousand rifles at hand, which he could arrange for the Saudis. Yūsuf Yāsīn was highly interested in seeing samples of these arms, but he asked Kirām if it was possible to pay by installments due to the economic problems in the Kingdom at that moment.¹²⁶)

In their negotiations with the Germans concerning arms deals, the Saudis wanted an intensification of German-Afghani trade.¹²⁷) Muhammad Amīn, the Afghani ambassador to Berlin, authorized Kirām on behalf of the Afghani government to finish a deal of purchasing 5000 Lee-Enfield rifles with belts and bayonets and 1000 cartridges. The embassy also entrusted Kirām to travel to Lithuania and other countries, to have contacts with firms and governments concerning the delivery conditions, and to act on behalf of the embassy in matters of contracts and agreements.¹²⁸)

In August 1934, Kirām sent the King of Saudi Arabia an English rifle as a present with a letter in which he showed his desire to visit Saudi Arabia. The Private Secretary in the name of the King replied in the affirmative. The Saudis were much interested in the German modern carbines (not the used old ones), which were much to be used by the Saudi soldiers.¹²⁹) On the other hand, Kirām had interest in making deals in the Saudi sheep wool in Germany. In October 1934, Faisal sent him a parcel of two kilos of wool as a specimen for their production.¹³⁰) However, it seems that Kirām's dealings with the Saudis had almost no results. In one of his letters (18 June 1935), he decidedly urged Yūsuf Yāsīn not to constantly demand him to deliver samples only, but to hasten finishing the deals very quickly.¹³¹)

Earlier in 1932, Kirām complained to Ridā about his frustration concerning the Saudi decision to choose somebody else for finishing a deal with the Germans. He must have written to Ridā because of his close friendship with the Saudi royal family. In a very confidential letter, Kirām asked him to mediate and convince the Saudis to make use of his agency with regard to their affairs in Germany. The letter was headed with the phrase: *Muharram wa-Shakhsī* (forbidden and classified). As an introduction to his request, he stressed to Ridā his good contact with the Saudi royal

¹¹⁵) Ibid., p. 16.

¹¹⁶) Fu'ād Hamza, born in Lebanon, studied in Jerusalem. As he had good command of English, he was appointed as an interpreter of Ibn Sa'ūd in 1926 in Riyadh. Then he became a deputy for foreign affairs based in Mecca. Later he became minister commissioner in Turkey and France. He died in Beirut. See, *Al-A'lām*, vol. 5, p. 159.

¹¹⁷) Wolffsohn, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

¹¹⁸) Ibid., p. 15.

¹¹⁹) Letter from Fu'ād Hamza to Kirām, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 3 November 1928; Ruwayha is the author of the book *Al-Tamrīd* (Sick-nursing), Cairo, 1932.

¹²⁰) See, Cleveland, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.

¹²¹) Letter from Fu'ād Hamzā to Kirām, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 3 November 1928.

¹²²) Letter from Fu'ād Hamza to Kirām (no. 7/2/46), 9 July 1929. Hamza sent Kirām a draft of 13 English pounds for the samples he dispatched. Letter (no. 7/2/6), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2 Safar 1348/7 July 1929.

¹²³) Letter from Yūsuf Yāsīn to Kirām (no. 3/3/1), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 4 Safar 1351/9 June 1932.

¹²⁴) See 'Emir Feisals Empfang in Berlin: Offizielle Begrüßung auf dem Tempelhofer Flughafen, der Besuch aus dem Morgenland', *Berliner illustriert (Nachtausgabe)*, Nr. 116 (Friday 20 May 1932). Faisal was the then deputy of the Saudi King in Hijāz and later King of Saudi Arabia.

¹²⁵) Letter from Hamza (no. 3/3/23), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 18/5/1351/ 19 September 1932.; Hamza sent him another draft of 35 English pounds and 18 shilling through the *Nederlandsche Handel Maatschappij* in Jeddah dated 12 September 1932; another letter from Hamza dated 19 Rabī' al-Thānī 1351/22 August 1932 in which he thanks Kirām for his reception during his visit with prince Faisal and the impression he left upon both of them.

¹²⁶) Letter from Yūsuf Yāsīn, Dīwān Jalālat al-Malik, Al-Shu'bah al-Siyāsiyya (no. 25/1/44), 23 Shawwāl 1351/19 February 1933.

¹²⁷) Wolffsohn, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

¹²⁸) Document of Authorization, Berlin, 9 February 1929.

¹²⁹) Letter from Yūsuf Yāsīn, Dīwān Jalālat al-Malik, Al-Shu'ba al-Siyāsiyya (no. 25/2/20), 9 Jumādā al-Thāniya 1353/ 29 September 1934; the Saudi government was going under some economic hardships at that time. Later in 1937 Yāsīn again requested the Germans to enable his delegate to Berlin to buy the weapons at moderate prices and by installments. See, Wolffsohn, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

¹³⁰) Letter from Faisal (no. 152/3/44), Mecca, 27 Jumādā al-Thāniya 1353/16 October 1934.

¹³¹) Letter, Yūsuf Yāsīn, Private Secretary (no. 31/1/5), 16 Rabī' al-Awwal 1354/15 June 1935.

family, and how sincere he was in their 'service, only for the sake of Islam'.¹³²⁾

Due to his economic expertise, Kirâm was requested by Ridâ during their meeting in Cairo on his way back from Yemen (see below) to prepare an economic plan that could benefit the Saudi government.¹³³⁾ After a while, Kirâm sent Ibn Sa'ûd some financial suggestions that might help them protect their fiscal system. Kirâm was very content with the King's reaction to his suggestions. He stated that he never expected any 'material benefits' in this 'mortal world' in return for his 'service to Islam and the Muslims'. To convince Ridâ of his loyalty to the Saudis, Kirâm maintained that he made delivery of good artesian wells and their drawings and maps without adding any commissions for himself.¹³⁴⁾

Kirâm was disappointed that the Saudi government had put him down by having asked somebody else to negotiate with German firms concerning transporting machines to the Saudis. He received a letter signed by Fu'âd Hamza of the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs requesting a list of prices of machines for repairing old cartridges. To his big surprise, Kirâm found out that somebody else had received the same demand from the Saudi government, and had already sent them the required information. Without mentioning any names, Kirâm gave a description of the person as: 'an Orthodox, Jesuit and Freemason'. He mentioned that he had given this person shelter in his house till he found a job, when he first came to Berlin in a dire need of help.

Kirâm stressed that with the support of his German friends he managed to get incomparably lower prices. However, Kirâm pointed out that he remained in their service and loyalty, whenever they would need his assistance. He reminded Ridâ of his former help to the Saudi government as an agent in other arms deals since 1929. He moreover asked Ridâ to contact the King to 'rely on Dr. Zekî Kirâm in Berlin in your foreign affairs, as he is an honest Muslim and trustworthy *mujâhid* more than anybody else', and to 'benefit from him instead of wasting their money in commissions'.¹³⁵⁾

At the end of his letter, Kirâm turned to attack the Old and New Testaments that they would command the believers of 'murder', 'destruction' and 'robbery'. He harshly assaulted the Old Testament of allowing its people to murder and destroy Muslims. He lamented the state of Muslims who did not depend on each other:

'Are those [people] better than Muslims? Are Muslims lacking [sincere] men to this degree? Supposing that they are equal to Muslims [...], is it then allowed to give our money to non-Muslims? Is it not better to sustain our *mujâhid* men and increase their energy and pleasure? You know how the Jews,

¹³²⁾ Letter from Kirâm to Ridâ, Berlin, no date (probably 1932). There is no date on the letter, but Kirâm had probably sent it to Ridâ in 1932 after his first visit to Yemen (see below). In the letter, it is also stated that Kirâm visited Ridâ in Cairo on his way back from Yemen. As a reaction to Kirâm's request, Ridâ later sent Ibn Sa'ûd a letter (dated 2 Sha'bân 1351/ 30 November 1932) in which he mentioned Kirâm's letter. Letter from Ridâ to King 'Abd al-'Azîz Ibn Sa'ûd, Cairo, 2 Sha'bân 1351/ 30 November 1932, included in Ridâ's collection of letter drafts.

