LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In the beginning no more than two editions of Diogenes *were foreseen, the English and the French. However, since the publication of a magazine devoted to general culture on a high level obviously responded to a need, other editions appeared successively, in Spanish, German, and Italian. Thus, for the first time, perhaps, a magazine of this type appeared simultaneously in all the principal cultural languages of the West. It has always been our purpose, however, to work for more than a merely European Humanism. We want a truly ecumenical Humanism. For this reason, hardly anything could give the promoters of our undertaking more hearty encouragement than the following letter, received from a group of Egyptian professors. This letter testifies to the impression our enterprise is making in the Near East, and moves us to predict for the near future an edition of* Diogenes *in Arabic. This remarkable support permits us to speculate, without too much temerity, that* Diogenes *may one day be welcomed by the cultures of the Far East in the same manner. Contributions from that quarter we regard as no less indispensable to the broad Humanism we are working for.*

To the Editor in Chief:

In the fourth number of *Diogenes* you clearly defined the message of that magazine. Since *Diogenes* first appeared, we have read it regularly, following your efforts with great interest. Our growing admiration has led us to the idea of bringing your message to the Arabic reading public. It is not so much the quality of the articles appearing in your magazine—who would contest their merit—as it is the governing idea —so lucidly set forth and elaborated in your letter—which finally induces us to broach our intention to you.

The Arabic East is now beginning to

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awaken to other civilisations. And it has need, in our opinion, of a formula defining a cultural attitude, an attitude such as would transcend the differences in this sphere and, at the same time, achieve a broad view of the conflicts.

At present the East is tossed between the cultural values of its own glorious past and the values of the West; a West which, already celebrating its triumphs, aspires to conquer the future singly and forever. Hence the indecision in the East. Shall we remain attached, jealously and fiercely, to ideas and traditions, acquired, to be sure, through centuries of grandeur, but, despite everything, for the most part outmoded? Or shall we assimilate the values of the dominant civilisation? Since this assimilation often seems to endanger our deepest spiritual calling, our indecision is of course all the worse.

But at this point, your project appears upon the scene, and opens up horizons more vast. Humanism is no longer restricted to the Humanities. It is no longer the exclusive property of this or that particular civilisation. Every culture, every heritage, if only viewed in its origins, is in your eyes valid. And it is origins, no matter how distant and mysterious they may appear, that *Diogenes* explored, and continues to explore. In such research, above and beyond all polemic, we meet of necessity. If it concerns the discovery of a civilisation buried under sand and wind; the revelation of a law governing human societies; the tracing of a tradition a thousand years old; or, finally, the marking out of a future judged probable by science: then we believe it concerns us too, and we can never be strangers to any of it. The common ground thus achieved is no longer the same as was urged upon us by a humanitarian ideology unable to prove anything but its own impotence, an ideology which of course could never win the confidence of our people. It is common ground based upon the objective and disinterested observation of human realities.

At this place of encounter, at this fatal crossroads of humanity, according to you, the Editor of *Diogenes*, the Near East can not, must not be absent. And in truth, only a formula such as that in *Diogenes* can help us out of our uncertainties.

Such are the considerations, briefly outlined, which led us, a group of Egyptian professors, to the idea of introducing *Diogenes* to the Arab world. The group is composed of the following:

ALY HAFIZ, *Professor of classical literature, the Department of Literature, Alexandria.*

MAHMOUD H. EL SAARAN, *Professor of Arabic philology, the Department of Literature, Alexandria.*

EDGAR SABET FARAG, *Professor of English to upper secondary classes, Alexandria.*

W. AZIZ WASSEF, *Press Attaché of the Unesco.*

MOHAMED SAÏD EL SAFTI, *Assistant in philosophy, the Department of Literature, Alexandria.*

In the expectation of your reply, I tender you my sincere regards.

MOHAMED SAÏD EL SAFTI,
Assistant in philosophy,
the Department of
Literature, Alexandria.

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