

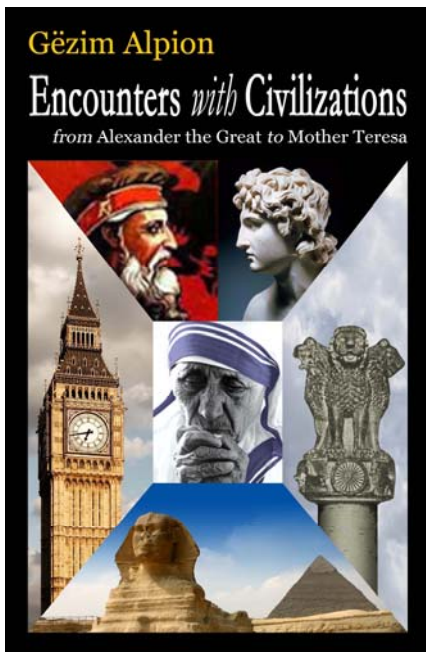
Calcutta, India, 7 April 2008

### Press Release

Announcing the publication of Gëzim Alpion's

***Encounters with Civilizations:  
From Alexander the Great to Mother Teresa***

ISBN 10: 81-88248-05-3 (pbk); xxii, 262 pp., £9.95, \$19.95, €14.95, Rs. 295



A collection of essays, *Encounters with Civilizations: from Alexander the Great to Mother Teresa*, by Gëzim Alpion, Professor of Sociology and Media Studies at the University of Birmingham, UK, has now been published in Kolkata by Meteor Books. The collection is edited by Gaston Roberge, Professor of Mass Communication and Film Studies, at St. Xavier's College, Kolkata.

When some speak of 'clashes of civilizations', Alpion and Roberge believe that not only can civilizations co-exist peacefully, but they must encounter harmoniously if they are to survive the present globalization trends. The fifteen articles included in this book will serve as essential reading for scholars, students and general readers who are interested in encountering the 'other' without prejudice.

Alpion was born in Albania in 1962. He records in this book his encounters with civilizations as a student (at the Universities of Tirana, Cairo and Durham) and as a sociologist and media expert. The essays were written between 1993 and 2007 and some of them have already been published in international peer-reviewed journals and newspapers.

As an Albanian, Alpion could not but take a keen interest in Mother Teresa. He has written widely on Mother Teresa since 2003. His internationally acclaimed book *Mother Teresa: Saint or Celebrity?* was published by Routledge in the UK, the USA and Canada at the beginning of 2007. The Indian edition (also in English) has just been published in New Delhi by Routledge India; the Italian edition will be published by Salerno Editrice in Rome on 30 April 2008. Alpion's *Mother Teresa* is perhaps the first book written by a scholar, who no doubt admires Mother Teresa but is not a 'devotee'.

Alpion's essays on Mother Teresa included in *Encounters with Civilizations* together with the essay by Roberge, 'Mother Teresa, Abortion and the Media', will hopefully encourage other sociologists and media scholars to approach Mother Teresa, her legacy and her relationship with the media without bias.

Canadian-born editor, Gaston Roberge, who has been living in India since 1961, believes that this collection of essays is strikingly relevant to the people of India, the cradle of ancient and rich civilizations. The experiences of the Egyptians recorded in the book will evoke a response in the hearts of many Indian readers, who will also have an opportunity to understand better their own milieu. Essays on the plight of the migrants from the Balkans to the UK, and especially the treatment of the foreign scholars in England, will ring a familiar tone to many an Indian. The book ends with a plea by Alpion to resist social closure.

However critical of certain situations, the essays are always positive and hopeful. The book has already been praised highly by numerous sociologists and media scholars.

'Globalization has brought an increased awareness of the interconnectedness of cultures, while a historical awareness shows the hubris involved in any presumption of a privileged centre. Dr Gëzim Alpion is the ideal companion in travels across and within cultures. He brings a sensitive humanism and the eye of an acute scholar to address diverse issues of cross-cultural understanding in divided worlds. These essays will be necessary reading.'

**John Holmwood, Professor of Sociology, University of Birmingham, UK**

'Academics today are expected to specialize in a subject and not attempt to address big issues so it's refreshing to find Dr Gëzim Alpion bringing an acute intelligence and critical eye to the question of civilization; what it means and how identity is shaped by religion, place, culture and society. His work is augmented by a foreword and two essays from the editor of the anthology, Professor Gaston Roberge, whose own encounters with civilizations bring an added depth to this account of a journey of discovery.'

**Brian Shoesmith, Professor of Media Studies and Journalism, University of Liberal Arts, Bangladesh/Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia.**

*Encounters with Civilizations: From Alexander the Great to Mother Teresa* and Dr Alpion's other two new books – *If Only the Dead Could Listen* (Chapel Hill, NC, USA: Globic Press, 2008), and *Madre Teresa: Santa o Celebrità?* (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2008) – will be launched at a special event in London hosted by the Right Honourable Gentleman, Mr John Grogan, Member of the British Parliament for Selby, at the House of Commons, on Friday 25 April 2008 from 16:00 to 18:00.

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