¹³³⁾ Kirâm did not send the plan on time, without mentioning the precise reason. He only hinted to Ridâ that it was the conflict between Imam Yahyâ and King Ibn Sa'ûd concerning the borders. Ridâ, Shakîb Arslân and the mufti of Jerusalem Amîn al-Husaynî had played a big role in solving the problem through negotiations. See Ridâ's letters to Shakîb, Shakîb Arslân, *Ikhâ'*, op. cit., pp. 736-740.

¹³⁴⁾ Ibid.

¹³⁵⁾ Ibid.

Jesuits, English people, Freemasons, etc do not prefer that their money would go to others' pockets, don't we consider that?' Is it not *harâm* that there will be among us specialists who [...] defend their religion [...] and the rights of Muslims, but are deprived of doing the good for their lands, while other 'homeless' people are to be given the chance?'

In a letter to the Saudi King, Ridâ briefly summarized Kirâm's letter pointing to the Christian person mentioned above, recommending him to the King:

'[...] Our friend [...] doctor [Kirâm] was able to make a deal with some firms on prices that nobody, as he believes, would ever be able to get. If it were true, then the Muslim doctor would rather deserve that job than anyone else. He was never [proved] to be a traitor; and he had finished arms deals before. He also does not demand any commission from the firms; however, he leaves it to you to reward him as you like after finishing the job'.¹³⁶⁾

King Faisal of Iraq

Zekî Kirâm was an admirer of King Faisal of Iraq (1885-1933). For him, in his friendship with Turkey and Germany Faisal was the 'best diplomat'.¹³⁷⁾ He also believed that Faisal was the hope for achieving Arab unity and independence.¹³⁸⁾

In March 1928 Kirâm contacted the Iraqi Royal Court in Baghdad enquiring whether they would be interested in doing arms deals through him in Berlin.¹³⁹⁾ Later in 1932 he approached the Ministry of Defense once again with the same question supplemented by catalogues of arms. But they showed no interest, apologizing to Kirâm that the Iraqi army was in no need for any of the equipment he referred to.¹⁴⁰⁾

After King Faisal's sudden death in Bern, Kirâm organized a commemorative ceremony for the late king in Berlin (Tuesday 24 October 1933). When Kirâm approached the German Foreign Office for the arrangement of the ceremony, the first impression he made was a bit doubtful, but the Office made good acquaintance of Kirâm, and later he got the reputation of being a valuable source of information on Arab matters.¹⁴¹⁾ For the ceremony, 'Alî Jawdat al-Ayyûbî (1886-1969), the King's private secretary and later Iraqi Prime Minister,¹⁴²⁾ sent Kirâm from Baghdad the Iraqi flag with a big portrait of the late king to be hung in the hall, thanking him for taking this initiative.¹⁴³⁾ During his meeting with German officials in the Foreign Office (4 October 1933), Kirâm maintained that he intended to organize this ceremony in the name of the Muslim community in Berlin. He also tried to convince them of the idea by showing them his written correspondence with the private secretary of the Iraqi King Ghâzî (1912-1939), Faisal's son and successor.

¹³⁶⁾ Letter from Ridâ to King Abdel-Aziz, Cairo, 30 November 1932.

¹³⁷⁾ E. F., 'Der Prophet Mohammed und die Frau', in *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, Berlin, Nr. 414 (22 September 1933).

¹³⁸⁾ *Al-Jami' a al Arabiyya*, 7 Jumâdâ al-Âkhira 1352/ 27 September 1933.

¹³⁹⁾ Letter from the Royal Court, 14 April 1928.

¹⁴⁰⁾ Letters, Ministry of Defense, Baghdad, 6 and 27 June, 1932.

¹⁴¹⁾ The document is to be found in the archives of the Auswärtiges Amt in Berlin (R 78045: Abteilung III Orient, Aktenzeichen Irak Politik 11 Nr. 1: Staatsoberhäupter und deren familien, Band 1). I am greatly indebted to Dr. Gerhard Keiper of the Foreign Office Archive for sending me soft copies of Kirâm's surviving relevant documents in his archive (email, 4 May 2005).

¹⁴²⁾ About his life, see *Al-A'lâm*, vol. 4, 270.

¹⁴³⁾ Letter, 'Alî Jawdat al-Ayyûbî, 2 December, 1933.

The Inspector Privy Councillor of the Office (Geheimrat Prüfer) showed no objection to the idea. But he commented that using the event as anti-British demonstration should not be tolerated on any account. Kirâm proposed to invite the officials of the Office. But the Privy Councillor preferred not to take part in the event.¹⁴⁴⁾

The *Deutsch-Islamische Kulturvereinigung* supported the mourning ceremony. The committee behind the organization of the occasion included Zekî Kirâm, chairman, Prof. Dr. R. Fitzner, Baron K. zu Putlitz (1899-1975), later German ambassador in many countries, Mehmed Halid, D. N. Abdin-Bey, and J. A. Al-Ibrahim.¹⁴⁵⁾

In his report on the ceremony to the German legation in Baghdad (26 October 1933), the Privy Councillor was not positive on the result of the occasion. He pointed out that a member of the organizing committee was Indian and delivered a speech in the name of the '*Deutsch-Indische Verständigung*'. Kirâm's speech during the event was, for him, scanty and gave no appropriate tribute or merit to the deceased king:

'Die Feier ist kaum in einer den Anlaß entsprechenden Würde verlaufen und nur sehr schwach besucht gewesen. Offizielle Persönlichkeiten und Mitglieder des Diplomatischen Corps haben an ihr nicht teilgenommen. Auch die Ansprache Dr. Kirams, in der er nur wenig Leben und Verdienst des verstorbenen Königs, dagegen vorwiegend seine einigen Meriten erwähnt haben soll, ist offenbar dürftig gewesen.'¹⁴⁶⁾

However, the Privy Councillor maintained that he would welcome the idea of the organization of the event if the Iraqi government showed their satisfaction of the organized ceremony.¹⁴⁷⁾

Significant Armament Source for Yemen

According to the Yemeni military historian S. Nâjî, there were three main sources of the Yemeni armament during the rule of the Zaydî Imam Yahyâ: 1) the residues of the Turkish army left after their withdrawal in 1918, 2) Austrian rifles and armored equipment brought by the Imam's close Jewish friend and advisor Isrâ'îl al-Subayrî who traveled to Europe to finish the deals in return for thousands of golden pounds, 3) German Mauser rifles which were brought by Zekî Kirâm, who was much attracted by the huge profit made by al-Subayrî. The arms were known in Yemen not as Mauser but they were named after the importer Zekî Kirâm, and 4) 20.000 Italian rifles brought to Yemen after the Yemeni-Italian agreement in 1936.¹⁴⁸⁾

Although Imam Yahyâ was determined to keep his country free from foreign interference, Germany managed to make armament deals with the Yemeni government. His policy of 'isolationism' was due to his experience with the Ottomans, who had taken selfish interest in his country.¹⁴⁹⁾ In order to consolidate his campaign against the British in the Protectorates, the Saudi in the north, as well as against his rebellious tribes, nevertheless, Yahyâ resolved to obtain new

weapons from Europe with little difficulty.¹⁵⁰⁾ As Yemen was not economically a self-sufficient state, he was also in need of relations with European governments, and was not able to wholly apply his policy of isolationism. His foreign relations later included Italy, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States.¹⁵¹⁾

According to Macro, the German-Yemeni diplomatic relations during the early 20th century were not a great success.¹⁵²⁾ During World War I, however, Germany had a small mission at Lahij as a part of the force which controlled Aden in 1916.¹⁵³⁾ The Yemeni army also continued for many years to have an unusual mixture of Turkish, German, and Arab training methods, commands and organization. The German influences in the Yemeni Army were derived from the training, which many Turkish soldiers and officers received from German officers in the early years of the twentieth century.¹⁵⁴⁾ Foreign military experts, usually Syrians and Iraqis, also trained the professional army.¹⁵⁵⁾ The only success, which the Germans ever attained in the Yemen before the end of the Second World War, was in their gun-running activities in 1934 and 1937.¹⁵⁶⁾ The Germans were certainly much more active and enterprising than the French, who also succeeded in selling weapons to the Imam.¹⁵⁷⁾

