

SECRET

die P. Carter
N. Lumbold.

(F.O. Mr. Grey should see?)

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUILDING

WOOD STREET
KARACHI

No. 474

INDEXED

1st March, 1948.

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Mr. Archibald Carter,

An Egyptian friend of mine, who was a valuable member of an organisation which I had the task of setting up in Egypt during the war, has sent me the following translation of a letter addressed by Mr. Jinnah to Sheikh Hassan El-Banna, leader of the Ikhwan-al-Muslimin (or Moslem Brethren) Society in Egypt. My friend claims to have obtained a copy of this letter through a source in close contact with Sheikh El-Banna: this is entirely plausible because we were together interested in this person during the war.

The following is the text of the letter in question:

"After greetings Mr. Jinnah said: 'I am writing you, the great Moslem Leader, to inform you that I am determined, by God's will, to save Pakistan from the tyranny of imperialism and the various hostile currents. I have therefore decided to follow the advice you kindly gave me in your recent letter, that my Government should assume a purely Islamic character and work in close co-operation with the other strong international Islamic organisations which are headed by your Ikhwan Al-Muslimun Society.'"

"I therefore ask you, Brother, to send me as soon as possible Ustaz Saleh El-Ashmawy, whom you had previously delegated to us on a special mission.

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Sir Archibald Carter, K.C.B., K.C.I.E.,
Permanent Under Secretary of State,
Commonwealth Relations Office,
S.W.1.

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and to the British Middle East Office, and

He will be the guest of our Government, and I shall be able to discuss with him the foundations on which to build our Islamic Government and to study together the question of the Islamic League which was previously proposed by you. I should also like to tell him of many things which he would be able to convey to you personally, because I do not trust sending it by mail - whatever the precautions I take".

The messenger referred to, Saleh El-Ashmawy, who was one of the three Egyptian journalists to visit Pakistan some little time ago, returned to Karachi last week. He told the Press that he had brought a personal letter to Mr. Jinnah from the ex-Mufti. He is still here and recently delivered a lecture on Arab affairs of somewhat inflammatory tone.

I think we should wait for the drafting of the Pakistan Constitution before we take it for granted that the Islamic character of the administration here will be as definite as alleged. Our latest information is that Mr. Jinnah has vetoed the West Punjab Government's Bill to applying the Shariat Code for matters of "statut personnel". However, the indication that Mr. Jinnah may be considering some form of "Islamic League" is interesting, and I will do what I can to follow this up.

Yours sincerely

Abdur Rahman

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FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

13th April, 1948.

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SECRET

EXXONI

Copy to ...
Kargachi
13/4/48

Dear Rumbold

(9) With reference to Grafftey Smith's letter No. 474 of 1st March to Carter, it occurred to me that you might find it useful to have what we know about Hassan al Banna and his Ikhwan League.

Our information goes to show that their activities are for the most part irresponsibly anti-British and that they indulge in terrorism and incitement to violence. Their association with Nazi and Fascist agents in Egypt will be well known to Grafftey-Smith. Since 1945 the trend of the League has been towards expansion abroad not only in India but also in Palestine, the Levant States, and the Sudan and there have been some recent indications of designs on East Africa. This appears to be in accordance with the revised statutes of the organisation (1945) which include among the objects of the society - "strengthening the relations between Islamic countries and composing differences between them" and "defence of Islam against aggression".

References to the anti-communist policy of the Ikhwan have been not infrequent and we are bound to assume that it represents the real attitude of the leaders, although the rank and file are unlikely to have any reasoned opinion on the matter. The emphasis upon the religious revival brings a reaction against the allegedly corrosive influence of Western culture.

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H.A.F. Rumbold, Esq., C.I.E.,
Commonwealth Relations Office.

It is not easy to see what the precise object may be behind this attempt to spread the influence of the Ikhwan to Pakistan. Hassan al Banna appears unlikely to attain real eminence even in his own country, and either as a political or religious leader is unlikely to carry much weight abroad. However, any additional link between Pakistan and the Middle East will strengthen the ties between Islam and the West and thus help to form a bar to the spread of communist influence. On balance, therefore, a rapprochement between Pakistan and the Middle East through the Ikhwan or any other channel may well be a good thing provided that means can be found to convert the destructive forces of hostility to the West into a consolidation of the strength of Islam against communism. But we must admit that this conversion has not yet taken place.

You may consider it useful to pass the above to Grafftey-Smith, and for that purpose I enclose an extra copy of this letter.

(P.F. Grey)

*Yours
Paul Grey*

*Mr
Graham
will follow
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