

Islam Assembled

The Advent of the Muslim Congresses



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New York Columbia University Press 1986

TWELVE

SWISS EXILE

The European Muslim Congress, 1935

SINCE THE late nineteenth century, Muslim political activists had worked to defend their causes in European capitals. Afghani's publication of *al-Urwa al-wuthqa* in Paris, and his diplomatic forays in London, had set a personal precedent. In later years, émigrés and converts formed societies which gathered Muslims from very different parts, and promoted a cosmopolitan sense of Muslim solidarity. The European Muslim Congress, held in Geneva in September 1935, represented a first attempt to gather these activists from throughout the continent under one roof. A circle around the Geneva-based Lebanese émigré Shakib Arslan (1869–1946) promoted and organized the event. In addition to his literary activities, Arslan had been involved in past congress initiatives, but never before had played a leading role.

The organization of the congress proved a severe test of Arslan's influence. Preparations took two years, and the congress was postponed twice. There were impediments created by the general lack of coordination among the various societies and communities in Europe, but Arslan's own controversial politics also were at issue. When the congress finally met, not all of these obstacles had been overcome, diminishing participation. The deliberations were for the most part of an informative nature, but Arslan allowed the occasional mention of political causes which enjoyed his support. These intrusions had divisive effects and exposed the congress to criticism from Arslan's numerous personal opponents. Although it was resolved that the congress meet annually, this detrimental controversy and the decline of Geneva as a center of Muslim activism assured that the congress did not meet again.

Important details concerning early preparations for the congress appeared in Arslan's published letters to Rashid Rida, but as Rida died shortly before the congress met, this correspondence includes nothing about the deliberations.¹ The principal published accounts of the congress were written by the organizers and participants themselves. Arslan's own periodical, *La Nation arabe*, carried an authorized account of

the deliberations, as did the émigré newspaper *La Tribune d'Orient* of Geneva.² The Damascus newspaper *al-Ayyam* happened to have a correspondent in Geneva, and it alone offered a first-hand report in a Muslim language. These accounts inspired two brief reports which appeared in contemporary orientalist journals.³ The ubiquitous Iqbal ʿAli Shah, a participant, left an account which inevitably emphasized his own contribution, but also mentioned some otherwise unreported dissensions within the congress.⁴ Swiss official files shed some further light on the preparations, but have yet to illuminate the deliberations.⁵ The voluminous but inaccessible private papers of Arslan, in family possession, are likely one day to answer outstanding questions about the Geneva congress, and the several earlier congresses which involved Arslan.

The initiative for a European Muslim congress first belonged to Mahmud Salim, an Egyptian journalist and lawyer long resident in Paris. He had been among the lesser participants in the 1931 Jerusalem Muslim congress, where the idea of a European Muslim congress was first mooted. The concept fired his imagination. The following year, Mahmud Salim embarked on a journey which took him through the Middle East and Europe to stir Muslim interest in the idea, and he then published a pamphlet on the subject. The pamphlet indicated that he had won the support of Amin al-Husayni and Ziya² al-Din Tabataba²i, and Salim began to formulate detailed plans in frequent séances with the members of a Paris-based society, La Fraternité Musulmane. This circle declared the projected European Muslim congress an emanation of the earlier Jerusalem Muslim congress, a formal claim advanced to legitimize the scheme. But in practice, this was an independent initiative in its own right.⁶

Mahmud Salim's group envisioned the aims of the projected congress to be intellectual, social, and educational. According to one of Salim's Paris collaborators, "questions of current politics, which often lead to acerbic conflicts without palpable results, will be left aside." The Paris salon around Salim also resolved that the congress should be open to all interested participants: "All Muslims living in Europe will be invited to participate, whether they are of European nationality, or are foreigners residing on this continent: industrialists, men of commerce, professors, students, officials, diplomats, artists, scholars, artisans—in a word, people of intellect from every walk of life." According to this plan, the congress was to be convened in Geneva the following August.⁸ There was little to excite controversy in this preliminary statement of aims.

But with their choice of Geneva, the Paris group appealed to Shakib

Arslan for support. Since the end of the war, Arslan had waged a campaign to gain the endorsement of enlightened world opinion for Muslim and Arab claims to independence. At the same time, Arslan corresponded extensively with noted Muslim activists such as Rashid Rida and Amin al-Husyani, who involved him in their politics. Around Arslan in Geneva revolved a great deal of Muslim political activity, for, like Afghani, whose circle he had attended many years earlier in Istanbul, Arslan combined an undeniable charisma with a certain capacity for dissimulation and intrigue.⁹

Now Mahmud Salim needed Arslan's broad network of affiliations. Salim's own influence was limited, and he was so unlikely a source for so ambitious an initiative that many assumed that the ex-Khedive ʿAbbas Hilmi stood behind his endeavors.¹⁰ The suspicion was understandable, for the ex-Khedive only recently had sought to convene his own Muslim congress in Geneva (see previous chapter). But it was to Shakib Arslan that Salim finally turned for support when he found his own efforts inadequate. Arslan wrote to Rashid Rida relating that

Mahmud Bey Salim originated this idea, and published a pamphlet about it. He came to Geneva and spoke with us, and we had no objection. But we indicated to him that he should proceed slowly and not rush into convening the congress, because a Muslim congress held in Europe must be worthy of the honor of Islam. We did not want it to be a simple meeting, where words are exchanged and the participants disagree.