In his travelogue, the English writer and land traveler to Yemen, L. Farago (1938) mentioned that 'when a German was in the Near East, he was either making gramophone records of native songs or selling arms to native warriors.'¹⁵⁸⁾ According to him, dealing in armament was 'a very lucrative business' and Imam Yahyâ for European agents was 'always a willing buyer, [who] pays fair prices and [...] pays in hard cash.'¹⁵⁹⁾ He met a certain Herman Krantz, a retired captain of the German army, who was an agent of a German armament firm in Sanaa in the deal of 50.000 rifles to the Imam in return for gold, which the Polish government had already rejected as faulty and old.¹⁶⁰⁾ Krantz managed to sell the faulty rifles to the Imam, who knew that the rifles were not up to standard. But the rifles would 'be resold by the Imam's agents at exorbitant prices.'¹⁶¹⁾ Another person, with the name of Heinrich Hansen, and another German from a Hamburg armaments firm also carried through another deal with the Imam in 1934.¹⁶²⁾

¹⁵⁰⁾ Imam Yahyâ was not willing to allow Europeans to train his troops; therefore he had dispatched Yemeni soldiers to Iraq, the first Arab state to recognize him as King of Yemen (1931), to receive training in the use of modern equipment and military technology in Baghdad, *ibid.*

¹⁵¹⁾ For more details, see Wenner, *op. cit.*, part III, pp. 141-171.

¹⁵²⁾ Macro, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-72 The German-Yemeni relations started as early as 1901 when Sultan Abdulhamid had allowed them to establish a coaling station. The station did not flourish, and was soon abandoned. In March 1913 the German government tried to arrange with Turkey for the establishment of a coaling station at Mocha. The missions to Imam Yahyâ in 1926 under Weiss-Sonnenberg, German minister in Addis Ababa, and another delegation to Sanaa in 1930, which lasted six weeks, were of little account. The second failed because the Germans, like the French, would not recognize the Imam's sovereignty over the Aden protectorate.

¹⁵³⁾ Wenner, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

¹⁵⁴⁾ *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

¹⁵⁵⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁵⁶⁾ Macro, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

¹⁵⁷⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

¹⁵⁸⁾ Ladislas Farago, *Arabian Antic*, New York: Sheridan House, 1938, p. 167. See in particular his chapter on the subject: 'Gold for Guns', pp. 165-175.

¹⁵⁹⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

¹⁶⁰⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

¹⁶¹⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

¹⁶²⁾ Macro, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-115.

¹⁴⁴⁾ The Foreign Office Archive, *op. cit.*

¹⁴⁵⁾ A notebook containing the signatures of attendants was found among Kirâm's papers.

¹⁴⁶⁾ The Foreign Office Archive, *op. cit.*

¹⁴⁷⁾ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸⁾ Nâjî, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-128.

¹⁴⁹⁾ Wenner, *op. cit.*, p. 141; cf. p. 83.

Belgian armament firms had also contributed to gun-running into the Yemen. A certain Laurent Dupui (later Ibrâhîm) was representing the Fabrique Nationale d'Armes de Guerre of Herstal, Liège (established 1888). He spent much time in Sanaa between the two world wars, trading in arms and ammunition.¹⁶³ The firm of Edgard Grimard (d. 1958) in Liège also delivered armaments to Yemen.

Kirâm's contact with the Yemeni administration started as early as 1929. At the beginning of his relation with the Imam of Yemen, he was requested to send samples of arms with lists of prices to Yemen before the start of any negotiation with the German firms. He besides proposed to deliver medical equipment to satisfy Yemen's needs.¹⁶⁴ Upon the Imam's invitation, Zekî Kirâm traveled to Sanaa for the first time in 1930 in order to make preparations for the deal of importing arms from Germany. Kirâm's trip was followed by two other visits in 1934 and 1936-1937. The Imam might have entrusted Kirâm for these armament negotiations with the Yemeni government due to his former military experience as an officer in the Turkish Army. The Yemeni authorities warmly received Kirâm. During his visit in 1936, the Yemeni monthly paper *Al-Îmân*, the mouthpiece of Imam Yahyâ, extolled Kirâm for 'his religious zealotness and support of Islamic civilization.'¹⁶⁵ According to this paper, Kirâm was also collecting desert plants from the Yemeni valleys, which he dried for his research after his return to Germany.¹⁶⁶ The newspaper, however, did not give any mention to his role in the armament deals between Yemen and Germany, which was the main reason behind his visit to Sanaa. The famous Italian orientalist Laura Veccia Vaglieri (1893-1989) published an Italian translation of *Al-Îmân*'s article about Kirâm's visit to Yemen in *Oriente Moderno*.¹⁶⁷

Kirâm was also a mediator between the Imam and the Belgian firm of Grimard. Shakîb Arslân was also a friend of its owner. Arslân was the one who suggested to the Imam to make agreements with Germany and other big countries in order that they would guarantee Yemen protection. Regarding the deals with Grimard, Arslân also recommended Kirâm to Imam Yahyâ as 'a good Muslim, sincere in his work and expert in the [military] field',¹⁶⁸ and an appropriate agent, who could efficiently provide Grimard with any information, which he is lacking on Yemen.¹⁶⁹

Kirâm was further introduced in the Berlin press as 'military advisor of the Imam of Sanaa and talisman of the King of Yemen in Berlin'.¹⁷⁰ The Imam also trusted Kirâm in his

armament dealings because of the latter's 'religious Islamic zeal.'¹⁷¹ His relation with Imam Yahyâ was intimate. The Imam showed appreciation for Kirâm's letters in which he would stress the significance of unity among *Ahl al-Tawhîd* (People of Monotheism), and the efforts he exerted in the cause of 'defending Islam [...] against the attacks of the enemies whose prime objective is atheism, and nature is inclination to corruption.'¹⁷² Kirâm also used to inform the Imam about his activities in Berlin. The Imam was pleased to read Kirâm's articles in the newspapers and know about 'his service for the cause of Islam and Muslims'. Kirâm alleged that some German had converted to Islam as a result of the lectures he used to give in Berlin.¹⁷³

The Imam also maintained to Kirâm that he was in need of 'his advice and wise views' as 'a zealous friend', and was also grateful to Kirâm for his loyalty and service of his 'Islamic Army'. He assured him that his 'confidence in him [Kirâm] would never change'.¹⁷⁴ After the death of Yahyâ's grandson in a car accident (1931), Kirâm sent his condolences to the Imam.¹⁷⁵ Kirâm was moreover confidentially entrusted by Sayf al-Islâm 'Alî ibn Yahyâ (d. 1962) to take care of some of his affairs in Europe.¹⁷⁶

The Imam's Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Qâdî 'Abdullâh al-'Amrî (d. 1948) and his Foreign Minister (of Turkish origin) Qâdî Muhammad Râghib Rafîq Bey (d. 1959-1960) were in charge of giving direct instructions and needed information to Kirâm concerning the deals.¹⁷⁷ His advisor 'Abdullâh ibn al-Wazîr (1885-1948)¹⁷⁸ was appointed to arrange the financial relations of the armament deals with Kirâm. Sayf al-Islâm was also an active partner in the negotiations. Ahmad Tâhir was the one in charge of finishing the payments to the Germans in Aden.¹⁷⁹

in Berlin: ein Gespräch mit Zeki H. Kirâm Bey, ehemaligen Kommandeur der Beduinen Al-Arich, Kommissar der Katia-Stämme, militärische Berater des Imam Yahyâ', *Raffeler Neuste Nachrichten*, Nr. 108 (Friday 11 May 1934).

