

backwardness. Any attempt to this explanation was doomed to be contradictory. If nations were to have their salvation by religion, then Christianity would be superior to Islam since the powerful West is Christian. On the other hand, if the civilization of the West were to be understood as divorced from Christianity, then the cause of strength and advancement would be found in something other than religion. This ideology doubtlessly imparted great influence on the masses, but nevertheless it failed to capture their imagination, and it failed to advance a theory that could explain the day-to-day events in the world.

Because the economic development of the Arab countries was so lagging behind Europe, Communism was translated to the Arab masses in a very crude manner. The lack of a working class tradition and a socialist intellectual heritage rendered the early introduction of Marxism to the Arab world as a mechanistic fatalistic doctrine. The working class was presented as the long-awaited hero, the new Mahdi. But since the problems of the Arab countries were not centered around the struggle between the workers and the capitalists, but around the need for industrialization, the Communist parties failed to play any meaningful role. Instead they followed literally whatever instructions they received from Stalinist Russia. Since some of these instructions were against the deep-rooted national feeling, Communism was