Arslan and his associates insisted that Salim postpone the congress until 1934, and they undertook to raise the £300 to £400 which they deemed necessary for funding a respectable congress. Mahmud Salim expressed his satisfaction with this decision.¹¹ "I had no intention of presiding over this congress because of my many other preoccupations," wrote Arslan, "but Mahmud Salim and other friends convinced me, despite myself, to accept the presidency."¹² Now the initiative belonged to Arslan, a political activist and polemicist.

The promotion of the congress fell to a Geneva committee over which Arslan presided, and for which his Syrian colleague Ihsan al-Jabiri acted as treasurer. By this time, Ziyaʿ al-Din Tabatabaʿi, secretary general of the Jerusalem congress, had ceased to fill his functions in Jerusalem and had returned to Geneva. Arslan made him secretary general of the Geneva preparatory committee, and so established a formal link of continuity with the Jerusalem congress. Ihsan Sami Haqqi, a Palestinian journalist appointed assistant secretary general, laid most of the groundwork for the congress. Another key member of the committee from its inception was ʿAli al-Ghayati, an Egyptian émigré in Geneva since 1910, and editor of *La Tribune d'Orient*. Ghayati's ostensible aim in his career

had been to defend the rights of Eastern peoples at the seat of the League of Nations, and the rallying of his established journal to the side of the congress put an additional means of propagation at the disposal of the preparatory committee.¹³ Also on the committee was Zaki ʿAli, an Egyptian physician resident in Geneva who served as Arslan's secretary, and who was close to the ex-Khedive.¹⁴ The congress was scheduled for September 1934, and the preparatory committee began to meet and plan a policy for invitations. They determined that the event was to gather not only notables from the indigenous Muslim minorities of Europe, but also Muslim political activists in European exile.

At an early stage, the organizers even hoped that the representatives of Muslim governments to the League of Nations would attend, but only one Muslim government showed any interest in the plan. During a stopover in Turkey, Mahmud Salim put his proposal to Receb Bey [Peker] (1880–1950), secretary general of the ruling Republican People's Party, who approved the congress idea provided that the caliphate did not figure in the agenda.¹⁵ After the initiative passed to Arslan's hands, the Turkish government took an even greater interest in the congress. During a Geneva banquet, Arslan was approached by Cemal Husni, Turkish ambassador to Switzerland, and Necmeddin Sadak, a newspaper editor, deputy from Sivas, and later foreign minister.

Then [the Turkish ambassador] asked me whether I intended to invite Turkey. I said no. He asked why not; were not the province of Edirne and even Istanbul part of Europe? I told him that we had seen Turkey refrain from involvement in Islamic questions. But we attach importance to this congress from the social aspect, said Necmeddin Sadak.

He took my hand and reiterated this. I told him amicably but to the point: In a word, we have excluded you from our activities.¹⁶

The Turkish ambassador did not relent. He arranged to meet with Ihsan al-Jabiri, insisted that Turkey receive an invitation, and assured Jabiri that the Muslims of Edirne would be permitted by the Turkish government to send representatives. Jabiri promised the Turkish ambassador that an invitation would be sent, explaining to Arslan that no harm had been done: If the Turks came, fine; if not, the loss was their own. But Arslan remained adamant: "It is impossible for me to support the sending of an invitation card to the Ankara government. We can send an invitation card to the mufti of Edirne; he is free to send a delegation, or not to send one." In justifying his position, Arslan cited the campaign waged by the Turkish government against the 1931 Jerusalem Muslim congress, a campaign which *La Nation arabe* had criticized (see previous chapter). The Geneva congress was a direct sequel to that

earlier gathering; how did Turkey now dare to solicit an invitation?¹⁷ Rashid Rida agreed, adding that there was no point in inviting the mufti of Edirne either.¹⁸

Arslan chose instead to devote his efforts to securing the participation of unofficial delegations, and began with a round of personal diplomacy among Balkan Muslims. He spent much of the winter of 1933–34 in Yugoslavia as the guest of the organized Bosnian Muslim community, strengthening ties established during the 1931 Jerusalem congress and spreading word of the forthcoming Geneva congress.