¹⁷¹ Letters from Yahyâ to Kirâm, 20 Jumâdâ al-Âkhira 1349 and 13 Dhû al-Qa'da 1349.

¹⁷² Letter from Yahyâ to Kirâm, 7 Rabî' al-Thâni 1351/ 10 August 1932.

¹⁷³ Letters from Yahyâ to Kirâm, 17 Ramadan 1349 and 8 Ramadan 1351 (1929 & 1932).

¹⁷⁴ Letters from Imam Yahyâ to Kirâm either by his own handwriting or his scribe's, 16 [...], 1348, 26 Dhu al-Qa'da, 1349; 13 Jumâdâ al-Akhira 1352 and 2 Jumâdâ al-Âkhira 1353; in other letter (dated 21 Shawwâl 1352 and 16 Shawwâl, 1353).

¹⁷⁵ Letter from Imam Yahyâ to Kirâm, 4 Dhû al-Hijja 1352. Sayf al-Islâm 'Alî Ibn Yahyâ sent another letter to Kirâm (from Sanaa dated Dhû al-Hijja 1352) to thank him for his condolences and to tell him about the accident that Imam Yahyâ's grandson went out for recreation in his father's Ford automobile accompanied by his younger brother, their teacher and some soldiers. The car crashed with a big rock, and Yahyâ Ibn Ahmad and one of the soldiers were killed.

¹⁷⁶ Letter, 'Alî Sayf al-Islâm, Sanaa, Dhû al-Qa'da, 1355 / January 1937.

¹⁷⁷ Letter from Sayf al-Islâm to Kirâm, 16 [...], 1348 / 1929; His correspondences with Râghib were mostly in Ottoman.

¹⁷⁸ He was the Yemeni ambassador in Saudi Arabia before the war with Yemen. He played a major role in the treaty of al-Tâ'if with 'Abd al-'Azîz Ibn Sa'ûd (1934). He returned to Yemen to be appointed as the emir of al-Hudayda for some years. He was one of the richest people in Yemen. During his office, his influence had been extended among scholars, leaders of the army and judges. Ibn al-Wazîr sealed a coup during the Imam's illness, and with the help of a group of conspirators had managed to assassinate Imam Yahyâ. He managed to take over power. Ibn al-Wazîr was executed (April 9, 1948), and crucified in one of the public squares in Hajja for three days. For more about him, see, *Al-'Alâm*, vol. 4, pp. 70-71; Manfred W. Wenner, *Modern Yemen 1918-1966*, The Johns Hopkins Press: Baltimore, 1967, pp. 82-108; Macro, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-84.

¹⁷⁹ Wenner, *op. cit.*, p. 58n; Letters from Ibn Al-Wazîr to Kirâm, Yemen, 9 and 12 Safar 1355.

¹⁶³ Macro, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-116.

¹⁶⁴ Letters from the Mutawakkiliyya government, 17 Jumâdâ al-Âkhira 1348 / 20 November 1929.

¹⁶⁵ 'Zâ'ir Karîm', *Al-Îmân*, Muharram 1355/1936, p. 2.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ *Oriente Moderno*, vol XVI (1936), p. 346. Veccia Vaglieri was close to Arslân's circle. She attended the European Muslim Congress in Geneva (September 1935), and delivered an address in Arabic. She also wrote reports on each day's proceedings and passed them to the Italian consul general in Geneva. See Kramer, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-52.

¹⁶⁸ A draft of Arslân's letter to Imam Yahyâ, Lausanne, 10 Shawwâl 1349/ February 1931.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ 'Talisman des Jemen-Königs in Berlin: Unterredung der Nachtausgabe mit einem Berater des Imam von Sanaa, Berge schüssen die Hauptstadt — Der Imam hat 30 Frauen und 13 Söhne — Ibn Su'ûds schwerster Kampfabschnitt', *Berliner illustrierte Nachtausgabe*, 8 May 1934; cf. 'Beim „Blücher von Arabien“: Ein Gespräch mit Zeki H. Kirâm Bey, dem militärischen Berater des Imam Yahyâ', *Pfälzische Rundschau*, Monday-Tuesday, 14-15 May 1934, 'Beim „Blücher von Arabien“ Arabischer Generalstabschef

Before his first visit to Yemen (15 September 1930), Kirâm concluded an armament contract with the Mutawakkiliyya Yemeni government. The contract was signed by both Imam Yahyâ and his Qadî Al-'Amrî on behalf of the Mutawakkiliyya government.¹⁸⁰ The contract was signed in two copies on 20 Safar 1349 (July 1930). The agreement obliged Zekî Kirâm to import 10,000 German Mauser long rifles and 1000 short carbines to the Yemeni government. The specifications of the rifles must be caliber 7.92, model 1898, most of which were modified in 1916 or 1917. The price of each rifle was to be 115 (Austrian) silver riyals current in Yemen.¹⁸¹ During his presence in Yemen one item in the contract was later modified due to their disagreement around the way of payment to restricting the contract to delivering 5000 long rifles and 500 short carbines only.¹⁸²

In 1932 Sayf al-Islâm demanded Kirâm to send catalogues of rifles, armored vehicles, military wireless sets and whatever medicament he believed that Yemen would need.¹⁸³ Through Shakîb Arslân the Imam had sent Kirâm a letter (August 1935) to deliver another 1000 Mauser rifles assuring him that he would remain his 'trustworthy' arms agent in Germany.¹⁸⁴ In 1936 Kirâm became representative of the German armament firms Rheinmetall and Mauser in Yemen and Iraq. He was requested to deliver 10,000 Mauser rifles and 10 million cartridges.¹⁸⁵ Yahyâ's son 'Alî mediated between Kirâm and his father's government to get each rifle with a thousand cartridges in return for three golden pounds.¹⁸⁶ Ibn al-Wazîr requested Ahmad ibn Tâhir, the person in charge of financial matters, to deliver 11,000 pounds and 90,000 riyals to Kirâm who as their agent would finish the transaction with the German firm directly.¹⁸⁷ After finishing his job, he took the permission of the Imam to leave Yemen in May 1937.¹⁸⁸

Kirâm briefed the Privy Councillor (Geheimrat Prüfer) of the German Foreign Office in Berlin on his experience in

¹⁸⁰ The contract between the Yemeni government and Zeki Kirâm was signed on 20 Safar 1349 / 17 July 1930.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. Kirâm was committed to consign all weapons to the port of al-Hudayda as one installment or more than one, and the Mutawakkiliyya government was committed to pay the price of each installment immediately on delivery to Kirâm or anyone authorized by him. The government, however, had the right to resend the items that do not meet the aforementioned conditions. The Yemeni government is committed to pay immediately after the arrival of all requested arms in al-Hudayda and their delivery according to the conditions of the contract free from any defect or delay. The payment could be with the golden Yemeni riyals according to the exchange rate on the day of payment. The government was obliged to unload 75 boxes of the rifles on the condition that there was not any considerable reason for hindrance. But if there were any delay due to negligence without any considerable reason, the government should pay compensation to Kirâm for the caused damage or the delay that might happen to the ship, except when in case the delay was for four or five hours only. The contract was outstanding for one year (beginning on 15 September 1930/23 Rabî' al-Thânî 1349). It could be extended for another year after the delivery of the half of the rifles and other related items in case with the proviso of its delivery in six months.

¹⁸² Letters, Al-'Amrî to Kirâm, 1 Safar 1349; 19 Safar 1349.

¹⁸³ Sayf al-Islâm to Kirâm, Sanaa, 17 Shawwâl 1353/21 January 1932.

¹⁸⁴ Letter from the Mutawakkiliyya government to Kirâm, 19 Jumâdâ al-Ûlâ 1354/19 August 1935.

¹⁸⁵ Letter from 'Abdullâh al-'Amrî to Kirâm, 7 Al-Muharram, 1353/30 March 1936 Ibn Tâhir had some problems due to the currency exchange in this time, and Ibn al-Wazîr had sent him another money later.

¹⁸⁶ Letter from 'Alî to Kirâm, Sanaa 25 Rabî' al-Awwal, 1353/8 July 1934.

