NOMADS AND FARMERS IN SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY

PROBLEMS OF SETTLEMENT

by

Wolfram Eberhard

I.

New research on the patterns of relation between nomadic and settled groups has shattered the traditional picture in many essential points. R. Thurnwald ¹ has shown that all higher societies with a nobility as leading elite, and consequently all classical and modern urbanized and industrialized societies, are the result of a military conquest or the peaceful penetration by nomadic groups of agricultural societies. A. Rüstow ² enlarges this theory of “super-stratification” by separating nomadic conquest of primitive agricultural societies (hoe-agriculture) from conquest of higher agricultural societies (plow-agriculture), although in both cases stratified societies result. The first situation produces a type of despotic kingdom as can be seen in central Africa, while only the latter type brings forth large social units with a high degree of division of labor that develop into “high cultures.” The above and related researches have shown that a study of these relations between nomads and agriculturists is of great importance for an understanding of the growth and the direction of development of our own civilization ³; they seem to be equally important for any project that aims at promoting industrialization in a pre-industrial society.

Furthermore, the old concept that nomads live in steppes or deserts, because they were expelled from better areas by stronger neighbors, has been given up. Once a group of hunters ⁴ or agriculturists ⁵ has

¹ R. Thurnwald, Die menschliche Gesellschaft (Berlin 1935), vol. 4, 26 ff. and Der Mensch geringer Naturbeherrschung (Berlin 1950), pp. 34-43.
² A. Rüstow, Ortsbestimmung der Gegenwart (Zürich 1949), vol. 1.
³ A. Rüstow devoted the whole second volume of his book to this question.
changed into a cattle-raising society of nomads, the desert or steppe is not a retreat but an area of preference: only the weak groups are expelled from the steppe and are forced to settle.  

The contact between both groups, nomads and settlers, is not limited to a sudden outburst of nomadic violence, attack and conquest; such catastrophes usually have a long prologue and an equally long epilogue. O. Lattimore, 2 R. Ekvall 3 and K. Jettmar 4 have shown that the actual conquest is usually preceded by a long period of contact: in some cases the nomads induce farmers to settle on their pasturage, 5 or farmers silently penetrate an area used by nomads as pasturage during a part of the year, usually the winter. On the other hand, nomads often penetrate the agricultural area, moving along the hills in small troupes and carrying on peaceful (trade) or warlike relations (called "banditry") with the settlers. After the actual conquest not only the conquering nomadic tribal federation settles in the conquered area as a new ruling class, usually as new nobility, but also individual tribal units continue to move into the new territory on their own initiative; they often continue their type of life and economy in the middle of an agricultural area for some time and independent of, or only loosely controlled by their relatives, the now ruling aristocracy. 6

It has long been observed that Islam, although created in Arabia, a typical nomadic area, and expanded by the armies of nomadic warriors, functions essentially as a "city-religion," 7 a religion practised by people who like to live in cities and a religion that can function satisfactorily only in cities and not among true nomads. It seems safe to say that all nomadic societies (this applies also to the Arabs at the time of their acceptance of Islam) in the period before they conquer an area of high

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2 Especially in his *Mongols of Manchuria* (New York 1934).


6 See the conditions in Iran under Mongol rule, cf. Z. V. Togan, *Umumi Türk Tarikine giris* (İstanbul 1946), vol. 1, 222 ff.