But in April 1934, he joined the Jerusalem congress mission to mediate in the war between Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and did not return to Geneva until September, the month for which the congress had been scheduled. Only upon Arslan's return did he begin to issue proper invitations. Thus, Great Britain's leading Muslim and president of the British Muslim Association, Lord Headley (1855–1935), received Arslan's telegraphed invitation only a week before the scheduled opening of the congress. Without time to weigh his reply, he turned for advice to officials in the Foreign and India Offices, who persuaded him not to attend.¹⁹ With so little advance notice, most of the invited participants must have sent their regrets, and the congress was postponed again. A short time later, Arslan rescheduled the event for September 1935, to coincide with the regular meeting of the League of Nations Assembly. The preparatory committee, chastened by failure, planned its moves more deliberately in a campaign to assure broad participation in the congress.

The first challenge was posed by Swiss authorities, who hitherto had shown little interest in the projected congress. In March 1935, congress organizer Ihsan Sami Haqqi requested a *permis de séjour* for one year to enable him to reside in Geneva. Swiss federal authorities thought that this provided a rare opportunity to secure detailed information on the congress plans, and Haqqi Bey was summoned before the police in Geneva to make a statement.²⁰ There he drew a wholly innocuous sketch of the purposes of the congress, which he defined as the reform of Muslim education in Europe. The congress had no political aim, and while some of the leading organizers were known for their political activism, the congress itself would not take up their causes.²¹ In view of this forswearing of politics, and the estimate of the Swiss Division of Foreign Affairs that the congress would not have important political repercussions, Haqqi Bey was granted his *permis de séjour*. An attached condition stipulated that he abstain from all political activity which might disturb Swiss relations with other states.²²

Arslan had an identical condition attached to his *permis de séjour*, and in light of Haqqi Bey's police interrogation, Arslan now thought it

prudent to request official authorization for the congress. "Political discussions are excluded from our program," he emphasized,²³ and the Swiss Division of Foreign Affairs concluded that

we do not have sufficient grounds for barring the convening of the European Muslim Congress in Switzerland. It would be preferable that deliberations of this sort not coincide with the regular session of the League of Nations Assembly, but in Chekib Arslan's letter addressed to Genevan authorities, he expressly declared that "political discussions are excluded" from the program of this congress. We do not wish to cast doubt on the value of a commitment assumed spontaneously by the organizers.²⁴

So long as there were no "tempestuous political demonstrations" during the congress, there was no reason to ban it, a formal reservation conveyed to Arslan.²⁵ And so Arslan, wary lest he be accused of abusing Swiss hospitality, announced repeatedly in public that the congress had no political purpose, although he and his associates all were known for their committed political activism. The congress proceedings soon would test Arslan's undertaking.

A second challenge cast a lengthier shadow over the preparatory work. Arslan had known Mussolini personally since 1922, when the Italian dictator was still editor-in-chief of the party newspaper *Popolo d'Italia*. According to Arslan,

Mussolini wrote articles in the *Popolo d'Italia* which demanded Syrian independence with such ardor as we had never seen in any European. A short time later, Mussolini became head of state, and—strange thing for a revolutionary turned head of state—did not change his attitude toward our cause. The Italian delegation at the League of Nations always demanded the abolition of British and French mandates over Iraq, Palestine, Syria and Lebanon, and supported the complete independence of those countries.²⁶

Arslan had withdrawn his hand of friendship when Italian forces ruthlessly suppressed a movement of Muslim resistance in Libya in 1931. The conduct of this military campaign had elicited condemnations of Italian policy from the Jerusalem Muslim congress, and from Arslan himself on the pages of *La Nation arabe*. But on the very eve of the congress came purported evidence that Arslan's always discreet Italian liaison had been renewed. In April 1935, two Palestinian Arab newspapers reproduced what appeared to be a damaging letter sent by Arslan to Amin al-Husayni, president of the Jerusalem Muslim congress. In it, Arslan wrote that he was "satisfied with the last parley and with the assurances which Mussolini has given personally. I am confident that Italy will not treat us as England and France have treated us." In the purported letter, Arslan said that he would open a campaign in favor

of Italy on the pages of *La Nation arabe*, and asked Amin al-Husayni to adopt a similar policy. Arslan denied authorship of the published letter, and Amin al-Husayni's camp claimed that it had been forged by their Palestinian Arab opponents.²⁷