¹⁸⁷ 'Abdullâh ibn al-Wazîr to Kirâm, 9 Safar 1355/11 May 1936.

¹⁸⁸ The permission was found among Kirâm's papers written by Imam Yahyâ himself 21 Safar 1356/3 May 1937.

Yemen during the second visit (1936).¹⁸⁹ He was planning to form a [solid] party within the Yemeni government by establishing strong relations with Qadî Râghib, Al-'Amrî, Crown Prince Ahmad and Sayf al-Islâm 'Alî. He asked the Privy Councillor not to underestimate the position of those figures in Yemeni politics. With his job Kirâm maintained that he intended to serve Germany '[his] land of training (*Ausbildungsland*) and [his] second homeland (*Zweite Heimat*).'¹⁹⁰ In his letter, he mentioned the deteriorating atmosphere in Yemen that everything was in chaos and in Yemen there was 'keine Kenntnisse, keine Ordnung, keine Festhaltung, [und] keine klare Richtung'. The atmosphere, according to him, would give the chance to many people to make deals with the government with no regard to their capacity or experience.

In the letter, he referred to a certain Thomas, who was present in Yemen at the same time, and promised the Imam's son (who?) lots of money in return for Mauser rifles. Thomas was trying to compete with Kirâm in the Mauser deals.¹⁹¹ In his memoirs, Kirâm recorded that Thomas met the Imam and his Prime Minister (on April 7, 1936) for negotiations. They paid his interpreter 1,500 riyals.¹⁹² Thomas was supposed to deliver 2,000 old Mauser rifles with two million cartridges.¹⁹³ Kirâm did not trust this Thomas, and attempted to convince the Privy Councillor to collect more information about him from the Mauser firm itself.¹⁹⁴ Thomas was an agent of an armament firm near Hamburg, who closed a deal with the Imam, and was given a cheque on an English bank. He left Yemen with the promise to deliver immediately on his return to Germany. After months, the Imam grew impatient and sent a letter to his firm. The letter caused an inquiry in Germany, and it was the century's biggest fraud.¹⁹⁵ Thomas was a member of an underground Communist organization in Germany, and succeeded in procuring export permits to Yemen after which he delivered the arms to the Spanish loyalists instead. After having been uncovered, Thomas escaped to Czechoslovakia. A few of his co-conspirators were arrested in Southern Germany and sentenced to death. The Imam, therefore, used to pay after the delivery of the arms after this notorious case.¹⁹⁶

He also pointed to the German machine firm Wirtz, which was making artesian wells in Yemen. Another contemporary of Kirâm was a certain Littmann. Kirâm was not sure about his nationality whether he was French or German. Upon writing his letter, Kirâm received a recent piece of news that Littmann was also trying to finish a deal with the Yemeni government with another German firm. At the end of his letter, he advised the Privy Councillor to warn German firms not to deliver any goods to Yemen without payment, and to make no deal on credit, since the situation, for him, was 'unimaginable' (*die Lage unbeschreiblich*).¹⁹⁷

¹⁸⁹ Kirâm to the foreign Office, 14 April 1936; The document is to be found in the archives of Auswärtiges Amt in Berlin (R. 78654: Abteilung III Orient, Aktenzeichen Yemen Politik 13: Militärangelegenheiten).

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Kirâm to the Foreign Office, *op. cit.*

¹⁹² Diaries, 7 April, 1936.

¹⁹³ Sayf al-Islâm, no date.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Farago, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 172-173.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

Kirâm's Arabic memoirs of his journeys in Yemen give a totally different picture from his words of appreciation of the Imam as 'protector of Islam'. He was very disappointed with corruption in that land.¹⁹⁸) To him, corruption was the cause of deterioration in this land. Imam Yahyâ himself, according to him, knew perfectly well about bribery acquired by his officials or the staff members of his palace, but he never took any position nor condemned it. More surprisingly to him, the Imam would allow his close administrators to use it as a method in facilitating the governmental matters, such as buying weapons or public projects. The same held true for the private guards of the Imam, who would not allow the people to enter his court without payment. Kirâm argued that the Imam accredited bribery and advised those in need to 'look for ways the same as others'.¹⁹⁹) He ironically described the trivial value of bribery, which was presented as *nadhr* (or vow) to the Imam. The Imam considered himself as holy or in the position of [the Prophet] Muhammad. The bribery sometimes did not exceed a couple of millimes. Also eggs were vowed. Many people, according to him, came to the palace with 5 or 10 eggs, a hen or a rooster, or sheep.²⁰⁰)

In his account of the corruption in Yemen, Kirâm mentioned that a certain Jew (without giving names), whom the Prime Minister entrusted in all affairs, had once gifted the Imam a European gilded sword. Kirâm here probably referred to Al-Subayrî, Yahyâ's Jewish friend, whom he entrusted all his purchase of European arms during the interwar period.²⁰¹) He was upset that 'the sword snatched the Imam's heart, and he had immediately agreed on the demands of this man with no regard of being beneficial or not. Kirâm bemoaned that due to its beautiful inscriptions he carried the 'European sword' leaving aside his 'Arab one'. But after a while the gilded colour had vanished and the colour of the silver tin appeared'.²⁰²) He moreover named the Imam 'protector of the Jews'. He alleged that Al-Subayrî, the Imam's close Jewish friend and advisor, collected thousands of riyals in his own account by profiting from the Yemeni resources. However, he would only pay 4 riyals a year as *jizya*. The *jizya* went only to the Imam's private account, and not to the service of his subjects.²⁰³)

According to Kirâm, the Imam's reply to complaints about bribery was all the time the same. He was of the view that it was not his fault, but it was the problem of the 'idiot' foreigners making deals in Yemen, who used to give money to Yemeni civil servants. Such answers were the reason why some of his sons, ministers, officials and even servants received pensions or salaries from Italy and England, thinking that they had 'deceived the ill-minded *ifrinj*, who dispersed their abundant money among the Yemeni officials'.²⁰⁴) For this reason, all those in charge of royal or military affairs were ready to offer foreigners anything in return of money.

Italian technicians, engineers, and other professionals, particularly doctors, were found in large numbers in the Yemeni capital and other cities. They were used by Italy as a means for extending its influence and to establish sympathy for fascist

ideas inside Yemen. The Italian medical men started their work in the *Missione Sanitaria Italiana* at Sanaa, established by Cesare Ansaldi, the first doctor sent to Sanaa in 1929, and later the personal physician of Imam Yahyâ. Italian doctors had great influence on army officers; however, they were conscientious workers.²⁰⁵) Kirâm related a story of an officer who became very shocked after he had witnessed a group of officials receiving money from the Italians. While supervising a group of Yemeni military soldiers who were constructing the garden of an Italian physician, the officer saw some governmental officials entering the house, and getting out with purses of money. The soldier returned to the Prime Minister (probably Al-'Amrî) to tell him the story. The prime minister rebuked the officer saying: 'It is none of your business; the Italians are donkeys and crazy by thinking that they would make the people love them by giving money'.²⁰⁶)

Spain and Spanish Morocco

During Francisco Franco's regime, Kirâm paid three visits to Spain and Spanish Morocco (1940, 1941, and 1944). Kirâm, who wrote *Der Islam im Urteil der Spanier*, paid a short visit to Spain for the first time in December 1940. Kirâm was officially received by Spain's then foreign minister Ramón Serrano Súñer (1901-2003) in Madrid. He was positive about his discussions with the minister around the role of Islamic civilization in Spain.²⁰⁷) *Arriba*, the Spanish Madrid-based journal, referred very briefly to his visit and meeting with Serrano Súñer.²⁰⁸) The invitation was extended to him by Consul D. Enrique de Ráfols, director general of Press and Propaganda at Spain's Ministry of Provincial Government and Foreign Affairs, who despite the war helped him by contacting the Spanish consulate in Berlin to get the required papers.