But to his correspondent Rashid Rida, Arslan admitted that he had come to a renewed understanding with Mussolini during a recent visit to Rome. "I will not become an Italian propagandist, and Mussolini will not ask me to become one," but Arslan had made certain "demands of Mussolini concerning Syria, Palestine, and Tripolitania, and I wrote things about Eritrea which would gladden Mussolini, so that he would meet my demands. After all, if we only said what we had been saying before, then he doubtless never would act [on our behalf]. But he has already fulfilled part, and I am asking him to fulfill the rest."²⁸ By his understanding with the Duce, Arslan would overlook aspects of Italian colonization in Libya, and apologize for Italian policies in Eritrea, while Mussolini would support the independence of the far more numerous Muslim peoples under French and British rule. Arslan believed without doubt that he thus served the best interests of his cause as a whole. Yet the suspicion inevitably gained ground that the European Muslim Congress was meant to serve Italian political interests, an insinuation which dogged the congress and warded off potential participants.²⁹

In the end, about sixty invited participants did arrive in Geneva. A minority were Muslim nationals of European states, while most were Muslims from predominantly Muslim countries then residing in Europe. The indigenous Muslim communities of Eastern and Southeastern Europe met few of the organizers' expectations. The Muslim population of Yugoslavia, the continent's largest, was represented by an acknowledged leader, Salim Muftic, the president of the Council of Ulama seated at Sarajevo. Muftic had attended the Jerusalem congress four years earlier, and headed a large delegation to the Geneva sequel. Also in attendance was Huszein Hilmi Durics (1889–1940), a Bosnian residing in Hungary who for some years had been involved in an attempt to construct a mosque in Budapest. He had visited Amin al-Husayni in Palestine the previous year, and for several years had been in close correspondence with Arslan. Durics had secured informal recognition as mufti of Budapest from the city's Bosnian residents.³⁰ One of the most articulate participants was the mufti of Poland, Jakub Szynekiewicz, who had taken his doctorate in old Turkish syntax, and had attended the Cairo caliphate congress in 1926. He, too, was involved in a plan to build a mosque, in Warsaw.³¹ But there were no noteworthy participants from the sizable Muslim communities of Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, and Greece.³²

None of the participants could speak with authority on behalf of the

heterogeneous and largely émigré Muslim populations of Western Europe. The venerable Lord Headley had died earlier in the year, and the organized British Muslim community was represented by Sir Hubert Omar Stewart Rankin, a Scot who did not enjoy a comparable reputation. France's Muslim population, swollen by waves of proletarian immigration from North Africa, was represented by Misali al-Hajj, an Algerian activist and orator based in Paris, and the commanding spirit behind the maximalist society Etoile Nord-Africaine. It was Arslan who led Misali to discard his earlier Communist sympathies, and to embrace Muslim pan-nationalist precepts. The relationship between the two men was one of master to disciple.³³ Most of the other participants from Western Europe attended in their private capacities or on behalf of minor associations.

One participant was ready to claim that the conferees were "fully representative" and "fully accredited" by nine million Muslims in Europe.³⁴ But a Muslim member of the League of Nations secretariat judged the delegates "distinctly third-rate."³⁵ The truth fell somewhere between these extremes, and this uneven turnout was due principally to the suspicions attached to Arslan's political affinities among Muslims who thought him driven by disguised motives. These persons for the most part simply stayed away from the congress, so setting the stage for Arslan's unchallenged reign throughout its sessions. Only in one instance did any other impediment discourage participants. Some of the members of Misali al-Hajj's party in Paris complained that they had been detained en route by French police in the border town of Bellegarde for thirty hours. Although they had protested to the chief of police that the congress was of an exclusively religious character, he held the opinion that "when Muslims meet to speak about religion, they occupy themselves instead with politics." Aspiring participants from Lyon were returned home under escort; those from Paris were admonished to turn back, but managed to board a train for Annemasse, and there crossed the Swiss border.³⁶

"As I entered the lofty hall," wrote one participant, "the Imam of the Paris Mosque was already reciting the verses of the Quran at the opening of the meeting."³⁷ Thereafter the deliberations were punctuated by theatrical demonstrations which served to charge the atmosphere in the Geneva hotel where the participants had gathered. Arslan himself later led his guests in Friday congregational prayer, an act of conscious ecumenical significance in view of his Druze origin. In another dramatic episode, the director of the Istituto Superiore Orientale di Napoli, Count Bernardo Barbiellini Amidei, appeared before the congress to ask that

it formally recognize his adherence to Islam. At the demand of Jakub Szynekiewicz, he pronounced the profession of faith (*shahada*) three times before congress participants who had risen as one to their feet, and chose for himself an Arabic name.³⁸ Some time also was consumed in the practical arrangement of an internal regime for the duration of the sessions. Arslan was acclaimed president without debate. With the help of his fellow organizers, named *in corpore* to a permanent committee, he dictated the agenda of the congress and determined rudimentary rules of procedure.

But that matter which occupied the far larger part of the proceedings concerned the conditions which prevailed in various Muslim communities throughout Europe. This provided the theme for the numerous informative speeches which filled the agenda. The representatives of the indigenous East and Southeast European Muslim communities were lavish in their praise of their governments, under which they claimed to have prospered. In contrast, the remarks of some participants from the émigré communities of Western Europe evidenced that the rule of their host countries over their coreligionists had left them embittered. There were even accounts which had émigré and indigenous Muslim spokesmen at odds. According to one participant, discussion after the opening prayer "assumed a high degree of passionate exposition on the part of certain Algerians and Palestinians resident in Europe, and in spite of the earnest pleadings of the Bosnian delegation for a calmer atmosphere, the discussion got more and more heated."³⁹

But Arslan carefully controlled the political signals which emanated from the sessions. In his inaugural speech, he stressed that the aims of the congress were not political, and thanked the Swiss and Genevan authorities for their hospitality, which they had made contingent upon his avoidance of political controversy. Later he maintained that "every time an orator attempted to deviate even slightly from the line which we ourselves had drawn, he was called to order."⁴⁰ Yet from the outset, Arslan held that the issue of Zionist settlement in Palestine involved the fate of Muslim holy places. This was properly speaking a religious question and so had a place in the deliberations.

When Ihsan al-Jabiri mounted the podium to speak on Palestine, he prefaced his address with this caveat: "I am not dealing with a colonial problem. I make no allusion, favorable or detrimental, to the conquering powers who have created this deplorable situation. I touch only upon a religious question, vital to Islam." This ritual pronouncement accomplished, Jabiri then proceeded to deliver a severe indictment of Jewish settlement and British policy in Palestine.⁴¹ His address proved to be the centerpiece of the deliberations. The participants unanimously decided to communicate their opposition to the creation of a Jewish na-

tional home to the League of Nations and the British government, stressing in their resolutions that the question of Palestine, while "purely a political one for both the Jews and the mandatory power, is a strictly religious one from the Muslim point of view."⁴² Through reiteration of this problematic distinction, Arslan was able to maintain, if need be, that he had not violated his assurances to Swiss authorities. At the same time, he imagined that the Swiss would show less indulgence toward a similar assault on French policy in North Africa and Syria, and none was made. All that Misali al-Hajj could do in his public remarks was to draw a dismal picture of the state of Algerian workers in France.⁴³

It was obvious that any reference made to Italian colonial policy during the congress would draw particular attention, since Arslan's detractors had labeled him an apologist for Mussolini's imperial quest. On the grounds that the congress excluded political questions, Arslan refused two intentionally provocative appeals demanding that the congress condemn Italian designs against Ethiopia, which Italian forces were to invade the following month. Were the congress to have taken a stand on this issue, he later wrote, then would it not have had a duty to protest the British occupation of Egypt and the Sudan, and French policy in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Syria?⁴⁴

Yet the proceedings left one foreign diplomat with the distinct impression that the organizers had gone still further, and sought "to present Italy to the delegates in a favorable light."⁴⁵ A still stronger impression was left by an address delivered in Arabic to the congress by the Italian orientalist Laura Veccia Vaglieri. Arslan later explained that she had come to assist Count Barbiellini, and so although she was not a Muslim, she had been allowed to attend the sessions.⁴⁶ She also had been shown special consideration because she was then writing a book which supposedly bore on questions raised during the congress. But according to a British memorandum, Veccia Vaglieri wrote reports on each day's proceedings and passed them to the Italian consul general in Geneva.⁴⁷

Although Count Barbiellini departed from the congress early, she remained in attendance, and even addressed the congress on the beneficial reforms instituted by Italy in its Muslim possessions. Arslan responded in turn by welcoming those reforms, with a single reservation concerning the confiscation of certain Muslim lands in Tripolitania.⁴⁸ Nothing could have been further from the spirit of the 1931 Jerusalem Muslim congress, during which one speaker had delivered so vitriolic an attack on Italian colonial policy that British authorities had no choice but to expel him from Palestine. The Italian presence at the 1935 Geneva Muslim congress gave an early indication that leading Muslim activists were slipping into Axis orbit; Arslan was but the first of many to do so.

With cries of "Vive l'islam!" the congress dispersed after four days of deliberations. There had been no attempt to elaborate detailed provisions for the perpetuation of the congress as an organization. The participants merely agreed in principle to meet annually, and elected members to a permanent committee led by Arslan and Jabiri. The members of this body were the same persons who had organized the congress. During the following months, 'Ali al-Ghayati's *Tribune d'Orient* published occasional items on the activities of this committee, since Ghayati served as its secretary.