During the Second World War, an Arab circle under the leadership of Hâjj Amîn al-Husaynî revived in the *Islamische Zentralinstitut* (established 1927) at the prompting of the German Foreign Office (1941) for the purpose of propaganda.²⁰⁹) In his memoranda to Karl Kapp (1889-1947), the General Council of the Information Department of the Office, Amîn al-Husaynî stressed the importance of launching a special German propaganda action in North Africa against the intensity of the Anglo-American propaganda.²¹⁰) He informed

¹⁹⁸) Kirâm's memoirs, 'al-Rishwa', no date.

¹⁹⁹) Arabic memoirs, no date.

²⁰⁰) Ibid.

²⁰¹) Wenner, *op. cit.*, p. 37n. See also Farago, *op. cit.*, p. 215; Hans Helfritz, *Land Without Shade*, New York: National Travel Club, 1936, pp. 215-223.

²⁰²) Ibid.

²⁰³) Ibid.

²⁰⁴) Kirâm's Memoirs, 'Rishwa', Ibid.

²⁰⁵) Wenner, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-155. Ansaldi was later replaced by Dr. Emilio Dubbiosi, who was followed by Dr. Passera. Other members of the medical staff were: Dr. Luigi Merucci, D. Carlo Toffolon, Dr. Deferrri, Dr. T. Samelli, Dr. Vittorio Rossi etc. During his visits, Kirâm made many photos of the Italian hospital and the sites of artesian wells. Some of his photos were published in German newspapers.

Italy's pre-eminence among European powers was marked by a visit (1927) by Sayf al-Islâm Muhammad, Yahyâ's most popular son (d. March 1934 drowned in the Red Sea), and other Yemeni officials in order to meet Benito Mussolini. As a result of the visit, Yemen got economic and military aid including aircraft.

²⁰⁶) Kirâm's memoirs, *op. cit.*
²⁰⁷) 'Al-Duktûr Zakî Hishmat Kirâm: Dayf al-Hukûma al-Isbâniyya (Dr. Zeki Hishmat Kirâm: the Guest of Spanish Government), in *Al-Wahda al-Maghribiyya*, 5 Dhû al-Hijja 1359/ 3 January 1941.

²⁰⁸) 'Serrano Súñer celebra una detenida entrevista con el nuncio de Su Santidad', in *Arriba*, 15 December 1940.

²⁰⁹) Kramer, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

²¹⁰) November 1942. See Gerhard Höpp (ed.), *Mufti-Papiere: Briefe, Memoranden, Reden und Aufrufe Amin al-Husainis aus dem Exil (1940-1945)*, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2001, pp. 93-102. Cf. His memoranda to Hans-Georg von Mackensen (1883-1947), the German Ambassador in Rome, concerning the same subject, pp. 107-112.

Kapp about the situation in Morocco under the Spanish protectorate. The objective of Husaynî's campaign was to combat the increase of English propaganda and the sympathy of some of the Spanish officials with England and the USA. He also suggested to Kapp that the German propaganda could be put into practice via the two big nationalist parties: *Hizb al-Islâh al-Watanî* (National Reform Party) founded by Abdel-Khâlik al-Turays (Torrès, 1910-1970),²¹¹ and *Hizb al-Wahda al-Maghribiyya* (1937, Moroccan Unity Party) of Muhammad Makkî al-Nâsiri (Naciri, b. 1904).²¹² Al-Husaynî added that the mouthpieces of these parties were at the disposal of the Office in commencing upon this propaganda campaign.²¹³

Due to Kirâm's good relation with prominent figures in the Arab world and Turkey, the Spanish authorities kept in touch with him for improving their economic and commercial relations. He was actively involved as commissioner in the Turkish-Spanish commercial relations. In one of his letters, Ráfols pointed out to Kirâm — as representative of some German firms in the East —²¹⁴ that he made a proposal to the president of the Spanish-Oriental Chamber of Commerce, Don José Luis Pando Baura, to appoint Kirâm as the representative of the Chamber in Berlin. Ráfols was convinced that he was able to play a good role in enhancing the Spanish commercial relations especially with Turkey and other countries in the Near East, such as Syria, Iraq and Persia.²¹⁵ Besides, Ráfols requested Kirâm if it were possible to recruit Arab students in the Near East to study at the institute of Ramiro De Maeztu in Madrid, where the son of the Moroccan ruler in Tetuan among other Moroccan highly-related students was studying.²¹⁶

As agent to the German firm Wolf, Kirâm was moreover asked to deliver medical devices to Spain. Also he made various other deliveries, such as typewriting machines and medicines.²¹⁷ In the same letter, Ráfols mentioned Amîn al-Husaynî, requesting Kirâm to send him the latter's address.²¹⁸ Later in October 1942 Ráfols requested Kirâm to recommend him to the president of the Council of Iraq to act as the 'honorary representative' of Iraq in Spain if there were no other candidates to the post. This issue of appointing Ráfols in this post was raised earlier during his meeting with King Faisal I in August 1933 one month before the latter's sudden death in Bern, and was much endorsed by Shakîb Arslân. Since this time, however, the issue was never discussed again.²¹⁹

²¹¹ The founder of *Hizb al-Islâh al-Watanî* (June 1936).

²¹² Al-Nâsirî was a scion of a noted Rabâti family. He studied in Cairo, and returned to Morocco (1927), was expelled in 1930 after presenting an indictment sheet against France's policy. More about him, see P. Shinar, 'Salafiyya: in North Africa', in *EI2*, WebCD edition, Brill Academic Publishers 2003.

²¹³ Höpp, *Mufti-Papiere*, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102.

²¹⁴ In his archive, I have found a record of his own voice of a commercial in Arabic for the firm Siemens presented to Radio Berlin. The commercial was meant to convince Arab audiences to purchase German products. He referred to the significance of combining 'Western materialism with Eastern spiritualism'.

²¹⁵ Letter, de Ráfols, to Kirâm, Ministerio de Gobernación, Madrid, 10 November 1941; my gratitude is due to Prof. Dr. P. S. van Koningsveld of the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions (LISOR) for helping me understand the Spanish documents.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ *Ibid.* Kirâm's draft of a letter sent to Ráfols, Berlin, September 1942.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.* He extended his greetings to al-Husaynî in the name of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the *Asociación Hispano-Islamica*.

²¹⁹ Letter, de Ráfols, to Kirâm, Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Madrid, 10 October 1942.

Kirâm was appointed as the representative of Iraq in Berlin (probably 1942). Ráfols hurried to congratulate Kirâm on his new post, stressing that no one would have been able to carry out this function as he would. He also confirmed that in cooperating with the Spanish authorities, Kirâm, due his knowledge of the Mediterranean region, would be capable of strengthening the mutual interests between both the Arab and Spanish peoples.²²⁰

After each visit to Madrid, Kirâm travelled to Northern Morocco. In Tetuan he was received by prominent Moroccan political *salafî* groupings, who were inspired by *Al-Manâr* and much influenced by the political ideas of Shakîb Arslân.²²¹ Kirâm's most well-known contact persons in Morocco were Muhammad Hasan al-Wazzânî (Ouezzani, 1908-1970),²²² al-Nâsirî (Naciri), Al-Turays (Torrès), and Muhammad Daoud,²²³ the same group mentioned above with Amîn al-Husaynî. Kirâm's relation with Al-Nâsirî probably went back to the time of the pan-Islamic Congress of Jerusalem (under the presidency of Rashîd Ridâ, December 1931), during which the latter led a campaign against the Berber Dahir and presented an indictment sheet against France's Berber policy.²²⁴ Through the articles he used to publish from Berlin, Kirâm became known to the readers of Tetuani periodicals edited by these persons, especially 1) *Al-Wahda al-Maghribiyya* of al-Nâsirî 2) *Al-Hurriyya* of al-Turays and Daoud and 3) *Barid-Es-Sabah* of Al-Wazzânî.

The prime reason for Kirâm's visit was to attempt to publish his works through the channel of this Moroccan group, especially his book *El Islam en la opinión de los pensadores españoles de hoy*. He also made another attempt to publish his other book on *Islam im Urteil der Deutschen* or *Al-Islâm fî Nazar al-Âlmân*. In the introduction to the typescript of the last book we read that Al-Makkî al-Nâsirî, who was also the director of the Mulay Mahdi Institute, recommended the book to be read by every Muslim. He described Kirâm as 'an energetic and true Muslim, a talented and zealous *dâ'î*, and a genius intellectual, [... who] devotes all his useful efforts and precious time from his residence in Berlin to do research in the corners of treasures on all statements and confessions written by German intellectuals on Islam.'²²⁵ Al-Turays, who met

²²⁰ Letter, de Ráfols, to Kirâm, Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Madrid, 20 November 1942.

²²¹ 'Al-Duktûr Zekî Hishmat Kirâm yazûr al-Maghrib', in *Al-Wahda al-Wataniyya*, 158 (15 Shawwâl 1359/15 November 1940). About Arslân's influence on North African nationalist movements, see John P. Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation: the origins and Rise of Moroccan Nationalism, 1912-1944*, Harvard University Press, 1967; Cleveland, *op. cit.*, 90-114.

²²² Al-Wazzânî acted as a secretary to Shakîb Arslân for some time. Both were also encouraged in their activities by the sympathy of some French socialists, notably Robert-Jean Longuet who had started the periodical *Maghreb* in Paris in 1932. Al-Wazzânî was a fellow-member of the *Comité d'action marocaine* (1937). The *Comité* was banned in March 1937 and reconstituted the following month as the *Parti national pour la réalisation du plan de réformes*, which was also banned the following October. In April 1937, al-Wazzânî, organized another political group under the name of *Action nationale marocaine*, which was likewise banned in October 1937. J.A.M. Caldwell, 'Hizb', in *EI2*, WebCD edition, Brill Academic Publishers 2003.

²²³ He was tutored by Tetuani 'Ulamâ' (1912-1920). The author of *Târîkh Tetuan*, Tetuan, 8 volumes, 1959-1979, more about his life, see his memoirs edited by his daughter, Hasnâ Daoud, 'Alâ Ra's al-'Arba'in, Tetuan, 2001. During my visit to Tetuan (January 2006), I have visited his library where I found similar letters, photos and typescripts of Kirâm's works.

²²⁴ Caldwell, *op. cit.*

²²⁵ Al-Nâsirî wrote his forword during Kirâm's visit to Morocco. The original manuscript was written in Tetuan, and dated: 13 Shawwâl 1359/13 November 1940.

Kirâm for the first time in 1933 during his visit to Berlin, considered the book as 'strong evidence of the good reception of Islam by European free thinkers.'²²⁶ In his foreword, Muhammad Daoud, the director of Moroccan Education, wished that Muslim scholars would follow the steps of such fair-minded thinkers in delving into the 'treasures' of their religion to promote their national dignity, and benefit humanity.²²⁷

Just like Shakîb Arslân, Kirâm believed in exploiting the historical, racial and cultural relations between Morocco and Spain in order to create an atmosphere for the former's claim for independence. This idea went back to the *Association Hispano-Musulmane (al-Jam'iyya al-Isbâniyya al-Islâmiyya)*, established in Madrid (October 1932). Arslân was instrumental in its inception and became one of the two vice-presidents, and Rashîd Ridâ was also apparently involved.²²⁸ In his introduction to his above-mentioned book on Islam and Spain Kirâm repeated the same ideas of these racial and cultural origins and how much they would enhance the political and social interests of the Muslim and Spanish peoples. He also praised Franco's initiative of establishing El Instituto General Franco Para la Investigación Hispano-Arabe and the role it might achieve in bringing Muslims and Christians together.

Kirâm strongly believed in the 'political' and 'religious' role of his work in boosting the relation between Spain and the Muslim world. In his work on the Spanish views on Islam, he briefly traced the historical beginnings of Muslims in Spain ending with the presence of Spain in Morocco. He quoted at length the letter sent by Franco to the Muslim General Congress held by the Muslim Young Men Association (founded in 1927-1928)²²⁹ in Cairo in August 1938. In the letter, Franco stressed that Spain's acceptance of the protectorate on Northern Morocco was to support the Moroccans. He promised the Congress that the 'gates' of Northern Morocco under their authority were open to the whole Muslim world, and Muslim leaders could visit the region to make sure that the Spanish authorities were keen on protecting their Moroccan people.²³⁰

Enrique de Ráfols extended an invitation to Kirâm for the second time to attend the exposition of Morocco and Colony, which was supposed to be held in August 1942.²³¹ It is not clear whether the exposition was held according to the proper schedule or not. However, Kirâm visited Madrid earlier on 14 May 1942 after having visited Tetuan (11 February 1942) for the same purpose of having a permission from the Spanish authorities to publish his work in Morocco. They requested him many times to make corrections of the language of his book.²³²

The book was proposed for publication at the *Imprenta El-Mahdia* in Tetuan.²³³ However, he failed to get any permit as he wished. His correspondence with the Department

²²⁶ He also wrote it during Kirâm's visit. The original typescript (Tetuan) was dated, 14 Shawwâl 1359/14 November 1940.

²²⁷ His typescript was written during Kirâm's second visit to Morocco (Rabî' al-Thâni 1360/ May 1942).

²²⁸ Halstead, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

²²⁹ About the Association, see, H. A. R. Gibb, *Wither Islam, A Survey of Modern Movements in the Moslem World*, Victor Gollancz LTD: London, 1932, pp. 102-170.

²³⁰ Kirâm's typescript of the book, p. 137-38.

²³¹ Letter, de Ráfols, to Kirâm, Ministerio de Gobernación, Madrid, 10 November 1941.

²³² Letter, de Ráfols, to Kirâm, Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Madrid, August 18, 1942.

²³³ Note, 2 July 1943.

of the Near East does not indicate the precise reason. But I assume that the work was not to fulfill any proper great political interest of Spain concerning their propaganda in Morocco. However, the Spanish officials were keen on keeping their friendly relation with him by postponing his request without giving him their definitive rejection because of the benefit they would probably gain from his political and economic connection with leaders in the Near East.

Kirâm's contributions to Moroccan journals were mostly far from politics. He only focused his articles on scientific and sometimes religious issues in the West. In Nâsirî's paper *Al-Wahda al-Maghribiyya*, the mouthpiece of Islamic nationalism, he published articles on scientific developments in Europe. Citing the Qur'anic verse "They ask thee concerning the Spirit (of inspiration). Say: 'the spirit (cometh) by the command of my Lord,'"²³⁴ on the front page of one of the issues, he argued that Western scientists would never reach a definitive conclusion about the definition or the contents of the *rûh* (soul).²³⁵ In a following issue he briefly analyzed the biological experiments on blood and immunization of the German physician Emil von Behring (1854-1917).²³⁶ In another article, he spoke about the invention of artificial cotton by German scientists as compensation for the lack of imported natural cotton due to the Second World War.²³⁷ Kirâm congratulated the editor of *al-Wahda al-Maghribiyya* on Francoist Spain's protectorate of Tangier (23 November 1940), and praised Franco's 'wise' policies in Morocco. He deemed it a 'historic moment that should be celebrated every year.'²³⁸ In another issue he introduced himself as president of the *Islamischer Weltkongress, Zweigstelle Berlin*, and extended his congratulations to Sultan Muhammad V (1909-1961) and the Moroccan people for their struggle for independence, and showed appreciation to Franco for his support of Morocco in its way for liberty.²³⁹

In Wazzânî's *Barid-Es-Sabah*, Kirâm was positive about the celebration of the Day of the Book in Morocco as an attempt to encourage the expansion of culture and literature. He attributed the success of such literary events to the efforts Spanish authorities took to promote Islamic culture in Morocco. Spain's attempts to make Morocco more cultivated were, to him, the act of a 'compassionate mother'.²⁴⁰ In an anecdote on the negative aspects of fashion and cosmetics, he also wrote that they have a stronger effect on women than that of 'oppressive tsars or unjust kings'.²⁴¹ A well-known

²³⁴ Sûrat al-Isrâ' (17): 85.