But Arslan's principal work on behalf of the congress was not to plan for the next year's meeting, but to refute accusations leveled against the proceedings just concluded. As an emanation of the Jerusalem Muslim congress, the Geneva congress excited those same political factions in Palestine and Egypt which opposed Amin al-Husayni's ambitions. Critics in both countries maintained that the congress had been a blunt instrument of propaganda on behalf of Italian colonialism, and much was made of the presence and remarks of Veccia Vaglieri at the congress.⁴⁹ All that Arslan could do from remote Geneva was to publish a rebuttal to these charges in an Egyptian newspaper weeks after they had appeared.⁵⁰

This spate of polemics combined with the decline of Geneva as an émigré center, to defeat all prospects for subsequent congresses envisioned by the organizers. In 1936, Anglo-Egyptian, Franco-Syrian, and Franco-Lebanese treaties were signed, leading Arslan and others to plan ends to their exiles. 'Ali al-Ghayati closed his newspaper, and returned to Egypt in 1937. Arslan and Jabiri departed for Syria the same year, Arslan to serve as elder statesman, Jabiri to serve as a provincial governor. In the event, Arslan's appointed role did not satisfy him, and he returned to Geneva in 1938, but he made no apparent effort to revive the congress.

For there had been a marked change in the attitude of Swiss authorities, who were led by the deteriorating situation in Europe to become strict with Arslan. Shortly after his return to Geneva, Arslan was summoned for a series of difficult interrogations by the police, concerning the full range of his political affiliations. A misstep here might have meant deportation. "I have always respected the law," he protested. "I have never done anything to compromise Switzerland or which was illegal."⁵¹ Arslan's responses to his interrogators were brilliant exercises in dissimulation, and he was not expelled. But the restrictions governing political activity in his *permis de séjour* acquired new force. The European Muslim Congress, the consequence of a lost combination of opportunity and will, would not meet again.

In the meantime, the Italians, lacking Arslan's subtlety, barged ahead

with their claim to Muslim allegiances. In March 1937, Mussolini visited Tripolitania, and there was girded with the 'sword of Islam' by Muslim notables. In fact, the sword, a Yemeni relic, had been purchased in Florence with official Italian funds, and the notables were pressed into bestowing the exalted title upon the blade. "Muslims may rest assured," declared Mussolini, "that Italy will always be the friend and protector of Islam throughout the world." Commenting upon the girding, Italian foreign minister Count Ciano asserted that "every day there reaches us from the most distant lands evidence of the impression produced by that event in the whole boundless Islamic world, which, in accordance with its traditions, loves in the Duce the wisdom of the statesman united to the action of the warrior."⁵² This claim was perhaps the ultimate yield of the European Muslim Congress.

98. Typescript copy in *ISA*, division 65, file 707; another copy appended to Tabataba'i Report.

99. For a list of branches, see Tabataba'i Report, appendix 1. For Ziya' al-Din's remarks, see *Filastin*, August 13, 1932.

100. For Ziya' al-Din's detailed account of the various options for proceeding with the university, see his undated letter to the members of a committee for the university, in *ISA*, division 65, file 864; another copy is appended to the Tabataba'i Report.

101. *Al-Jami'a al-'arabiyya*, November 23, 1932.

102. Record of conversation of March 16, 1933, between Amin al-Husayni and Charles Crane, as recorded by George Antonius, *ISA*, division 65 (Antonius Papers), file 854. Numerous schemes to raise money—most based on some sort of tax for services provided by the Supreme Muslim Council of Palestine—were aired during the congress itself. See *al-Jami'a al-'arabiyya*, December 12, 1931.

103. *Filastin*, December 4, 1932. For examples of appeals, see Tabataba'i (Jerusalem) to King Fu'ad (Cairo), May 16, 1932, *MRF*, file 1935; Tabataba'i (Jerusalem) to 'Abbas Hilmi, June 26, 1932, *AHP*, 125:16–17.

104. Departure detailed in *Filastin*, May 5, 6, 1933.

105. Antonius, Annual Report to the Institute of Current World Affairs for the year ending September 30, 1934, in Antonius-Oxford. For accounts of the mission, see *Oriente Moderno* (1933), 13: 293–95, 336–39, 558–60, 402–4. 'Alluba has left an account of his journey to India, in *al-Fath* (June 21, 1935), 9(450): 1220–21; (June 28, 1935), 10(451): 14–17.

106. D'Aumale (Jerusalem), dispatch of May 9, 1935, *AFC*, carton 66, file 12/1. For earlier evidence of 'Alluba's interest in making Egypt the center of the congress functions, see *Filastin*, January 14, 1933. For an account of the mediation mission to Arabia, see *al-Manar* (July 1934), 34(3): 232–35.

107. Secret police report, Palestine, no. 13/33, April 22, 1933, L/P&S/12/2118; Ely Palmer (Jerusalem), dispatch of March 6, 1935, *NA*, RG59, 867n.00/238; *Palestine Post* (Jerusalem), January 16, 1935.