²³⁵ Zeki Kirâm, 'Âyât al-'Ilm Tufassir Âyât al-Qur'ân: Hal al-Dimâgh Markaz al-Rûh aw al-Rûh Mustaqilla bidhâtihâ (Scientific Signs clarify the Verses of the Qur'ân: Is the head the center of spirit or is it self-independent?'), in *Al-Wahda al-Maghribiyya*, 5/169 (10 Muharram 1360/ 7 February 1941).

²³⁶ Id., 'Quwwat al-Dam al-Shifâ'iyya (Healing Power of Blood), in *Al-Wahda al-Maghribiyya*, 1 Safar 1360/ 28 February 1941.

²³⁷ Id., 'Qutn Sinâ'i min Alyâf al-Shajar wa-l-Hashîsh (Artificial Cotton from Tree and Grass Fibers)', 27 Rabî' al-Awwal 1360/ 25 April 1941.

²³⁸ His letter (dated 10 Rabî' al-Thâni/7 May 1940) was included in the article 'Sadâ al-Wahda al-Maghribiyya fi Urûba (The Echo of Moroccan Union in Europe)', in *Al-Wahda al-Maghribiyya*, 12 Rabî' al-Thâni/ 9 May 1941.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Zeki Kirâm, 'Sûq Ukâz al-Sâmit', in *Barid-Es-Sabah*, 4/787 (Saturday 9 Rabî' al-Thâni 1961/ 25 April 1942).

²⁴¹ Id., 'Sawânih li Ahad al-Mufakkirîn (Thinker's Anecdotes)', in *Barid-Es-Sabah*, 4/795 (22 Rabî' al-Thâni 1361/ 7 May 1942).

chemist and physician had announced a public lecture on the side-effects of cosmetics on women's face and health. Nobody attended his lecture except his servant with three letters, in which three anonymous women accused him of being 'an idiot'. His lecture according to them was out of date, and probably suitable for women from the first century, not the twentieth century. The man was very disappointed, and admitted that he should search once again for a woman that could understand him.²⁴²⁾

In Turays' *Al-Hurriyya*, Kirâm reviewed and translated small parts of the work *Glaube und Welt des Islam*, written by the Austrian historian of Islamic art Ernst Diez (1878-1961).²⁴³⁾ He also praised the German Lutheran missionary Adolf Gustav Gedat as a missionary of 'bravery' and 'free consciousness' for writing his work *Ein Christ erlebt die Probleme der Welt*.²⁴⁴⁾ Kirâm selected passages from the book and translated them into Arabic, which according to him prove the transgression and crimes of the Europeans in Africa and Asia.²⁴⁵⁾ In his work, Gedat expressed his admiration of Muslim prayers that he as a Christian feels jealous when he sees Muslims praying in the direction of Mecca.²⁴⁶⁾ Gedat was also impressed that Islam as a religion 'requires the Muslims to act, and sacrifice for the sake of liberating their lands'.²⁴⁷⁾ The Muslim does this only because he knows that 'whatever happens to him will be Allah's will, and he will only meet his delight [in the Hereafter]'.²⁴⁸⁾

Due to his former military experience in the Balkan, Kirâm was also keen on informing his readers of the state of Muslims in Croatia, their 'friendly relations with the Croatian Catholics, and the establishment of a new mosque in Zagreb as a 'symbol of this good relation'.²⁴⁹⁾ He also briefed *Al-Hurriyya* with the last developments on the Jews during the war in Europe. He compared the anti-Jewish systematic movements in Europe to other historical examples as in the time of Babylon, the Roman Empire, the Medina of the Prophet or Medieval Spain. He counted eleven restrictions imposed upon the Jews, for instance, carrying a star on their bosoms, prevention of using Christian names for their children, etc.²⁵⁰⁾ On another subject, he published reports on recent medical research on the causes of cancer, and that it was most widespread in the countries where pork is much eaten.²⁵¹⁾

Conclusion

The paper has focused on the life of Zekî Kirâm as a Muslim activist in Berlin. It has attempted to study him in

²⁴²⁾ Ibid.

²⁴³⁾ Ernst Diez, *Glaube und Welt des Islam*, Stuttgart: Spemann, 1942. Z. Kirâm, 'Dîn al-Islâm wa-l-Âlam al-Islâmî', in *Al-Hurriyya*, 27 Muharram 1361/ 13 February 1942.

²⁴⁴⁾ Adolf Gustav Gedat, *Ein Christ erlebt die Probleme der Welt, Versuch einer volkstümlichen Einführung in das Weltgeschehen unserer Tage*, Steinkopf Verlag: Stuttgart, 1935.

²⁴⁵⁾ Kirâm, 'Mubashshir Yatakallam', in *Al-Hurriyya*, 27 Muharram 1361/ 13 February 1942.

²⁴⁶⁾ Gedat, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

²⁴⁷⁾ Ibid., p. 132.

²⁴⁸⁾ Ibid.

²⁴⁹⁾ Kirâm, 'Jâmi' Jadîd fi Zagreb', *op. cit.*

²⁵⁰⁾ Id., 'Masîr al-Yahûd fi Urûba', in *Al-Hurriyya*, 2 Safar 1361/ 18 February 1942.

²⁵¹⁾ Id., 'al-Tibb wa-Marad al-Saratân', in *Al-Hurriyya*, 3 Rabî' al-Awwal 1361/ 21 March 1942.

the historical context of the Muslim presence in Germany in the interbellum period. The whole history, however, should be re-written on the basis of identifying such persons who had participated in making such a history, their lives, activities and roles. Kirâm's early diaries (in my possession), for example, reflect his impressions and experiences of the Berlin of the 1920s-1940s. They tell us about the life in the city from an Arab's point of view.

Muslim nationalist intellectuals and publicists of the early twentieth century were able to constitute a good network through which they attempted to fulfill their political aims. We have seen that Kirâm's ties with the circle of Muslim propagandists (especially Rashîd Ridâ, Shakîb Arslân and Amîn al-Husaynî) enabled him to function easily and to have contact with major political figures in Yemen, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and North Africa. Although he was a peripheral person in modern history, Kirâm proved to be a good 'instrument' in the hands of other contemporary prominent figures. For instance, Arslân — who was a great admirer of Imam Yahyâ — introduced him to the Yemeni authorities as a 'reliable arms agent'. Through their contact on a regular basis Kirâm kept Ridâ updated with the scholarly developments on Islam in Germany, and the situation of Muslims in Berlin. Ridâ was also aware of his negotiations with the Yemenis, and received him in Cairo on his way back to Berlin after his visit to Yemen. Although he was a *Shi'î* ruler, Imam Yahyâ was Ridâ's choice as the temporary 'caliph of convenience'.²⁵²⁾ As a big sympathizer to Ibn Sa'ûd and the Saudi royal family, Ridâ also highly recommended him for the Saudi deals with German firms.

As is mentioned above, Kirâm was arrested by the American forces and was put in their military hospital as prisoner of war.²⁵³⁾ The present researcher does not know the reason for his arrest so far. Nevertheless, one could conclude that his military role in arms trade, his function as a translator in the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and his visits to Spain during the war still raise many questions. Further research is still needed to answer these questions. Before his death he wrote letters to his friends in Egypt and elsewhere (such as the editor of *Al-Fath* journal in Egypt Muhibb al-Dîn al-Khatîb) requesting them to give him assistance by sending medicine and food. But it is not sure whether the drafts of the letters, which he wrote one month before his death, have ever reached the people.

Kirâm did not manage to establish a very high scholarly career. In my view, the only merits of his works on Islam were his abridgments of other earlier works either by Rashîd Ridâ or Shakîb Arslân, and his Arabic and Turkish translations of German works on Islamic themes. However, he, to some degree succeeded in being a 'mediator' in economic and military deals between Germany and the Muslim world.

²⁵²⁾ Cleveland, *op. cit.* p. 81.

²⁵³⁾ Kirâm died of cancer. His medical reports are still surviving in his remaining papers.