108. For a view of the secretariat as essentially closed, see Antonius, Annual Report to the Institute of Current World Affairs for year ending September 30, 1935, Antonius-Oxford.

109. Paulo Boneschi, "Une fatwà du Grande Mufti de Jérusalem."

110. *Al-Muqattam*, February 7, 1937.

111. George Wadsworth (Jerusalem), dispatch of February 19, 1937, *NA*, RG59, 867n.00/440.

112. Enclosure no. 1 in R. Bullard (Jidda), dispatch of March 9, 1937, FO371/20839, E1868/201/25.

113. Fritz Grobba, *Männer und Mächte im Orient*, 273.

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1. Sharabasi, *Amir al-bayan*, 2: 815–17.

2. Ihsan El-Djabri, "Le Congrès Islamique d'Europe"; *La Tribune d'Orient*, October 31, 1935, for what the sponsors regarded as a "compte-rendu exact."

3. "Der Muslimische Kongress von Europa, Genf September 1935" (republishes account of *La Tribune d'Orient*, October 31, 1935, with introduction); Virginia Vacca, "Il Congresso dei Musulmani d'Europa a Ginevra" (based on the *Damascus al-Ayyam*).

4. [Iqbal 'Ali Shah], "European Muslim Conference at Geneva." The authorship of this anonymous piece has been deduced from its contents.

5. The Swiss materials cited here originated in the Ministère public fédéral, and were obtained through the Swiss Federal Archives in Bern. Unfortunately, it was impossible to locate any federal police file on the actual proceedings, although it seems unlikely that the event would have escaped surveillance.

6. Mahmoud Salem, *Le Congrès Islamo-européen de Genève (Août 1933)*, 3–7.
7. *Ibid.*, 9.
8. *Ibid.*, 15–18; *La Nation arabe* (April–May–June 1933) (no. 4–5–6): 5–7.
9. On Arslan's political career, see E. Lévi-Provençal, "L'Emir Shakib Arslan (1869–1946)"; Juliette Bessis, "Chekib Arslan et les mouvements nationalistes au Maghreb"; Antoine Fleury, "Le mouvement national arabe à Genève durant l'entre-deux-guerres," 345–53; and a forthcoming biography of Arslan by William Cleveland.
10. *Filastin*, July 1, 1933.
11. Arslan to Rida, July 29, 1933, in Sharabasi, *Amir al-bayan*, 2: 815; announcement of postponement in *La Tribune d'Orient*, July 15, 1933.
12. Chekib Arslan, *Aucune Propagande au monde ne peut défigurer le portrait d'un Homme*, 9.
13. On Ghayati and his journal, see Fleury, "Le mouvement national arabe à Genève," 339–45; Trefzger, *Die nationale Bewegung Ägyptens*, 109–20.
14. Zaki Ali, *Islam in the World*, dedication page.
15. Salem, *Le Congrès Islamo-européen*, 5.
16. Arslan to Rida, July 29, 1933, in Sharabasi, *Amir al-bayan*, 2: 816.
17. *Ibid.*, 817.
18. Rida (Cairo) to Arslan (Geneva), August 10, 1933, in Arslan, *Sayyid Rashid Rida*, 717–18.
19. Minutes by A. K. Helm, September 19–20, 1934, FO371/17831, E5873/5873/65; British legation (Bern), dispatch of September 29, 1934, FO371/17831, E6124/5873/65.
20. Procureur général de la Confédération (Bern) to Conseiller d'Etat, Dépt. de Justice et Police (Geneva), March 8, 1935, *SFA*, C.10.3.
21. Declaration by Hakky Bey at the Commissariat de Police, Geneva, March 19, 1935, *SFA*, C.10.3.
22. Procureur général de la Confédération (Bern) to Police fédérale des Etrangers (Bern), June 17, 1935, *SFA*, C.13.108; Chef de la Division des Affaires Etrangères (Bern) to Procureur général (Bern), July 11, 1935, *SFA*, C.10.3.
23. Arslan letter of August 14, 1935, quoted by Conseiller d'Etat, Dépt. de Justice et Police (Geneva) to Procureur général (Bern), August 21, 1935, *SFA*, C.10.3.
24. Chef de la Division des Affaires Etrangères (Bern) to Procureur général de la Confédération (Bern), August 23, 1935, *SFA*, C.10.3.
25. Procureur général de la Confédération (Bern) to Conseiller d'Etat, Dépt. de Justice et Police (Geneva), August 26, 1935, *SFA*, C.10.3.
26. Arslan, *Aucune Propagande au monde*, 25.
27. For a translation of the letter—Arslan (Geneva) to Amin al-Husayni, February 20, 1935—see Esco Foundation for Palestine, *Palestine: A Study of Jewish, Arab and British Policies*, 2: 774–75. On the letter incident, see Sharabasi, *Amir al-bayan*, 1: 103–6; 2: 828–34.
28. Arslan (Geneva) to Rida, Safar 12, 1354, in Sharabasi, *Amir al-bayan*, 2: 829.
29. On Arslan's Italian affinities, see Bessis, "Chekib Arslan," 477–79; Mario Tedeschini Lalli, "La propaganda araba del fascismo e l'Egitto," 724–26.
30. On Durics and Mehmed Reszulovics, who accompanied him, see Alexandre Popovic, "Les musulmans de Hongrie dans la période post-ottomane," 181–82.
31. On Szyrkiewicz, see "Der Muslimische Kongress von Europa," 103–4. On his community, see Maciej Konopacki, "Les Musulmans en Pologne." A few years later, Szyrkiewicz gained some notoriety when German occupation authorities installed him as mufti of all *Ostland*, the German-occupied areas of the Soviet Union.

32. On these communities, see the sources provided by Alexandre Popovic, "Les Musulmans du Sud-Est européen dans la période post-ottomane."
33. On Misali's relationship with Arslan, see Bessis, "Chekib Arslan," *passim*; for his recollection of the congress, see Messali Hadj, *Les mémoires de Messali Hadj*, 195–99.
34. [Shah], "European Muslim Congress," 396–97.
35. Prentiss B. Gilbert (Geneva), dispatch of October 2, 1935, *NA*, RG59, 540.4 V1/4.
36. *Oriente Moderno* (1935), 15: 564.
37. [Shah], "European Muslim Conference," 396.
38. "Le Congrès Musulman d'Europe," *La Nation arabe* (October–November 1935), 7(7): 419. On Barbiellini, see *Oriente Moderno* (1932), 12: 72–73.
39. [Shah], "European Muslim Conference," 396–97; similar report in *Oriente Moderno* (1935), 15: 503.
40. Arslan, *Aucune Propagande au monde*, 8.
41. "Discours de Ihsan Bey El-Djabri, prononcé au Congrès Musulman d'Europe," *La Nation arabe* (July–August–September 1935), 5(6): 379–85.
42. *Ibid.*, 376.
43. *La Nation arabe* (October–November 1935), 5(7): 422.
44. *Al-Muqattam*, October 9, 1935; *Oriente Moderno* (1935), 15: 566–67.
45. Prentiss B. Gilbert (Geneva), dispatch of October 2, 1935, *NA*, RG59, 540.4 V1/4.
46. An exception also was made for the Viennese Turcologist Herbert Jansky, who also attended the congress.
47. British consulate (Geneva) to Chancery (Bern), October 2, 1935, FO371/18925, E6005/5696/65.
48. *La Nation arabe* (October–November 1935), 5(7): 423–24; "Il Congresso dei Musulmani d'Europa a Ginevra."
49. *Filastin*, September 19, 1935; *al-Fath*, September 26, 1935; *Oriente Moderno* (1935), 15: 503–4.
50. *Al-Muqattam*, October 9, 1935; *Oriente Moderno* (1935), 15: 565–66.
51. Transcript of Arslan's interrogation by the Police de Sûreté, Geneva, October 6, 1938, *SFA*, C.10.7.
52. Mussolini's speech of March 12, 1937, and Ciano's speech of May 13, 1937, in Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Documents on International Affairs 1937*, 267, 283.

13. CONGRESSES OF COLLABORATION

1. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 151.
2. *Ibid.*, 151–52.
3. Activities of the Indian Muslim delegation reported by W. A. Smart (Cairo) to P. C. Bamford (Simla), October 28, 1938, FO371/21884, E6732/10/31. See also the reports from the delegates to Jinnah in Atique Zafar Sheikh, ed. *Quaid-e-Azam and the Muslim World*, 27–41, 65–76.
4. On the congress, see Ettore Rossi, "Il Congresso interparlamentare arabo e musulmano pro Palestina al Cairo (7–11 ottobre)"; and the organizer's own account in Muhammad 'Ali 'Alluba, *Filastin wa-jaratuhu*, 7–9, 115–16.
5. For an informative if overwrought account of this policy, see O. S. S. Research and Analysis Report 890, "Japanese Infiltration among Muslims throughout the World," May 15, 1943, *NA*, RG59.
6. On Ibrahim's career in general, see the sources cited in ch. 1, n. 34. On Ibrahim's early activities in Japan, see Abdürreşid Ibrahim, *Âlemi İslâm ve Japonya'da istigârı İslâmiyet; Nakaba Wakabayashi, Kaikyo sekai to Nihon*, 8–10, *passim*; and Ettore Rossi, "Le relazioni tra il Giappone e il mondo musulmano e l'opera di 'Abd er-Rashîd İbrâhîm." On the impression made upon Muslims by the Japanese victory over Russia, see Klaus Kreiser,